

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**5 October 2000**

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## Thursday, 5 October 2000

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. B. W. Bishop) took the chair at 10.03 a.m. and read the prayer.

### ELECTRICITY: SUPPLY

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I move:

That the Council take note of the Minister for Energy and Resources' answer to a question without notice given in this house on 6 September 2000 relating to future electricity supply.

In February 2000 Victorians faced the first interruption to the state's power supply in 17 years. It was estimated that the cost of this interruption to the community was more than \$100 million, in addition to the impact on and risk to personnel and property. The question is, why did it occur? Despite the minister's valiant attempt to excuse the government in her report on the security of electricity supply task force, the facts are indisputable. The government failed in its obligations to the community, and it has failed in terms of the task force review.

The context is important to illustrate the background of the electricity industry crisis. We know that there was a major industrial dispute at Yallourn Energy leading into the peak summer demand period. Between November and February the company sought the assistance of the government in resolving issues with its work force. Clearly the company was unable to deal with the industrial disruption and it consistently warned the government of the impact of the dispute on the security of the state's electricity supply. Further, on a number of occasions Nemmco, the national electricity marketing company, warned the government that there was a risk to the reliability of supply. The government failed to respond even when pressed by the community. Leading articles in the major dailies, commentary throughout the media and calls from the opposition reflected community concern about the government's inaction, but the government failed to respond.

The Nemmco and industry warnings of the threat to supply were discounted by the government and as a result blackouts occurred. The lives of ordinary citizens were disrupted and industry came to a grinding halt. The unscheduled and unforecast interruption to supply was significant in itself. However, the government overreacted because it was embarrassed, and brought in restrictions which, as the task force report demonstrates, were beyond what was required. That meant that power was being sold interstate while Victorians were suffering under burdensome restrictions.

In the middle of all this the Premier proposed that the state invest \$1 billion in a new power station in the Latrobe Valley. This subsequently caused the minister some embarrassment and in the task force report she has done her best to get her Premier off the hook. That report demonstrates quite clearly that there is no need for the state to invest in a new power station in the Latrobe Valley as the Premier proposed on 4 and 5 February. The Premier was doing what we have noted the government is interested in doing when managing issues in the state — that is, taking a populist position — and providing a bit of rhetoric as a short-term answer to the pressures being applied by community expectations of what the government would do to protect supply.

The government's whole approach to this issue contrasts poorly with that of the former government. There were major industrial problems at the Longford gas plant during the restoration of the gas processing facilities following the damage caused by an industrial accident. During that period there was significant industrial unrest and eventually it became evident that unless the government took some action to support the employers in resolving the issue there would be a risk to gas reticulation in this state. Therefore, in April 1999 the then government intervened with the employers in the commonwealth Industrial Relations Commission. The result was a settlement of the outstanding issues, and the project work at Longford was completed by the winter period.

Victoria's access to gas for heating and industrial purposes was secured by the action of that government. That contrasts remarkably with the lack of performance by the Bracks government when there was disruption to electricity supplies.

Did the report address the cause of the crisis? In my view it did not. It failed completely to deal with the primary cause of the electricity crisis: the industrial relations dispute. It certainly declined to take a view about the government's future involvement in such disputes, a dispute that threatened our essential services.

What it tried to do was suggest that the principal causes were related to the peak load period — that is, the high temperatures and therefore the demand for power for airconditioning — and that it was somehow unfortunate that it paralleled the industrial dispute. In other words, it took the Pontius Pilate approach of washing its hands.

The report has aptly been described in the press as high farce. It is clear that the electricity industry investors have had their confidence shaken. For example, Edison Mission had been considering investment in a

300 megawatt gas turbine plant to extend its operations and provide peak load capacity at Loy Yang, but it has now put that proposed investment on review. That is clearly a result of the mismanagement of the arrangements in the electricity industry in Victoria in February this year.

It was best summed up in an article in March in the Loy Yang Power *Marketing* newsletter, which states:

Clearly there is now a very real risk that the market in its current form will not be allowed to function without political interference.

...

... It was only when the state government intervened that unnecessary restrictions and further suffering were experienced.

...

... yet by its actions they have suppressed the very signals which would induce a new entrant into the market.

Obviously there is a strong view in the industry that the government does not know what it is doing because it has prejudiced the policy stability that is required to achieve investment certainty.

The government's principal response on the task force report and the comments it has drawn seems to be a hope that domestic and industrial consumers will be persuaded to cut their power usage at peak periods — that is, on a very hot day they will turn off the airconditioners. I hardly think that is an appropriate response to such a significant issue. It makes it clear that the government failed to recognise its role as representing the community in dealing with the crisis period in February.

The report also proposes a further investigation into the availability of stand-by generation. That is ridiculous. We know there is significant stand-by generation capacity, in excess of 300 megawatts, that could readily be connected to the grid. It is not time for a further report and review, it is time for the government to get on with the business of meeting its obligation to ensure capacity to deal with the peaking requirements that have been identified, which are limited for most of the year. It represents less than 1 per cent of the annual demand period.

The report proposes to minimise any barriers to new generation capacity. It clearly contradicts itself. How can one remove barriers to new generation capacity if possible investors in such capacity have no confidence in the stability of the market structure because the government has demonstrated that it cannot maintain a consistent policy approach? The mishandling of the situation has prejudiced investment. The state must

attract investment into the energy industry, but the government is unable to do that.

The report makes no mention of market forces providing incentives. Clearly significant pricing incentives are to be considered. The national electricity code administrator and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) review of the price cap on the value of lost load issued earlier this year should be taken into account.

I am surprised the report did not have regard to the proposal to move the price cap up as a result of the maturation of the national electricity market to enable signals to be given to the generation industry to invest. At least NEMMCO recognised in its statement of opportunities that this was a significant issue and said it would have a marked impact on future decisions to provide augmentation either by way of generation capacity or interconnections.

I shall now go into more detail because it is useful to understand the background to the debate. The report the Premier released on behalf of the minister on 6 September has been given some consideration by the industry and has been found wanting. On 11 September the *Age* reported that:

Victorians will be facing a quickly escalating power crisis as summer peak demand for electricity outstrips supply. And some electricity organisations believe that the measures introduced last week by the state government are inadequate and will do little to avert the situation.

...

... the Victorian government has placed its hopes in the short term on convincing domestic consumers and industry to cut their power usage at critical times.

What I found interesting was a comment from the Energy Action Group.

**Hon. C. C. Broad** — I like it.

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** — You like that, do you? I shall repeat it so honourable members can be tuned into the high farce, as it is described. John Dick is quoted in the *Age* of 11 September as calling it high farce and saying:

... They are doing a very Neroic act, (i.e., fiddling while Rome burns) ...

That is a fair summation of the way many observers see this task force report. It took six months for a ministerial task force, set up after the biggest electricity crisis in 17 years, to come to the conclusion that the community should be advised to turn off

airconditioners on very hot days. It is absolutely astounding work.

The reality of the report is that it is just a sop to deal with the need by the government to be seen to be taking some immediate action in the aftermath of the disaster it created. The government announced that a review would be undertaken, and subsequently on 28 March the terms of reference were announced. The Minister for Energy and Resources had the obligation to discharge the review.

I have mixed feelings. I feel sorry for the minister because she was given that responsibility to try to cover up the mess of the Minister for Industrial Relations, who failed to intervene in any meaningful way in the dispute when it occurred in the summer. Because the Minister for Industrial Relations had no idea of what she was doing the net result was that the Minister for Energy and Resources was dragged into that vortex and caught up in a difficult situation. I have no doubt that if the Minister for Energy and Resources had responsibility for the industrial relations portfolio, she would do a much better job, but we will see what happens in time.

The report clearly identifies that the decision of the government about restrictions created an opportunity to sell power interstate. I refer to page 2 of the report which states:

As it was not required in Victoria, some of the reserve was exported to New South Wales —

that is, the reserve capacity after the restrictions came into force —

through normal market functions, emphasising the need for more sophisticated and targeted demand reduction strategies to be developed.

The fact that restrictions achieved a greater reduction in power use than was anticipated and required to maintain a reasonable contingency reserve highlighted the need for more sophisticated and targeted strategies to be developed.

That is gibberish for saying the government overreacted to the circumstances of the day. The restrictions were onerous in their impact on the community and unnecessary in their extremity. Regrettably they were a consequence of the failure of the government to respond to the urgings, from November, of the industry, the market managers, the opposition and the community.

It is useful to be clear about the stridency of those representations. As I recall there was a consistency of approach. The first article in the press that referred to

the issue was in the *Age* of 17 November 1999. The article states:

The threat of industrial action has sparked fears that Victorian households may face the risk of electricity shortages or price hikes.

The government was on notice. Of course, the government claims it had no effective role to play, but it was on notice that Victorians would be at risk from 17 November because of an industrial dispute, and that is notwithstanding that there had been private communication between Yallourn and the government warning of that fact. Certainly from the middle of November the public was well aware that there was a risk in the event of there being peak load demand coincidental to the industrial dispute, thus prejudicing the security of supply.

The Premier refused to intervene, and that continued to be the status of the government's position for some time. The headline of a *Herald Sun* article of 11 January states 'Work bans cut power'. The article states:

The shutdown has raised the prospect of power rationing for businesses if the dispute drags into February, when factory use climbs.

I am not sure if the minister enjoyed her summer holiday — —

**Hon. C. C. Broad** — I did not have a holiday.

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** — The minister did not have a holiday? That is very interesting and quite revealing. If the minister was not holidaying, where was she during this dispute? For the past nine months I have worked on the basis that the minister was on leave, because for the duration of the crisis she was invisible. There was not one sign of activity on the part of the Minister for Energy and Resources taking any interest whatsoever in the dispute. Indeed, I felt sorry for the fact that the Minister for Industrial Relations was probably doing the job of the Minister for Energy and Resources at the same time as her own, and that is why she got into so much trouble dealing with the industrial relations challenge.

It was evident to everyone interested in the industry and the security of electricity supply that throughout January a disaster was looming for Victoria. An article in the *Age* of 11 January reports:

Dr Charlie Macauley, general manager of operations for the National Electricity Market Management Company ... said power supplies in the three states would be 'grim' next week ...

No wonder they were grim. We had a dispute at Yallourn. The article further states:

Yallourn Energy yesterday informed the state government of the shutdown, warned of possible power shortages and was seeking urgent talks last night.

What did Pontius Pilate do? Apparently she was not on leave. The question is: what was the minister doing through that time? When one looks at the number of press articles about the warnings it is clear that the public was well aware of the looming crisis and that the company had been making representations to the minister and the Premier seeking opportunities to have the government facilitate a resolution. The government neglected to take any action until the crisis occurred.

By 12 January the Premier was overseas and acting Premier Thwaites was in charge. He entered the arena on this issue because the Minister for Energy and Resources was too busy in her office, or somewhere else. An article in the *Australian* of 12 January states:

Acting Premier John Thwaites assured Victorians there was no need for concern about the security of supply, with little prospect of blackouts or restrictions over summer.

It is a pity the Acting Premier was not better informed. The interesting point about that comment was that Acting Premier Thwaites further stated that the government would not involve itself directly in the stand-off.

Clearly a year prior to that event there had been a major issue with the industrial relations management of the contractor work force at Esso's Longford facility about the reconditioning of the Longford plant. The former Kennett government used its powers to intervene to resolve the issue.

I ask the minister: why was that most significant issue of industrial relations management not commented on in the report? Why was there no acknowledgment by the government that part of its response to reviewing the outcomes of the electricity crisis was that it needed to acknowledge its role in industrial relations representations in the federal arena where it is appropriate, rather than begging off and taking the view that it has no responsibility?

Further, the government failed to acknowledge that it had powers under its own state legislation through the Electricity Industry Act, the Vital State Industries (Works and Services) Act and the Essential Services Act to resolve those issues.

By avoiding that question in the task force report the Minister for Energy and Resources is clearly abrogating

her responsibility. I doubt Victorians will be impressed if there is a continuation of this Pontius Pilate approach on which the government seems determined to set its course.

Even before the crisis eventuated the press referred to the difficulties the government was creating for itself. An interesting editorial in the *Herald Sun* of 18 January entitled 'Time to lead, Mr Bracks' states in part:

The government has invoked the same Pontius Pilate approach to justify doing nothing about the Yallourn power station strike threatening our electricity supply.

Dealing with those matters is critical to good governance. This is about the role of government. Aside from the regulatory responsibilities, it is about leadership. We have seen none of that from the government to date. My cynicism is reinforced by the substance of the task force report, which fails to deal with the issue.

The industry came to the conclusion that the government was going to let it down. The result is that I have invited the minister to recover from that position as best she can — to try to redevelop some confidence in the future of the industry and its ability to operate within the market arrangements, secure in the knowledge that its investment will not be jeopardised by unilateral, unpredictable management of crises that develop because the government is not meeting its responsibilities.

I am concerned that the government, through the task force report, is glossing over the most critical element of the cause of the crisis. It offers solutions that are in themselves lightweight, such as suggesting an advertising program to persuade people to turn off their airconditioners on hot days. That is not a constructive way to approach this issue. The minister could have used the six months working on the task force report more constructively. I am surprised the task force report proposes further investigation of stand-by generation. We know the opportunity to deal with stand-by generation exists. It is a technical matter of applying the protocols to connect into the grid and regulate the stand-by generation.

**Hon. C. C. Broad** — Why didn't you do anything about it?

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** — I am not the minister; Ms Broad is the minister. That the previous government had the security of supply in hand and the way it managed the state are demonstrated by the fact that it has been 17 years since the last major electricity crisis.

It took the Bracks government only three months to bring about a crisis not seen for a generation.

The fact that the task force report does nothing constructive is highlighted by the uncertainty that has now been created in the minds of the energy industry investment community. The Premier's cavalier approach to the issue of investment warrants further examination.

When the political heat was on the government to deal with the crisis the Premier was busy commenting about the future of security of supply. In two newspaper reports, a report in the *Age* of 9 February and a report in the *Herald Sun* of 11 February, he is reported commenting on the state investing in electricity generation assets. Damon Johnston's report in the *Herald Sun* states:

About \$1 billion in taxpayer funds may be used to build a new power station under a drastic plan floated by Steve Bracks.

It is evident from the way the government ultimately intervened in the crisis after the blackout occurred and imposed restrictions in a heavy-handed manner that it had jeopardised the good operation of the national market. The result was that Victoria exported power interstate while Victorians suffered restrictions, and the Premier then expressed the opinion that the state would invest in a new power station. That would be turning back the clock. It is unbelievable. The Premier of Victoria saying the state would invest in new generation capacity. The minister's report clearly states there is no case for the state investing in new generation capacity.

Minister, did it cause you some difficulty in cabinet that your report completely contradicted the Premier's comments reported in the *Age* and the *Herald Sun*? In coming out with that naive solution the Premier was attempting to be populist and to talk up the role of government, which had been neglecting its role for some months. Even if such a solution were relevant it would be years away from the period of the crisis the Premier was talking about. For the Premier to make such a proposal reveals that the government has no idea how to manage such a situation.

I raise that issue because it is important to put on the record that the opposition believes the most important issue to secure electricity supply is a consistent commitment to a policy framework that will attract capital investment in generation and interconnection to facilitate long-term growth and availability of power to consumers in Victoria.

Other measures can also be expeditiously implemented. The opposition has referred to the stand-by generation capacity that can be connected into the grid. That ought to be done swiftly.

Through the task force report the minister set out to examine the improvement of the security of supply, but the report fails to go to the heart of the matter, which is the role of good governance and leadership and the need for the government to have involved itself in a timely fashion in the industrial relations dispute at Yallourn.

The government failed to competently manage the ultimate crisis that developed. Therefore, the report is delinquent. I urge the minister not to slide away in embarrassment from the report, which has been roundly condemned because of its inadequacy. She should work tirelessly to restore certainty in the energy industry and create a policy framework on which investors can stake a claim for the mutual benefit of all involved.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** (Minister for Energy and Resources) — On 6 September the opposition moved that my answer to a question without notice about the security of electricity supply be considered. Although the government would have liked opposition support for my answer, the motion to consider it is about as far as an opposition can go. And, as expected, the government supports the motion.

My answer to the question without notice of 6 September was given on the same day as the Premier and I released the *Security of Electricity Supply Taskforce Report*, which was referred to in my answer. The report was produced by the task force I chaired. It was established by the government following the major interruption to the state's power supplies in February last, which has been referred to, and which occurred about three months after the change of government, as has also been referred to.

The February incident was the first major power disruption experienced by Victorians for about 17 years. The government moved quickly to appoint a task force to examine what could be done to manage future electricity shortages and how Victoria's future demands for electricity could best be met. It is important to refer to the specifics of that exercise. The terms of reference with which the task force was charged were, according to the task force report, to examine:

... the ability of the electricity market presently operating in Victoria, to manage supply shortages;

the adequacy of existing information and communication systems to enable effective decision making and dissemination of information to the public; and

the capacity of Victoria's generators (augmented by the national grid) to meet Victoria's ongoing electricity demand.

The report was not produced by the government entirely from within its own resources. The key elements of the task force's work were undertaken by the government, but there was also substantial input from industry and community stakeholders while others occurred as agreed processes between the national electricity market jurisdictions under the emergency protocols.

Those review processes, as outlined in the report, included:

... an internal government review of information and communications systems during emergencies;

provision of expert advice to government on the forecast supply and demand situation and the options for increasing capacity where that is required, and on the performance of the system in times of stress —

that certainly was the case in February —

information and discussion sessions with trade unions and consumer representatives;

an electricity industry debrief of the February events, facilitated by government;

a review of the legal and governance framework of the National Electricity Market;

a review of power restriction notices and exemptions to ensure ... minimum disruption to the community, in the event that restrictions be required in the future;

an examination of the adequacy of current protocols between government and industry relating to emergency load shedding, including an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the memorandum of understanding —

signed by the previous government —

and protocols by NEMmco and all NEM jurisdictions; and

a technical review of the incident prepared by NEMmco.

That was an external report on the process. Much of that information, in addition to the government's report, is publicly available. It further states that:

The report draws on the outcomes of those processes and presents the Victorian government's response to the significant issues raised ...

That refers to issues raised as a result of the events and from the review that took place following those events.

As part of the outcome of the report the task force reviewed the legal and governance framework of the national electricity market. It concluded that the existing structures need substantial improvement. It was the view of the task force and of participants in associated reviews leading to the task force report that the existing framework:

maintains a focus on ... (maintaining the system in a secure operating state) with little focus on ... (maintaining a continuous supply of electricity) —

and that the frameworks —

do not include sufficient mechanisms for recognising government and community concerns;

do not place sufficient duty of disclosure on market participants thereby reducing the quality and timeliness of information available to the National Electricity Market Management Company ... and

do not provide sufficient clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of all parties ...

That also contributes to reducing accountability.

In response to the findings the government initiated a number of actions that are outlined in the report. They include initiating:

... an expansion of the role of the national electricity market reliability panel to place more emphasis on system reliability, to independently review and report on the annual statement of opportunities prepared by the National Electricity Management Company —

for the national electricity market —

and to capture the wider interests of government and the community.

In addition, further action by the government has been to:

... work with NEMmco to improve the efficacy of the Reserve Trader safety net arrangements in relation to anticipated shortfalls;

initiate a more stringent duty of disclosure to assist NEMmco in providing timely and accurate information to the market and to government —

something that was clearly missing in February —

consider regulatory arrangements to ensure that the Victorian distribution businesses undertake activities to allow load shedding to occur in a managed manner.

The task force recognised that Victoria is part of the national electricity market. Consequently, it does not have sole jurisdiction over the legal and regulatory arrangements that apply in the market.

Accordingly, the report of the task force indicates that the Bracks government will initiate consultation with other state and territory governments to resolve these issues. At the recent meeting of energy and mining ministers — the first such meeting I have had the opportunity to attend as Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources — I was pleased to be able to discuss those issues with a number of other jurisdictions. I was also pleased to receive a positive response, other jurisdictions indicating their willingness and their eagerness to set up discussions around those matters.

To that end, in conjunction with the other state and territory governments involved in the national electricity market, Victoria is seeking to define an appropriate ongoing role for government and to ensure that the national electricity code clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of all market participants. Electricity supply is one of the essential services on which we all depend in our daily lives, and Victorians expect the market to deliver a reliable supply of electricity at an affordable price. For that reason, under the privatised system established by the previous government the Bracks government will work with market participants, in addition to other jurisdictions and stakeholders, to improve the market's operation and accountability.

The Bracks government is also acting to: strengthen the accountability of the markets to governments and the community; put a stronger focus, as I have mentioned, on system reliability as well as system security; and improve the quality of the information available from the market.

The task force also reviewed the communications and operational protocols for managing supply shortages, as they were also under scrutiny after the events in February. As a result of the review the government has produced a revised set of electricity demand restriction notices and associated media releases and information packages. They are designed to deliver more targeted demand reductions — since that was clearly an issue in February — while so far as possible minimising any adverse impacts on business and the community.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — The government has also acted to clearly allocate responsibilities for communications relating to electricity supply shortfalls among stakeholders, something that clearly required clarification after the events in February. It has also acted to clarify the exemption categories to ensure that vulnerable groups are not adversely affected by future restrictions. It has prepared a formal Victorian

electricity supply industry demand reduction procedure in conjunction with the industry. It has ensured there is consultation between the electricity industry and emergency services to make sure of a coordinated response to any future load-shedding events.

The government has also acted to undertake regular readiness exercises within the industry, something which, unfortunately, had not occurred in the lead-up to February. It has formalised the role of Vencorp in dealing with electricity supply shortages. Honourable members will be aware of proposed legislation before the other place that is designed, among other things, to achieve a stronger role for Vencorp in those matters.

Further action by the government arising from the report, to which I will refer briefly, includes the facilitation of new investment. That includes working with other jurisdictions to minimise any impediments to inter-regional transmission system augmentations. An earlier interjection referred to interconnects. In the first instance the government's priority is to the existing interconnects, but it will be interested to consider any interconnects that are invested in in the future.

Further action arising from the report includes establishing a project team to encourage demand-side capacity, which has been referred to earlier, in the form of embedded generation and/or interruptible loads to help meet peak demand conditions during the coming summer. There has been much reference to that. The task force decided that although the supply generation available to the Victorian community is a great deal more than adequate for the great proportion of the year, the capacity of the system is tested for very short periods coinciding with peak annual demand, which might be for no more than two or three days a year.

Although the electricity system has reserve capacity to accommodate forecast peak demand, it is clear from the events of last February that a coincidence of generator or plant failure or a higher than expected temperature or industrial action, or a combination of some or all of those factors, can cause a shortfall in supply. That is the reality of the electricity supply system under the national market structure.

The Victorian demand situation is somewhat different from the characteristics of demand in other jurisdictions. The extreme peak demand for short periods that has occurred in Victoria in recent years is unlikely to be met commercially by traditional generation options. As the opposition has correctly identified, this government is not in the business of investing in those generation options, so it is important to consider the commercial response to such conditions.

As a result, the most efficient and effective means of meeting these extreme demands is through demand-side capacity, and that comes through the voluntary curtailment of load for commercial gain.

To return to the facilitation and development of demand-side initiatives, I point out to the house that the project team the government has established to undertake the facilitation work is proceeding extremely well. Notwithstanding some of the comments to which the shadow minister referred in his opening remarks, there has already been some response to that work, and it is clear that there are commercial responses for the demand-side response.

Other action arising from the report includes the encouragement of the removal of any barriers to the uptake of interruptible load contracts, which includes an examination of associated regulatory arrangements in conjunction with the industry.

It is evident that the current regulatory arrangements were designed for large industry participants and that those arrangements are not suitable when it comes to facilitating smaller industry participants wishing to engage in commercial arrangements. As a result the regulatory arrangements need to be changed to facilitate as much smaller industry participation as possible, which is a significant issue when it comes to managing short-term peak demand.

Further actions include investigating the availability of stand-by generation capacity and market mechanisms that can be used to implement the use of that capacity. The opposition has cast doubt on whether that will happen. I again indicate in response that a great deal of progress has been made, notwithstanding the arrangements that now exist as a result of the privatisation and the break-up of the industry, which make it much more difficult to identify the capacity because the arrangements are subject to commercial contracts. Nonetheless significant progress has been made in identifying stand-by generation capacity which can be utilised for the peak demand period.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — In Victoria?

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — In Victoria. In addition, the government has acted to encourage demand-side responses through the Sustainable Energy Authority and its education and communications program. Some fairly derogatory comments have been made about the government's efforts in this regard and the capacity of a contribution to be made to the security of supply through energy efficiency measures.

**Hon. Philip Davis** — I suggest 'constructively critical' would be a better phrase.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**  
(**Hon. Jenny Mikakos**) — Order! It is not question time now.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**  
(**Hon. Jenny Mikakos**) — Order!

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — I point out that what the government is aiming for appears to have been well outside the consideration of members of the previous government. This government's objective is to achieve an energy policy which has regard to a range of matters, including the essential service nature of energy necessitating the supply of electricity which is both affordable and reliable, and the environmental impact of energy use in relation to greenhouse emissions and their effect on climate change.

Efficient use of electricity has benefits not only for the environment with reduced greenhouse emissions but also for customers with reduced energy bills. It also has benefits with the security of supply in relation to the management of demand and necessary investments.

Although the opposition might not have a lot of time for those responses, it is the government's view that a whole-of-government response to ensuring electricity supply must include energy efficiency measures. That includes fostering the efficient use of energy by Victorian business, industry and households, and efficiency programs to target peak load drivers, including airconditioning. Analyses of the distinctive peak demand load which Victoria has for short periods point to the load increase coming directly from airconditioning as a result of the standard of living of the Victorian community and the greatly increased penetration of airconditioning into Victorian industries and homes.

As part of the actions outlined in the report and in addition to the energy efficiency measures to which I have referred the government has also indicated its commitment to substantial new resources to boost Victoria's renewable energy industry. In the current budget the government has committed significant additional resources to the Sustainable Energy Authority and given it a specific charter to facilitate growth in the renewable energy industry.

I refer the house to the commitment of the government outlined in the report, which was also an election commitment, to establish an essential services

commission with a charter to work towards ensuring a high-quality, reliable, fair and safe provision of electricity as well as gas and water services. A discussion paper has been issued and the government has invited submissions from the community and from industry on the essential services commission, which will play a very important role in the future.

I turn to some of the specific matters raised by the Honourable Philip Davis in his contribution. The honourable member accused the government of being populist and overreacting to the interruption to power supplies in February this year. That just indicates how out of touch the opposition is, particularly if it thinks the Victorian industry and community believes the role of government in ensuring electricity supplies is to sit back. The opposition referred to some other sources related to this matter along the lines of interfering in the market and the impact that that might have. I remind the opposition that since this issue was much debated following the events in February the government has been very careful. It had no choice but to follow the protocols according to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the previous government on what actions it could take in relation to the incidents in February. I remind honourable members that the MOU essentially commits the government to not taking any action until an emergency actually exists. That was the point at which the government acted to ensure that the Victorian community had some certainty about the supply of electricity.

If the opposition thinks the community will tolerate governments sitting back and relying on the market and industry participants to resolve those matters while in the meantime it is deprived of supplies of electricity, that demonstrates how significantly out of touch the opposition is. Clearly the government was elected — notwithstanding the sale and break-up of the electricity industry in this state — on the basis of its having a clear role to ensure affordable and reliable supplies of electricity to both the community and industry, and that is exactly what the government intends to follow through on. I refer also to the accusation that was levelled at the government — —

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — On a point of order, Madam Acting President, I seek clarification. Is the minister saying that the government will build a power station?

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — That is not a point of order.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — The minister seems to be hedging around and not coming out and saying what she is indicating. I ask for a direct answer.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**  
(**Hon. Jenny Mikakos**) — Order! There is no point of order. The minister will resume her remarks.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — I was referring to the accusation levelled at government for dealing with the industrial relations situation, which the opposition claimed was the principal cause of the interruption. In making that claim the opposition failed to mention that the industrial relations situation was not only inherited from the previous government but dates back to April 1999. If the matter required such urgent attention one might have expected that the previous government would have done something about it prior to the election. In fact, the real situation does not accord with the opposition's claims. Of itself the industrial relations situation would not have caused a problem for the securing of supply in Victoria. It was only the combination of that situation, the generator breakdowns which were not foreseen — —

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — You forgot the hot weather.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — Indeed, there was extremely hot weather across the eastern seaboard. Any one of those factors, or indeed any two of those factors, would have been manageable, and it was only the combination of all three that ultimately caused a problem for the securing of supply in Victoria and lead to the review outlined in the report under discussion.

In summary, the government has taken action on a number of fronts. It has made sure it has the information, the tools and the planning to deal effectively with any shortages that arise in the future. It recognises there can be no guarantees when it comes to unforeseen emergencies in the electricity industry. It also recognises that it is extremely important to be prepared in the event that any such emergency arises. The electricity industry, the government and the community all have important roles to play in minimising the impacts of any future reductions in supply. The government has also committed itself to working with industry and other state governments to make the market more accountable to governments and the community for system security.

In conclusion, the government recognises that it must work with industry and the community towards achieving a better management of peak electricity demand. Its major focus is on the improvement of security of supply, and that will involve commercially based decisions to reduce demand where necessary. The government has already moved to implement as a matter of extremely high priority many of the report's recommendations, so it is well prepared for the coming

summer. Notwithstanding the forecast, which indicates that sufficient supply is available, the government will continue to take every action in pursuing the recommendations in the report.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — Honourable members are debating the answer to a question without notice that the Honourable Elaine Carbines asked the Minister for Energy and Resources on 6 September. I welcome this form of debate because it is less adversarial than the debates on opposition motions that take place on Wednesday, and the government's agreement makes the debate more constructive.

One of the reasons the Honourable Philip Davis moved that the house take note of the matter was the simplistic response the minister gave following the release of this significant report. The report looks at the security and reliability of electricity supply in Victoria and the minister's response gave notice of just one initiative — an advertising campaign. I therefore welcome this morning's debate because it at least gives the minister the opportunity, which she has taken up, to elaborate on further actions we are told the government has taken as a result of the report. I will question some of those actions and seek further information, as will subsequent speakers. Government members should be thankful for the motion because it will enable them to substantiate the actions taken following that report.

The question asked by the Honourable Elaine Carbines was not a bad one, apart from the gratuitous comments in the preamble, which is something the opposition parties have come to expect from her. It asked what the government had done to improve the security and reliability of supply following the power shortages earlier this year, which is an important issue for the house to take note of and debate. In her response the minister spent most of her time criticising the previous government before finally announcing the advertising initiative to be undertaken with the help of the Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria. She announced only one outcome of an important report. Although the report is not lengthy or detailed — it consists of 27 pages — it gives the background to the initiation of the task force.

The report states that in February Victoria's power supplies experienced a major interruption. It concedes that that was the first major interruption Victoria has had for some 17 years, which is a reflection of how well the electricity power system has been handled in Victoria over that period, including during the seven years the Kennett government was in power. During that seven years there was not one major power interruption. I am therefore at a loss to understand why

the government reflects poorly on the previous government and casts aspersions on it. The government's comments are purely political.

Indeed, the foreword of the task force report signed by the Minister for Energy and Resources states:

The government response to this situation was made more complex by the division of what was a single distribution system into privatised business units by the Kennett government.

How did that make the response more complex? That is what I have asked myself. The Minister for Energy and Resources spoke for half an hour or more this morning and made no attempt to try to justify that sort of gratuitous comment. The comment was not in the task force's findings but in the minister's foreword.

I now turn to the task force report. The minister's answer responded to just one aspect of it. This debate provides us with an opportunity to look at all aspects of the report. The task force was established, as has been said by others, on 28 March to look at the following:

the ability of the electricity market presently operating in Victoria to manage supply shortages;

the adequacy of existing information and communication systems to enable effective decision making and dissemination of information to the public; and

the capacity of Victoria's generators (augmented by the national grid) to meet Victoria's ongoing electricity demand.

They are most worthwhile terms of reference and I have no criticism of them.

The report also says that the interruption to the power supply in February this year was the result of 'three major events' coinciding. The minister has spoken about these events and they are:

... industrial action at Yallourn power station, the high demand on power due to hot weather, and the temporary loss of generating units at other power stations due to mechanical failures.

The opposition can let the government off the hook on at least the second of those events — we realise and understand that the government has no control over the climate of this state. There will always be times of hot weather and increased demand on electricity during those times.

However, we cannot let the government off the hook over the first event, the major industrial action that took place at Yallourn power station. I agree with the minister's comments that the dispute had begun in April of last year and had been running for three months when the new government came into office.

The situation was getting critical in October, November and December of last year. That was the time for the Bracks government to act, but it completely washed its hands of the matter and refused to intervene or assist in the resolution of the dispute. The primary reason for the power shortage, the ongoing industrial action at the Yallourn power station, was at least in large part in the hands of the current government to resolve. Victoria's power blackouts can be attributed not only to those other events but also to the inaction of the Bracks government.

The third event was mechanical failures at other power stations. Once again I concede that the government does not have any direct control over that and that these things happen. Nevertheless, the onus is on the government to ensure that when such things happen there is a backup supply so Victorians have a secure and reliable electricity source.

The task force report is divided into two main sections: one headed 'Meeting Victoria's future power needs', and the other 'Managing emergency power shortages'. I will look at both those sections but first I want to make a couple of overall comments about the report. Anybody who reads this report comes away with the concession made in the report that Victoria will have power shortages in the very near future. If we have hot weather and high demand next summer it is very likely that we will have power shortages. The report's authors predict that even putting aside our normal hot weather pattern we will have power shortages in the future. We need to address those problems. It alarms me that my overall impression of the report is that it indicates we will have power shortages again this summer and probably every summer until the government puts in place plans or processes to prevent that.

When I read this report, particularly the early part of it and the minister's foreword, I thought it sounded very much like an election policy document. In the two and a half pages of the foreword of the report we read no less than five statements like 'The Bracks government will initiate consultation', 'The Bracks government will work with market participants', 'The Bracks government will act to strengthen the accountability', 'The Bracks government will facilitate the development of' and 'Actions the Bracks government will take to ensure'.

That sounds like a policy document to me. I wondered if this was the government's new policy document on the security of electricity supply. Politics should not play any part in such an important issue as this. We can talk about the government's intentions and substantiate our comments but some of the terms used by the

minister in her foreword were unnecessary. They made the whole thing sound a bit farcical and more like a policy document than a responsible approach to an emergency situation in this state.

There was a strong emphasis in the report on promises to do things, but we as a public are becoming increasingly sceptical about what this government actually gets done. I appreciate the minister's comments this morning. She outlined some of the things the government is doing or has commenced doing. That is fine, but her response to the question on 6 September gave few details about how the government was responding to this task force report. The government may have started some of these things but we will wait and see. The jury is still out because I think the government is quickly developing into a 'gunna' government; it is gunna do this and gunna do that, but the achievements are yet to be put on the board.

Before the numbered pages of the report there is a section headed 'Summary of key Bracks government actions'. It lists 18 dot points under headings like 'Review electricity market arrangements', 'Facilitate new investment', 'Encourage demand-side participation', 'Analyse brown coal use options', and 'Foster energy efficiency'. The minister's answer on 6 September referred to but one of those 18 dot points. I think the minister referred to the dot point that says:

Encourage demand-side responses through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria education and communications program.

This was the dot point under which the minister announced the advertising campaign to encourage conservation of electricity during periods of hot weather. There are 17 other key actions of the Bracks government that were not addressed in the minister's answer. I appreciate the minister's comments this morning when she told us that the government is taking some of those key actions. We welcome that. However, I should have thought that some of those other key actions were even more important than the advertising campaign we heard about on 6 September.

I turn now to page 4 of part 1 of the report entitled 'Meeting Victoria's future power needs'. Earlier I referred briefly to the issue of the forecast supply and demand. The report shows very clearly in graph form that come 2001-02 we will have electricity shortages in Victoria. In the explanation to figure 1 on that page the report says:

The forecast indicates that Victoria needs a small amount of additional capacity (or to reduce demand) as early as summer 2001-02 to meet forecast peak demand plus the

recommended reserve margin. By the summer of 2002–03 we have a significant reserve margin shortfall. By the following summer (2003–04) Victoria may have insufficient capacity to meet peak demand.

That is without any reserve whatsoever. They are the alarming trends that have come out of this report. These are things about which Victorians are concerned, particularly dairy farmers who in February were caught halfway through their milking cycle when the power was suddenly cut off without warning. The animals suffered because milking could not continue. Those are the real issues we have to face, and I appreciate that some of the report goes to those matters.

I turn to page 7 of the report, which states:

The Victorian government believes management of electricity demand, rather than augmentation of generation or transmission assets, is the most desirable and efficient option to address any peak supply–demand gap in the short term. It also offered other long-term benefits to the Victorian community.

I would agree that, despite the promise given on the spur of the moment by Premier Bracks to build new power stations, we probably do not need a new major base-load power station in Victoria. But I would not agree that we do not need power stations that can be fired quickly and have short start-up times to supplement Victoria's generation capacity in time of need.

The Honourable Philip Davis said at least one generation company was considering investment in a gas-fired power station that can come on line quickly when there is a need. There are probably existing and new generators that would be interested in that concept. It is the role of the government to facilitate and encourage investment in additional generation capacity in Victoria, albeit that it does not have to be a major base-load power station. I do not entirely agree with the comment that we should ignore the possibility of generation that can come quickly on line to serve Victoria's power shortages.

I raise another issue that has been ignored in the debate — Basslink. Part of the report talks about a national electricity market and connections between states. That has potential and means that states can share generation capacity and help each other in time of need. It also promotes greater competition within our system. Victoria does not have a link with Tasmania. It is proposed that Basslink become the transmission link for electricity between Victoria and Tasmania.

I put clearly on the record that the National and Liberal parties have no fundamental objections to the concept of linking Victoria and Tasmania power transmission

but we remain resolute in our attitude that when it reaches Victorian land it must be an underground transmission link. We strongly support the view that we should not have a link that involves the use of overhead pylons.

I should be interested in the government's response on whether a project like Basslink would bring any direct benefit to Victoria by meeting some of its power need during peak summer periods. There is the potential to import electricity from Tasmania at a time when Tasmania has excess hydro power available, but that is unlikely to be the case during the hot summer months. I am not sure whether Basslink will have any direct benefit to Victoria, particularly during hot summers when power demand is at its peak. I encourage a government member to comment on the Basslink project.

Page 10 of the report refers to an essential services commission. The government has made a commitment to establish an essential services commission. We are still waiting for that initiative, and eventually legislation may be introduced into this house.

What role will the commission play in ensuring the reliable, equitable and safe provision of high-quality electricity, gas and water services in Victoria? I am unsure of how that will be achieved and how it will be different from the current function of the Regulator-General. The Regulator-General plays an important role in the electricity industry, and with gas and water coming on line the role of the Regulator-General could be expanded to cover the three utility sections. Perhaps the government can tell us how the establishment of an essential services commission will improve security and reliability of electricity supply.

I turn to the section on renewable energy. I welcome the government's commitment to supporting ventures to increase electricity production capacity in Victoria from renewable resources and welcome the initiatives currently being undertaken in South Gippsland to establish a wind farm to produce electricity. It will be an important economic stimulator to the South Gippsland economy as well as providing additional capacity for generation of electricity in Victoria.

The report makes no mention of solar power, perhaps because it is not always practicable on a large scale, but on a small scale solar power is an important generator. Two weeks ago I was in the Anglers Rest area north of Orbost visiting constituents in the more remote valleys where there is no electricity supply.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — In my province!

**Hon. P. R. HALL** — Indeed I was. I was about 20 kilometres from Falls Creek at one stage. I looked at some of the systems that produce power. There were some excellent solar models that through ingenious measures track the direction of the sun from morning to night. Weights are put on the panel so that it is in position to catch the morning sun next day. The solar panels are relatively small but are capable of providing some 70 per cent of the power need even on the most cloudy days. The supply is often supplemented by small hydro schemes from small creeks and rivers.

One of my constituents in the area, Mr Russell Smith, is prolific with his emails to me. He runs his computer day in and day out on power he has generated, predominantly from solar energy but augmented by some hydro power from one of the small creeks on his property. The report does not mention solar energy. It is important enough for the report to at least have given it some consideration.

I turn to the second part of the report under the heading 'Managing emergency power shortages'. It is a sad fact that we need this section, but it has to be admitted that even with the best of capabilities and intentions it is important to have in place a system that will ensure that if power shortages occur we do not have to go through the fiasco we went through in February, when people suddenly found their power was turned off without warning.

That left some people in a terrible position. Some of my constituents were caught during the middle of milking. When a farmer is trying to milk a 300-head dairy herd and the power goes off halfway through the farmer faces a dilemma in trying to continue to milk. More important, the dairy farmers do not have refrigeration to enable them to keep the milk. Consequently, money is wasted.

People with physical difficulties and older people were in discomfort because they did not know the power was going off. Had they known they could have made appropriate preparations to counter the fact that there would be no power during the day. Effective processes need to be put in place to manage emergency power shortages, and protocols and guidelines need to be in place so that if power shortages are to occur, people are warned well ahead of time.

The minister said guidelines have already been developed, and I welcome policy direction to help Victorians this summer if there are to be power shortages. I would appreciate a copy of those protocols

or guidelines, because it is important that we know what they are so that when power shortages occur constituents can be advised of the processes to be followed.

Page 13 of the report refers to developing effective communications and an action plan that will aim to minimise the adverse impact of load shedding. It refers to a forum involving customer and industry representatives to be held in September 2000 to seek stakeholders' views on the draft plan. Perhaps a subsequent speaker could clarify whether that workshop took place and whether there were consumer and industry representatives present, and that that is where the guidelines and protocols were developed. It is now October so I ask whether the commitment at the September workshop has been met.

The report also says that the procedures will be tested during a dry run exercise with the industry later this year. Again, some information on that point would be helpful. Is a test of the new procedures and guidelines to be developed going to take place? At page 15 the report states that a further dry run industry exercise is scheduled for late November to provide an opportunity for market participants to ensure the revised protocols and systems are in order prior to next summer. That dry run is welcomed because if power shortages are to occur people need to know exactly how and when they are to be informed so that they can make the appropriate recommendations.

They are the main points I wanted to make about the task force report. As I said at the start of my contribution, I welcome the debate because it is an important subject and everyone has had the opportunity to elaborate further than the minister was able to in her answer to the question without notice.

I repeat some thoughts about the report and this issue. We on the opposition benches support any improvements that can be made to the security and reliability of power supplies. It is disappointing that the report still leaves Victorians with the knowledge that they are again going to face power shortages in the future because Victoria has insufficient generation capacity to meet peak demands. It is disappointing that a solution to that situation has not been found.

There is plenty of capacity for the Victorian government to encourage investment in power generation that can come on line quickly during a crisis. That knowledge concerns me, but nevertheless the approaches outlined in the report are probably a step in the right direction and we will watch how the government progresses the initiatives in the report. We

will certainly assist where we can, because we stand together on this issue. Nobody wants to lose supply. However, it is now up to the government. It won the election, it has gone through this process, it has put a report on the table and although I believe the report has some weaknesses, it is a step in the right direction. We will maintain a watching brief to ensure that the government does its job — that is, to make Victoria's power supply more secure and reliable.

**Hon. G. D. ROMANES** (Melbourne) — I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the consideration of the minister's response to a question without notice on 6 September relating to the Bracks government's initiative to improve security and reliability of electricity supply following power shortages earlier this year.

The debate has given the minister the opportunity to outline the comprehensive program and action plan the Bracks Labor government is putting in place to address the issues should a similar crisis arise in the coming summer months. As the minister has indicated, the government will support the motion.

The problem Victorians face is that electricity loads in Victoria increase by approximately 15 per cent for only 1 per cent of the year. As has been pointed out, that situation is largely due to airconditioning being used on the days when temperatures are extreme. It is necessary to address and meet those peak loads. Those demands are unlikely to be met commercially by traditional generation options.

The prospect of building a new, large-scale power station costing hundreds of millions of dollars simply to meet that 1 per cent peak demand at one point in the year is a prospect that consumers would be unlikely to accept, given that the project would probably require increased power bills to finance its construction and operation. It is necessary to look at other alternatives, and the most efficient and effective means of meeting those peaks for that short time in the year is through demand-side or voluntary curtailment of load for commercial gain. The government and the task force have put forward that option as a way of dealing with potential peak loads and crises in the future.

The Minister for Energy and Resources has outlined the action the government has taken on a number of fronts. The minister mentioned that the Bracks government is gathering the information and putting in place the tools and the plans necessary to more effectively deal with any shortages that occur in the future.

Secondly, the government will work with industry and the other state governments to make the national market more accountable to governments and to the community for system security. As honourable members know, that needs to be done in a way that not only improves system security but provides certainty for the market and does not create impediments to further industry investment. So far as possible the government intends to remove any barriers to investment in and development of new generation capacity.

The third element of the action plan for the future is that the government must work with industry and the community towards better management of peak electricity demands. That is a major part of the government's focus to improve security of supply and may at times involve commercially based decisions to reduce demand. The strategy of the government will require widespread support and cooperation of the Victorian community in putting measures in place and changing behaviour so that there is a more efficient use of electricity and at times a limit in the use of energy-intensive appliances, particularly airconditioners, during the periods of peak demand.

The government will enlist the resources and the expertise of the Sustainable Energy Authority to involve Victorians on a mass scale in energy issues and measures that will ultimately change the behaviour of people in this state. That is in stark contrast to the situation under the Kennett government when the situation was left to market forces and the privatisation of the electricity industry. That move fragmented the industry, killed off demand-side management initiatives and priorities and turned the clock back. When the electricity industry was sold off there was no requirement to consider environmental needs in the future, and no demand management plans were put in place.

One company, Citipower, has continued with an environmental unit and an environmental program. The Citipower program was inherited from the former Brunswick electricity supply department owned by the then Brunswick City Council. The continuation of that environmental program was driven by community demand and interest. Thankfully, the program has survived the difficult period of the past seven years.

One example of the policies undertaken by the company is a program in the inner city involving 100 solar roofs. Like many other members of Parliament, in recent months many reports have come across my desk relating to environmental programs now being put in place by various companies operating

in Victoria. Those environmental reports are the beginning of the response to the federal government requirement to generate 2 per cent of power from renewable sources. Unfortunately we lost many years during the 1990s when the attention on demand-side management and the need to produce electricity from renewable sources dropped out of the picture.

The former Kennett government had an appalling environmental record. Earlier this year the house debated legislation establishing Sustainable Energy Authority, which evolved out of the former Energy Efficiency Victoria. The debate revealed that as soon as the Kennett government took office it slashed the budget of Energy Efficiency Victoria and its capacity to work in that area was dramatically reduced. On assuming office the Bracks government doubled the budget of EEV and created the Sustainable Energy Authority, which will take up in an energetic and direct way the vast problems we face in turning around people's thinking. It will provide a focus on the need for sustainable energy and an ecologically aware society, and it will pay particular attention to problems caused in urban areas.

The Bracks government has allocated \$15.7 million a year to the authority to help it develop programs such as the new solar water heating rebate program. More than that, the government has broadened the charter. Not only are the authority's energy conservation programs targeting the reduction of demand for fossil fuel-based energy, they are designed to stimulate and facilitate interest in using renewable energy sources in Victoria.

The authority is extending its advisory services so that practical, independent advice on the efficient use of energy is available to all Victorians. In order to change their behaviour people need to have access to advice at the point when they are interested in buying an energy-efficient appliance or when they are considering whether to change an energy appliance by 1 or 2 degrees. The authority will extend the opportunity to obtain that information and advice to people throughout the state. New Energy Smart Advisory centres have already been established in Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat. Other centres will shortly be established in Wangaratta and Gippsland. Regional Victorians will have local access to the full range of the authority's services. The new centres and this network will form Australia's only statewide advisory network that is specifically directed at energy conservation and renewable energy issues.

Beyond the community there is a need to work closely with business to tackle energy conservation issues. The Energy Smart Business program has been revamped so

that it is a partnership with business. It will help Victorian companies reach world-class standards in energy use, reduce costs and improve productivity. Furthermore, in conjunction with local councils, the building industry and other government departments, the Sustainable Energy Authority is introducing a new Energy Smart Homes program that will implement improved energy efficiency standards for new homes and renovations.

The authority's program involves Energy Smart Builders, which is another partnership program with many of Victoria's leading building companies. These companies have made a commitment to ensure that every home they build meets a minimum 3.5 star energy rating level. In many cases the star rating will be significantly higher.

A further element of the program to reduce reliance on fossil fuels as a source of power and energy is the Green Power program. It will help facilitate the generation and production of electricity from renewable sources and stimulate growth and jobs in these industries. Many organisations are taking up this opportunity because they believe they can make a statement about their commitment to greener, cleaner power.

I am aware that the Moreland City Council's new civic centre was built with priority being given to maximising renewable sources of energy for its operation and for recycling. The council has gone even further and has decided to purchase a considerable amount of the power it uses from green, renewable sources.

The Bracks government will purchase a minimum of 5 per cent of its energy requirements from clean, renewable, green power.

That will make the government one of the largest single green power customers in Australia. The sort of leadership the state needs is that shown by Moreland council. Leaders of the country should be prepared to stipulate that a certain percentage of green power be purchased. In addition, the Sustainable Energy Authority will help facilitate improved energy efficiency in all government departments, agencies and local government through a new Energy Smart government program that sets a target of 15 per cent energy reduction by 2005.

It is interesting that the government has set that target. Although the community knows that various approaches may initially seek cooperation and involvement, whether it be from government

departments, business or the community, the setting of targets is often the best way to realise goals.

I draw attention to the success story yet to be fully told of the Sydney Olympic Games — that is, part of the games bid was to run the cleanest, greenest Olympics yet. That has been achieved in many areas. The ecologically sustainable development principles enshrined in the framework that was part of the Sydney Olympics bid set goals for the Olympic Coordinating Authority for the Sydney games to achieve world leadership in that regard. Recently Bob Symington, the coordinator of Green Games Watch 2000, visited Melbourne. That watchdog body was funded by the federal and New South Wales governments to monitor the commitment of Sydney to a green Olympic Games. He explained to Victorians the many achievements of the Sydney Olympics in greening Sydney and its games facilities, while producing a stunning Olympic Games outcome.

One of the highlights was the Olympic Games village, where various measures were put in place to utilise solar power, recycle water, use whole-of-life cycle materials as the basic materials in construction and development and adopt a whole range of measures that were ecologically sustainable and would place the least pressure on the environment.

As a result, Australia has made huge technological advances in knowledge that will flow to jobs and opportunities in green industries. However, in some areas the objectives of greening the Sydney Olympics were not achieved. One was in merchandising, another was in the use of 3500 vehicles that burnt fossil fuels. The point made by Mr Symington about the enormous achievements in the Sydney Olympics was about the need to set targets, to show leadership and to make every endeavour to achieve those targets for the good of the community.

Through the Sustainable Energy Authority the government has renewed interest in using greener solutions. It is taking the issue out into the community for debate. There is a growing awareness in the community that sustainable energy makes good sense; that, as with the Sydney Olympics, we can have a win-win situation when we save energy. We pay for energy and if we can find ways to incorporate greener and cleaner energy or other alternatives into our lifestyles, we will win by paying less for our power bills.

Part of the advertising campaign mentioned by the minister when she replied to the question without notice on 6 September related to a metropolitan and regional

advertising campaign as part of the government's Energy Smart living program. That advertising campaign will be part of a raft of measures and initiatives designed to change the behaviour of the Victorian community and to educate people about the practical benefits of energy smart practices. The program is designed to encourage the community to play its part in reducing peak demands for energy in the coming summer months.

However, that initiative does not simply relate to preparing ourselves to cope with what is expected to be a possible surge in peak demand and pressure on the electricity supply system in the coming summer months as more people turn to the use of airconditioners, thereby putting pressure on the system. It goes further.

Previously the house has debated the greenhouse gas reduction strategy. The reduction in our reliance on fossil fuels feeds into the greenhouse gas reduction strategy. It is not only part of the work of the Victorian government but is also a federal strategy. Following the commitments made a few years ago at Kyoto the Victorian government has a responsibility to the rest of the world to reduce greenhouse gases.

Contrary to what Mr Philip Davis said, the government is providing leadership on the matter. That leadership is not to leave everything, as the former government did, to market forces and hope everything works out. The Bracks government aim is to look comprehensively at a whole range of issues that need to be addressed, as were outlined by the minister. Beyond that, it means getting serious about demand-side management and encouraging Victorians to play their part in reducing energy consumption and demand — a part that will not only benefit Victorians but also the Australian environment.

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** (Higinbotham) — This interesting debate has given the house an opportunity to deal with the good and the bad, and to congratulate the minister on areas that have been tackled successfully. I remember when the minister answered the question on 6 September. She referred to her report, but in essence the answer to the question, as I recollect, concentrated more on demand-side management and energy conservation. I remember thinking — I may have commented to the minister — that that approach is the right way to go, rather than building new power stations, which was an idea then being canvassed.

Although I will make some critical comments about the report, I must also say that some parts of it are heading in the right direction, for which the minister and the government are to be congratulated. However, I have

some concerns, as do other honourable members, about how the good words will be translated into action, and I will dwell on that at some length.

In talking about energy conservation and alternative energy, Ms Romanes implied that the previous government had done nothing in that area.

**Hon. G. D. Romanes** — I didn't say 'nothing' — I said it cut the budget in half.

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** — The implication was that the previous government had been prepared to let market forces deal with the issue and had neglected an important part of the mix that goes towards meeting supply and demand. That is fundamentally incorrect. The previous government had programs and initiatives in place in that area. Ms Romanes needs to realise that there is a time and a place for everything.

**Hon. G. D. Romanes** interjected.

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** — If you listen I will try to explain. Many alternative energy solutions are often more expensive than the conventional solutions. That is no reason for not pursuing them, but there is a time and a place for doing so. Throughout the 1990s and until very recently there was a significant excess of supply over demand. It would not have made good sense to spend a lot of money on expensive renewable energy options when the excess capacity was so great.

Now that supply and demand are coming back into balance, there is considerable logic in doing so, but honourable members need to always remember the rational, economic and real-world context in which things are done rather than just assuming it is because of some philosophical driver. There is a context in which these things have to take place, and when you have massive excess capacity you do not invest in more. The time to invest is approaching, given the coming shortage. That is the context in which the industry, not just in Victoria but throughout Australia and the rest of the world, was working throughout the 1990s. It is important to put that on the table.

It seems to me that the report of the task force, which is the subject of the minister's response to the motion honourable members are debating today, had two main objectives. The first was to set a scenario that allowed the government to wash its hands of its responsibility for the blackouts in February, and the other was to allow the government to say it had the solutions to those problems in the future. As other speakers have said, they were its two main objectives, regardless of what its terms of reference might have been.

As I said in my opening remarks, it is important that the government, which is responsible for this important industry for the next few years, maintains its credibility. As the shadow minister has said, unfortunately the report missed the mark in its attempt to establish the government's credibility. In fact, I think it did the reverse; certainly that is the message I have received.

As I said, the first objective of the report was to enable the government, like Pontius Pilate, to wash its hands of its responsibility. It also has a Cyclops-like element, in that it takes a totally one-eyed view of the problem. The report tries to spread the blame to everybody else. For instance, it says the government's response to the situation was made more complex by the Kennett government's decision to divide a single distribution system into privatised businesses. That is part of spreading the blame. Any logical analysis of the electricity industry — the house should remember that the report is aimed at people in the industry — will show that that is fundamental nonsense. One need only look at the states to Victoria's north to see that.

In New South Wales, for example, the industry is divided into multiple distributors. I think that state now has something like 16 separate distributors, whereas before the rationalisation it had 64. Queensland has five or six separate distributors, and it does not have any problems. Those states have managed to operate successfully for the past 20 or 30 years with a diversified distribution system. People in the industry know that comment in the report is simply nonsense, and reciting it brings no credit to the Victorian government in an area where it clearly needs it.

The report continues spreading the blame. It says the outcome is a function of the national market and that therefore Victoria is not in control. There are significant and wide-ranging protocols dealing with the national market. In fact, the national market has provided incredible security of supply not only to Victoria but to all people connected to the national grid. There is much greater security of supply in the national market than there would be if Victoria operated in its own isolated area. If there had been no interconnects to other states, we would have had restrictions before this. Blaming the national market simply does not ring true, so that argument does not help the government.

In spreading the blame to everybody else, the report also refers to the National Electricity Market Management Company (Nemmco). The foreword of the report states that the current structures:

... maintain a focus on system security (maintaining the system in a secure operating state) with little focus on reliability (maintaining a continuous supply of electricity) ...

Perhaps I am a little thick, but I find it difficult to see the fine distinction between system reliability, which is ensuring that the system is there to carry electricity, as distinct from maintaining a continuous supply. Believe me, it is pretty hard to maintain a continuous supply if there is no system security because there may be no wires for the electricity to go through. Such fine distinctions really do not help. As someone who has been involved in the industry, I can say that the whole area of system security and the maintenance of continuous supply is the driver of almost everything the industry does. I am not sure whether trying to create an artificial difference helps.

The *Security of Electricity Supply Taskforce Report* goes on to spread the blame around. It says that insufficient credence is paid to community and government concerns and that they are not recognised. I believe the basic concerns of the community and of government are about electricity flowing and system security. Then, interestingly, at one of the dot points the report says that there is not:

sufficient duty of disclosure on market participants thereby reducing the quality and timeliness of information available to the National Electricity Market Management Company ...

One need only look at the continuous flow of documents that comes out of Nemmco dealing with the supply and demand balance across Australia and in each particular state to see that it puts out notices virtually minute by minute at the critical stages. How does it get that information? The same way it has for the past 10, 15 or 20 years. Protocols are in place that says each of the power stations is required to give its availability by looking six months ahead, three months ahead, a month ahead, and that keeps getting refined to a week ahead, a day ahead, and refined again to virtually hours ahead. There is a continuous updating — a massive overkill — of information.

I repeat: one of the most critical things to do in running an electricity system is to ensure that the supply and demand are in balance. That is the absolutely paramount thing anybody in the business thinks about. The report's saying that there are inadequate and non-transparent ways of seeing that that takes place does not do it any justice. The dot points refer to a lack of clarity and roles. The fourth dot point says that there is not:

sufficient clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of all parties thereby reducing accountability.

The participants in the industry are at a loss to understand how that is. More importantly, the report does not actually give any instances. For instance, it

does not say, 'This lack of clarity in this particular instance led to a problem', or, 'There was a lack of clarity in this particular instance'. It just makes a global sweeping statement which, if one looks at the whole systems that are in place to ensure that the industry knows what is going on, just simply does not ring true.

The bottom line can be summarised in one of the end paragraphs of the first part of the report, which comes to the conclusion of what really happened. The paragraph states:

The task force decided that while the supply of generation available to the Victorian community is more than adequate during most of the year —

it says 'the task force decided', so it was a decision the task force arrived at after its great deliberations; it decided that the supply and demand balance was adequate for most of the year but that —

the capacity of the electricity system is tested for short periods of time coinciding with peak annual demand. Although the electricity system currently has reserve capacity to accommodate forecast peak demand, a coincidence of generator plant failure, higher than expected demand, and/or industrial action, can cause a shortfall in supply. This is the reality of the electrical supply system within the national market structure.

I reiterate that it says 'the task force decided'. I have to say that anybody who knows anything about electricity and about this business knows that; that is nothing that has to be decided. For the past 80 years, since there have been electricity systems, peak demand has always been a problem. So the task force's deciding that there is a peak demand problem makes it an absolute laughing-stock. Who does not know that? The industry has always known that, and that situation has been managed by good, appropriate and timely management. That lack of good, appropriate and timely management is why the blackouts took place. Any prudent manager knows that there is always a supply and demand mix and manages the situation so there are no blackouts. So that earth-shattering conclusion unfortunately debases the report.

The conclusions of the first part of the report go on to talk about demand-side management. Peak demand and demand-side management are well known, well accepted and that is the right course. Nobody objects to them. It is like motherhood and apple pie — everybody agrees with that.

My concern with the report is: what will happen? The unfortunate part is that the report is full of good intentions and words such as 'the government will foster', 'the government will encourage', 'the government will clarify', 'the government will

communicate' and 'the government will analyse', but does not specify what the government will actually do or any initiative it will take to find a solution to the problem. It only contains words of good intentions — foster, encourage, clarify, communicate, analyse, and advertise.

More needs to be done. Demand management and conservation are like motherhood and apple pie — everybody agrees with them. But the issue is: how will it happen? Unfortunately I do not see the answers to that in the report.

It has the absolute gall to state in one paragraph that:

... it identifies the available options to address this peak supply/demand situation and to respond effectively to power shortages when they arise.

But what options has it identified? What are its responses? They are simply to foster, encourage, clarify and analyse. Again no specific actions are mentioned.

The report deals at some length with the February 2000 shortages and blackouts, but there is an important omission which has been touched on by others and which I will explore more fully. The report states that during the period of high demand there was load shedding because of industrial action, and so on. For the information of honourable members, load shedding takes place instantaneously after supply and demand are mismatched, and users must be taken off the wire straightaway. Somebody pushes a button on an automated switchboard and great swags of territory are simply cut off from power. It is therefore a serious and draconian action, but if it is not taken the whole electricity system will collapse.

The argument runs like this: load shedding caused problems — that is true — and therefore a better solution to those problems was to put restrictions in place; that rather than initiate indiscriminate load shedding, which cuts off whole pieces of territory, restrictions would be more discriminatory in that essential services to schools, hospitals and so on could be maintained but other services could be cut off. So the government introduced restrictions the following day. There was nothing wrong with that; that was reasonable.

To paraphrase it, the report states that the purpose of the restrictions was to reduce the demand equitably and sufficiently to avoid undesirable involuntary load shedding. It continues:

Successful restrictions will achieve a lower, sustainable level of demand plus some margin of reserve supply, in case of an unexpected contingency, such as a generator failure.

In other words, in setting the restriction level one still needs to leave a bit of headroom so that if something goes wrong there is still spare capacity to take up plant failures. The report spells that out by saying that if the restrictions reduced the demand only to the expected level of supply there would be no reserve available. It states:

In this case, a failure of a generator could lead to an involuntary load shedding, even while restrictions are in place.

That is the key sentence and it is buried in the report. It states further:

During the February 2000 restrictions a reserve was maintained ...

That was eminently appropriate to ensure that no further load shedding took place in Victoria. However, again and quite correctly — it is something that everybody knows — that reserve was not needed because there was no further plant breakdown and the reserve was exported to New South Wales through the normal market functions. That is quite normal — it happens every day. It is absolutely correct practice and everybody in the industry knows that.

But what happened the day after that took place? I am sure most honourable members can remember the venomous and shrill way in which Premier Bracks accused the electricity industry. He implied that the rapacious, capitalist, private sector industry was exporting power to New South Wales when poor Victoria was in the grip of power restrictions, suffering sweltering heat and people were unable to use airconditioners. It was a clear attempt to blacken the reputation of the industry. Honourable members will remember that that was in the context of the industrial dispute at Yallourn, and the Premier was trying to shift blame for the industrial dispute to those 'rapacious private sector generators'.

I am sorry the Minister for Energy and Resources is not in the chamber. She states in the report that it was a normal market function, yet the Premier accused the industry of committing some heinous crime against Victorians. The minister should ensure that the Premier apologises to the industry for that inexcusable outburst. If he is not prepared to do it publicly, for the sake of the government's credibility, the Premier or the minister should at least write to the industry and apologise for what was an absolutely inexcusable and unjust outburst against it for doing what it does every day. The minister's own report acknowledges the industry's actions were perfectly correct, yet the Premier went public on television and accused the industry of doing

something terribly wrong. The report totally vindicates the industry and labels the Premier as a liar. For the sake of her credibility the minister should take up that issue with the industry.

I will jump to the report's conclusion because it again exposes that the report is like both a Cyclops and Pontius Pilate — it is one eyed and washes its hands of the issue. I will quote at some length so that honourable members can see where the one-eyed view of the world starts to develop. The conclusion states in part the earth-shattering story:

This report has identified that interruptions to Victoria's electrical supplies in February 2000 occurred because of the coincidence of three major events: industrial action at Yallourn power station, the high demand on power due to hot weather and temporary loss of generating units at other power stations ...

After a bit more repetition of those three things it goes on to state:

The report has examined a number of key issues relating to Victoria's future electricity supply ...

After yet more repetition the closing sentence again refers to those three things:

When very high demand days coincide with generator plant failures or industrial action, supply shortfalls are possible.

That is the conclusion at the end of a whole series of so-called initiatives of the foster and investigate type — initiatives that will try to deal with those issues. However, let us remember what the three issues were: hot weather, mechanical failure and industrial action. In all those initiatives, fosterings, inquiries and communications to do various things to deal with hot weather, mechanical failure and industrial action there was not one example of fostering, communicating or establishing protocols with the unions to try to create a situation whereby when those three things were happening the unions would ensure the supply of essential services to Victoria.

It is Cyclops-like — it identifies the three issues but does not come up with one initiative or even the tiniest suggestion that we should work towards fostering a protocol with the unions so that in times of stress to the electricity system the unions could back off a bit. Why do we not communicate with the unions and analyse options such as that they do not strike when the electricity system is about to collapse? It is totally one-eyed and shows that the government is wanting to spread the blame on to everybody else. It shows the Cyclops nature of the report.

I will now look at a couple of the recommendations of the report, although they are hardly recommendations because they are all about fostering, encouraging, clarifying, communicating and analysing rather than doing anything; action is remarkably missing from this report.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Run through that list again.

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** — Foster, encourage, clarify, communicate and analyse: the government does not actually do much as it is just fostering, encouraging, clarifying, communicating and analysing.

The Honourable Peter Hall, one of the previous speakers, touched on the fact that all the analysis shows that as we come into 2001–02 the supply–demand balance at the peak level starts to get a bit dicky. I touched on that in my comments to the Honourable Glenyys Romanes, but this comes as no surprise to anybody who has had any involvement in the industry. It has been known for up to 10 years that the supply–demand balance starts to look a bit difficult in 2003 and 2004 plus a year or two. That is when the crunch will come. It is no surprise to anybody that that will happen.

This is the time for action, but what sort of action are we talking about? We have touched on all the usual demand management issues that have been identified over the years. All the issues that have been listed to be fostered, encouraged, clarified, communicated and analysed have been on the books for many years.

I put my comments on stand-by generation on the record in a very positive way. Stand-by generation has enormous potential, which can be garnered if the government is prepared to take the initiative and act. I will tell the house what I think needs to be done. Stand-by generation and, to a great extent, issues of interruptible tariffs and so on are a question of packaging. They must be packaged and they need somebody to put it all together. Everybody says stand-by generation is a good idea, but it is of very low importance to everybody. It is not important to the people who have the stand-by generators in their buildings; it is there but it is no big deal: they have it for their own security and they are not interested in all the hassles of trying to get it onto the system. The distributors do not particularly want it, again because it is a hassle. The pool also does not really want it because it is a hassle — it is all just too difficult. As a result nothing much has happened.

I would like to tell the house about a little electricity utility that I visited some years ago in Utah. It was

called UAMPS, which stands for the Utah — something — Municipal Power Supply; I forget what the 'A' stands for.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Atomic?

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** — No, it was not atomic. It might have been 'Associated' or something like that. That utility supplied electricity to little municipalities spread all over the countryside in Utah, and it did so in a remarkable way. It had stand-by generators in probably 50 or 60 small towns in the backblocks of Utah, some of which are quite remote. All those stand-by generators were on automatic starts, so from the central control in downtown Salt Lake City people at the utility could push buttons and start generators anywhere in the boondocks. It is not highly sophisticated technology. They do it there, and the same thing happens in South Australia, in the backblocks of Western Australia and in some parts of Queensland.

The people at UAMPS put all the separate, diverse generators together and bid that load into the equivalent of the local pool. They knew what it cost to run a diesel generator and they packaged it together as a group. If they could buy power out of the pool for less than the cost of running a diesel generator, they would buy out of the pool. When the cost of power from the diesel generator was less than the pool price, they would push the button on different generators to phase them in. They had enormous power to operate. It was very successful and saved the municipalities which were part of the group a huge amount of money. UAMPS provided some of the cheapest electricity I have ever seen with that very clever technique. It was about packaging stand-by generation into a group that was big enough to be taken notice of in the pool and having somebody to manage it.

If each of those municipalities with their stand-by generators had wanted to go into the system independently they would have been told to go away because it is too difficult and nobody is interested. Any packaging has real value. The government should take the initiative to package stand-by generation throughout Melbourne.

Although I am not one to propose that the government stand in the place of the private sector, somebody has to take the initiative, and it is the government that should package the load. Once packaged it could sell it to the private sector at considerable profit. The situation with interruptible tariffs is similar. Large industries such as Alcoa are not only big enough but also important enough for the utilities and everybody else to be

bothered about. Only a handful of industries are big enough to be bothered, but somebody should take the initiative and put together a package of smaller, interruptible power supplies. Some investment may have to be made, because that is a significant part of the energy equation. Once it is packaged the value is significant. It will not happen by itself because nobody can be bothered.

I turn to where some of the money may be obtained. Under a current campaign the government is providing \$1000 grants for people to install solar hot water services. There is nothing wrong with that — it is highly desirable — but given the crisis we face over the coming years in the supply of electricity the money should be spent in more productive areas.

Electric hot water is not a big market segment. People well remember that during the Longford disaster most people in Melbourne who relied on gas had to forgo showers. In addition, most new houses built over the past 10 years or so have gas hot water services. It is a huge market. One must also ask the question: what do electric hot water services run on? They run on off-peak energy during the night when huge surpluses of energy are available. The \$1000 grant to install a solar-powered hot water service would provide off-peak hot water for a normal household for six or seven years. It would be more sensible to use that money for load shifting and to provide grants for putting in equipment that will ensure that swimming pool pumps, dishwashing machines and so on run at night when they will not be adding to peak demand.

Although the initiative for solar hot water services is good, all it is doing is displacing off-peak electricity. Much can be done, and I hope the government is fostering, encouraging, clarifying, communicating about and analysing those matters and will rapidly take some action. If I had any message for the government from my experience and discussions with those in the industry it would be to get into the packaging business, into stand-by supply and certainly into interruptible tariffs. That would add enormous value and not cost much once it was packaged.

Although I am critical of the Pontius Pilate and Cyclopean nature of the report, in that it tries to wash its hands of the problems and does not focus on the key issues of industrial relations, rather than motherhood and apple pie concepts of fostering, encouraging, clarifying, communicating and analysing, the direction the government is taking is correct.

I encourage the government to continue in that direction. It should take the lead. Although it may cost in the short term, it will not cost in the long term.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Sitting suspended 12.58 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Geological survey: appointment

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** (Gippsland) — In reply to a question without notice from me last Tuesday, the Minister for Energy and Resources asserted that the termination of the employment of the manager of geological survey was a decision of and implemented by the former head of the department. Given that the letter of notice explains that the termination is a consequence of implementing the new government's priorities and was signed by the acting secretary on 13 January, many weeks after the retirement of the former secretary, I invite the minister to reflect on her answer of Tuesday and make a personal explanation.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The honourable member has invited me to address this issue a number of times. I reiterate my response — that is, that very shortly after becoming the responsible minister I was advised by the then head of the department that he had taken the decision that the contract in question would not be renewed. I understand that was something that predated my taking on the responsibilities of minister. I have no knowledge of exactly what occurred during the caretaker period under the previous government when the contract was due to expire.

However, I understand — it is the reason for the other information contained in the question — that subsequently a different decision was taken to extend that contract for a short time. That decision was also taken at departmental level, not by me.

### AFL: grand final tickets

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Jika Jika) — Given the previous statements of the Minister for Sport and Recreation to the house about ticket scalping and the establishment of a government scalping hotline, will the minister now inform the house of the results of that phone-in?

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — The automated scalping hotline for the 2000 Australian Football League Grand Final operated

from 30 August to 4 September. The line provided an opportunity for the public to assist in identifying and quantifying the level of scalping activity occurring in relation to AFL tickets.

The short-term goal of the initiative was to gather additional information and public feedback on the prevalence and extent of scalping activity. An analysis of the comments and information received on the survey line indicates — this point is quite important — that large quantities of tickets are allegedly being acquired from a number of AFL clubs and then being sold through unofficial ticket brokers at highly inflated prices.

Information was also gathered from an examination of classified advertisements in the press and from Internet auction sites. The information showed that the peak number of advertisements appearing in the press was 186 on 31 August, with prices ranging from \$250 to more than \$500, with 56 per cent seeking prices over \$500, and 44 per cent seeking prices between \$250 and \$500.

The survey shows that a minimum of 562 tickets was available during the survey period. At an average price of \$500 those tickets stood to yield a cumulative asking price of \$280 000 for scalpers. Those tickets had a nominal face value of approximately \$11 500.

I am informed by Sport and Recreation Victoria that City of Melbourne by-laws officers issued one infringement notice and eight tickets were confiscated within the environs of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on 2 September. That figure compares with 12 infringement notices issued and multiple ticket confiscations in 1999.

The scalping survey line and associated publicity appears to have had a discernible impact on the physical presence of scalpers at the MCG, with scalpers presumably resorting to less visible means of ticket reselling.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — I appreciate that the opposition is always going to be sceptical about this issue because traditionally opposition members have never supported scalping legislation. They are happy to see that situation continue, as they have always done.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — With the opposition members sitting on the back benches, there will never

be any fear of people scalping tickets to see them in operation!

The next step in developing a strategy to control organised ticket scalping and improve consumer protection for sports spectators will be the preparation of a discussion paper.

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** interjected.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — You do not discuss anything; you just abuse people.

The draft paper will canvass a range of issues, including the feasibility of codes of conduct for the industry. The draft paper will be circulated to the sports and entertainment industry, including the Australian Football League, for consultation to finalise the strategy.

### Public sector: enterprise agreement

**Hon. M. A. BIRRELL** (East Yarra) — Yesterday the Premier advised the Legislative Assembly that the teachers industrial agreement involved payments of \$75 million for performance bonuses. Will the Minister for Industrial Relations now follow the Premier's lead and outline to taxpayers the amount allocated for performance bonuses in the Community and Public Sector Union industrial agreement?

**Hon. M. M. GOULD** (Minister for Industrial Relations) — As I indicated to the house yesterday, the CPSU agreement, which is yet to be endorsed by members of the CPSU and the public service, involves a budgeted 3 per cent pay increase and performance pay based on employees' 1999–2000 performance. The 1 per cent performance pay is based on the managers' assessment of whether employees have exceeded expectations, and the entitlement to a further 1 per cent increase is based on whether they have worked in a superior capacity. The performance pay and bonus will be paid in either a recurrent form or during the bonus period.

**Hon. M. A. Birrell** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I asked the minister whether she would follow the precedent set by the Premier in the Legislative Assembly yesterday when at his own request he outlined the cost to taxpayers of the performance bonuses in the agreement with teachers. I asked the minister whether she would outline the cost to taxpayers of performance bonuses in the CPSU agreement. The minister is not addressing the issue. She may be coming to it, and if that is the case I look forward to her addressing the issue of the cost to

taxpayers of performance-based bonuses in the agreement.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! On the point of order, the question is specific. I know the minister is only partly through her answer, but I urge her to address the specific question.

**Hon. M. M. GOULD** — As has been indicated in the other place by the Treasurer, the 3 per cent pay increase has zero impact on the budget. The 1 per cent performance pay amounts to about \$9 million per annum. The second performance bonus, if paid as an ongoing amount, could equate to \$9 million per annum. As indicated earlier, the second performance-based amount may be paid as a bonus. Performance-based pay is being funded through the savings each department has made and has put aside.

### Cruise ships

**Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA** (Melbourne West) — Will the Minister for Ports advise the house of the scope and possible benefits for Victoria of the coming summer cruise ship season?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I am prepared to stand here for as long as it takes for the house to come to order. It is up to the house.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** (Minister for Ports) — I welcome the opposition's interest in the coming cruise ship season. I am pleased to advise the house that the success of last summer's cruise ship season, during which Melbourne hosted 20 cruise ship visits, is likely to be repeated in the coming season.

Approximately 20 ships are again scheduled to visit Melbourne between October this year and March next year. An increased number of ships will stay for more than one day. Victoria will host more than 30 000 visitors during this season — more than 20 000 passengers and nearly 10 000 crew members.

The 2000–01 season will start earlier than most years, with the arrival tomorrow of both the *Crystal Harmony* and the *Seven Seas Navigator* at Station Pier. Melbourne is benefiting significantly from follow-on visits as a result of ships being at Sydney for the Olympic Games. Other season highlights include the first visit to Melbourne by the *Crown Odyssey* on 10 February 2001 and a return visit by the *QE2* on 12 February. On 13 February three cruise ships will be hosted at Station Pier at the one time.

**Hon. I. J. Cover** — Can you fit them all in?

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — Indeed.

**Hon. G. R. Craige** — Because of the work we did.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** — I will come to that. This season will benefit greatly from the reopening of the inner west berth following the \$17.7 million upgrade to Station Pier. The upgrade offers new facilities and opportunities for cruise ships. The completion of works now provides for four operational berths. Other works include improvement to the roadway at the entrance and the upgrade of utility services scheduled to be completed by December.

Cruise ships invest on average \$1 million per visit into the state's economy. Most ships take on significant supplies of stores and provisions in Melbourne. There is also a range of flow-on benefits to the economy from cruise ship passengers visiting tourist destinations in and around Melbourne.

I am also pleased to note that the City of Greater Geelong is actively seeking to develop facilities for cruise ship visits. I am advised that the city is undertaking infrastructure studies and surveys and is in discussions with cruise ship providers over possible visits. The prospect of attracting cruise ships to Geelong, in many cases before they proceed to Melbourne, offers a great opportunity to boost the economy of the Geelong region. That, of course, is in line with the government's commitment to grow the whole of the economy, including regional Victoria.

### Snowy River

**Hon. W. R. BAXTER** (North Eastern) — I refer to the response of the Minister for Energy and Resources to Mr Stoney's question without notice yesterday and the matter raised subsequently by him during the adjournment debate last night regarding environmental flows in the Snowy River. Bearing in mind the administrative orders the government has outlined in the *Victorian Government Directory*, assigning all acts dealing with water to the Minister for Environment and Conservation in the other place, will the minister advise the house whether she holds an overriding authority to direct water savings made in irrigation districts in northern Victoria to the Snowy River?

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** (Minister for Energy and Resources) — As honourable members will be aware, I was charged by the Premier with specific responsibility for negotiating an outcome for environmental flows in the Snowy River. The administrative orders, which have been correctly outlined by Mr Baxter, remain

unchanged and I look forward, after the conclusion of negotiations with the commonwealth and New South Wales governments on environmental flows in the Snowy River, to working with my colleague, the minister responsible for water, in implementing that settlement for the Snowy River.

### Young Achievement Australia

**Hon. JENNY MIKAKOS** (Jika Jika) — Will the Minister for Small Business advise the house on the ways the Bracks government is supporting young people in small business?

**Hon. M. R. THOMSON** (Minister for Small Business) — The Bracks government is committed to encouraging young people to adopt small business as an alternative career option to some of the more traditional areas encouraged in the school system in the past and to harness their education experience, their innovative capacities and natural enthusiasm to look at small business career options.

One way the government is assisting is through Young Achievement Australia, an organisation that has operated for more than 20 years. In previous years the former government gave \$10 000 to assist the running of the program which assists young people to create projects and to develop business enterprises and which gives them hands-on experience in creating businesses — from establishing business plans, marketing, selling shares, the product and, where necessary, product manufacture. I have been fortunate enough to have visited some of the businesses or enterprises to see what they are selling and marketing.

I am pleased to announce that this year the Bracks government has increased to \$50 000 its funding to Young Achievement Australia to allow for the creation of 10 new regional projects so that young people in regional and rural Victoria can participate in this worthwhile exercise.

There are two components to Young Achievement Australia: one is a project run by tertiary students; the other is run from secondary schools. The project provides experience for a variety of age groups and gives them the capacity to be innovative and creative.

I was pleased to be able to launch the Pakenham group's business product, which was a recipe book entitled *Off the Grapevine*. The group's members talked to Victorian winegrowers about wines to complement the recipes in the book. It has been a good experience for students because they had to negotiate with the winegrowers not only for them to contribute their expertise about which wines should be drunk with

which food but also the winegrowers had to pay for the privilege. As can be seen from that one group of young entrepreneurs in the making, the participants of Young Achievement Australia, the young entrepreneurs of the future, are certainly developing well.

**Women: small business finance**

**Hon. W. I. SMITH** (Silvan) — The government has acknowledged the special role of women in small business and in its policy commitment at the last election it promised to promote and encourage better access for women to finance from banks and non-financial institutions. Now that the government has had 12 months to fulfil that commitment, will the Minister for Small Business advise on programs she has initiated to meet the election promise and give women better access to finance from banks and non-financial institutions?

**Hon. M. R. THOMSON** (Minister for Small Business) — I thank the honourable member for her important question. Access to finance for small business generally is difficult at the best of times. I have had conversations with a number of women’s business organisations about the way small businesses, particularly those involving women, develop relationships with banks and financial access points.

The government is now looking at ways to enhance the way women and small business in general communicate with those from whom they seek financial assistance or loans. The government is conscious that there are a number of pressure points on small business, including the start-up phase, particularly for women. There is also concern about the next stage of development, where a person may have a successful small business but is looking at extending it and experiencing problems gaining access to finance.

From discussions the government has had with small business it appears one of the problems is of communication. The government is looking at utilising women in the finance sector to develop options and ways that communication and relationships can be built with their financial institutions, so businesswomen can easily approach those institutions.

**Industrial relations: task force**

**Hon. D. G. HADDEN** (Ballarat) — I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the recent industrial relations task force report. Will the minister inform the house of the key concerns expressed in submissions from rural and regional Victoria?

**Hon. M. M. GOULD** (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The industrial relations task force report made a number of recommendations, some of which affect regional and rural Victoria. As part of its process the task force held 11 public hearings, 5 of which were held in regional Victoria — namely, at Geelong, Ballarat, Mildura, Traralgon and Bendigo. Employers and employees, farmers and small businesspeople were among the approximately 400 locals who attended the public hearings.

The task force heard first-hand how people in regional and rural Victoria have been doing it tough. They not only spoke about the pressures of low wages but they raised concerns about their small businesses and farms. A number of farmers made submissions to the task force hearings. Employers and employees at the hearings were deeply concerned about the lack of services to advise employers and employees of their rights and obligations in the workplace. The task force found that that lack of information and support have been dramatically affecting regional and rural Victoria because 60 per cent of Victorian employees in regional and rural areas have no award coverage.

So 60 per cent of the work force in regional and rural areas is not covered by any awards, even though it represents only 30 per cent of the working population. The federal workplace relations inspectorate operates only in Melbourne, Geelong and Bendigo. The task force discovered a consistent theme running through the forums — the need for a renewed focus on providing clear information to employers and employees and an increase in the resources that are available to them. The report recommends improvements in a range of areas, including fair standards of employment for employees.

That is a task force recommendation that the government will consider, and I look forward to reporting to the house on that in due course.

**Winton Motor Raceway**

**Hon. I. J. COVER** (Geelong) — Yesterday the Minister for Sport and Recreation admitted that the government had turned its back on regional Victoria by withdrawing financial support for the Victorian Masters Games in Ballarat — an admission he repeated on radio this morning. Today I refer to Benalla, home of the acclaimed Winton Motor Raceway, and I specifically ask the minister: does he support motor racing at Winton?

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I thank Mr Cover for his question. We have never snubbed regional Victoria — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — And as a government we never will. Mr Cover's interpretation of the answer I gave yesterday is entirely incorrect, so I will clarify that for a start.

**Hon. I. J. Cover** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I refer to the relevance of the answer. The wording of my question was:

I specifically ask the minister: does he support motor racing at Winton?

I could not have been more specific!

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, in the preamble to his question Mr Cover referred to the minister's response yesterday and asserted that the minister had made certain comments or accusations. It is the minister's right, in responding to the question, to clarify that the honourable member had misinterpreted his remarks.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! On the point of order, the minister has just begun his answer. I am sure he will be responsive and will not debate the issue in his answer.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — I thank you, Mr Acting President, for your sensitivity and understanding.

In relation to what I said yesterday and what Mr Cover asked today, I point out that the Victorian Masters Games — I am leading up to Winton as well — was unable to secure corporate sponsorship and had experienced declining numbers. As I said yesterday, the government will address those issues with the games group and with the City of Ballarat to see whether it can be made a biennial event that is linked to and builds on the profile of the World Masters Games, which will take place in Victoria in 2002. In that way we can increase the support for the games provided by the relevant state sporting associations, which is needed to facilitate and enhance the event.

In relation to the Winton raceway, it is my understanding that a number of issues are involved. The Winton raceway has to resolve environmental and planning issues to ensure sustainable operations at the site. I understand the raceway is now conducting discussions with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to ensure that it can resolve those

environmental and planning issues and continue with motor racing events at that facility.

### IAAF Grand Prix Final

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** (Geelong) — Will the Minister for Sport and Recreation inform the house of recent developments in Victoria's upcoming athletics program?

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — Honourable Members may not be fully aware that Melbourne has won the right to stage the 2001 IAAF Grand Prix Final at Olympic Park on 9 September 2001. The grand prix final is the final meet of the year and the climax of the international athletics season.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — These are the details opposition members may not be aware of. At the close of the grand prix season the top eight point-scorers in each discipline gather to contest the IAAF Grand Prix Final. The titles of Grand Prix Athlete of the Year for each discipline and overall Grand Prix Athlete of the Year are decided at this final event, with prize money awarded accordingly.

Worldwide television and media interest is likely to be at a peak for the 2001 grand prix final, following the world championships the previous month in Edmonton, Canada. In 1999 Golden League TV attracted 304 million viewers, and we would expect somewhere in that vicinity when the Melbourne event is transmitted across the world.

The event will raise the international profile of and focus on Victoria in the lead-up to the World Masters Games and the Commonwealth Games. It will help to attract elite international athletes to those and other events in this city, again reinforcing the fact that Victoria is the place to be.

### 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 to questions 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*.

I have answers to questions 609, 774–806, 818–826, 848, 849–854, 858, 859, 866, 916, 917, 921–924 and 957–960.

**Motion agreed to.**

## TATTERSALL CONSULTATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time on motion of Hon. C. C. BROAD  
(Minister for Energy and Resources).**

## INTERPRETATION OF LEGISLATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Second reading*

**Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small  
Business) — I move:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 (the principal act) governs the interpretation of legislation in Victoria. Its long title states that it provides for the construction and operation of, and the shortening of language used in, acts of Parliament and subordinate instruments.

Chief Parliamentary Counsel has requested a number of minor amendments to the principal act.

The bill will allow acts and subordinate instruments to be organised into chapters. Some acts and subordinate instruments, especially large and diverse ones, would benefit from being organised into chapters. Using chapters in large and complex pieces of legislation will help people find their way through that legislation, thus aiding comprehension. Chapters would add a level of organisation above parts. The commonwealth and some other states provide for chapters.

Section 32 of the principal act requires commonwealth acts or statutory rules incorporated in Victorian subordinate instruments to be tabled in both houses of Parliament. This requirement is designed to ensure that any commonwealth acts or statutory rules incorporated into Victorian law are available for all to see. However, given the widespread availability of commonwealth acts and statutory rules in both paper and electronic forms, their tabling in Parliament when they are

incorporated into Victorian subordinate instruments is considered redundant.

Currently, headings to sections in an act or a subordinate instrument are not part of that act or subordinate instrument. It is proposed to amend the principal act to make these headings form part of the act or subordinate instrument in which they are found. The policy behind this reform is that all text in the body of legislation should be interpreted as part of that legislation. It is also proposed that the principal act be amended to make it clear that examples and notes in the body of legislation form part of that legislation. These changes will only apply to acts and subordinate instruments passed after the commencement of the bill. Headings are considered to be part of legislation in Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, and can be used in interpreting legislation in New Zealand.

A number of other minor amendments regarding the status of punctuation, endnotes and indices are proposed. Following the policy that all text in the body of an act should be part of that act, punctuation in acts or inserted by amending acts after the commencement of the act will be considered part of the act. The bill will also make it clear that endnotes and indices do not form part of an act.

The principal act does not define ‘territory’. The bill defines ‘Australia’ when used in a geographic context, ‘territory’, ‘internal territory’, ‘external territory’ and ‘Jervis Bay territory’. These definitions are all similar to definitions in the commonwealth Acts Interpretation Act 1901.

The body formerly known as the Standards Association of Australia is now called Standards Australia. It is proposed to correct this definition in the principal act.

I commend this bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. C. A. FURLETTI  
(Templestowe).**

**Debate adjourned until next day.**

## ANGLICAN TRUSTS CORPORATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Second reading*

**Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small  
Business) — I move:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Anglican Trusts Corporations (Amendment) Bill amends act no. 797. Act no. 797 was passed in 1884 and did not have a short title. One of the amendments contained in this bill will give act no. 797 a short title to make it easier to identify. The short title is the Anglican Trusts Corporations Act 1884.

It is not often that those of us in this house deal with an act that was passed seventeen years before Federation. Queen Victoria, for whom this state was named, was more than half way through her reign in 1884. In Victoria, the population was approximately 500 000.

It was a rough and ready time. Life expectancy in Australia was 47 years for males and 50 years for females. It was a time of bushrangers. Ned Kelly was hanged in 1880.

But it was also a time of prosperity in Victoria. Melbourne and Sydney were linked by rail in 1883. Trams began operating in Melbourne in 1885. As the *Oxford Companion to Australian History* notes, Victoria ‘boasted a varied economy grounded on goldmining, woolgrowing and a strong agricultural sector. State socialism — the provision of roads, railways and water supply, a system of secular primary schools and a network of subsidised mechanics institutes and schools of mines — was a significant contributor to this prosperity and sense of wellbeing. The blend of private enterprise and state assistance was not uniquely Victorian, but in some respects Victoria had led the Australian colonies’.

In the 1880s, approximately half of Australia was nominally Anglican. Although the percentage of Australians that are Anglican has declined over time the Anglican Church continues to be a positive force within the community. I point to the valuable work of the Mission to Streets and Lanes and the work of Anglicare.

The Anglican Trusts Corporations Act 1884 provides for the legal structure under which most Anglican Church property in the various dioceses in Victoria is held and managed. The act enabled each diocese to establish a corporate body of trustees in accordance with the act and provided for the transfer of church property that had been held by many separate groups of non-corporate trustees to the corporate body.

The aim of the main amendments contained in this bill is to enable the dioceses to improve the management of diocesan property.

Under the 1884 act, the number of trustees is determined by the number of trustees that were initially appointed when the diocesan trusts corporation was

first established in accordance with the act. The number differs in the dioceses and varies between five and seven, with some ex officio and some appointed members. It has proved difficult in some cases for the trusts corporations to function efficiently with a restricted number of members.

The bill amends that act to enable a diocese, through its synod, to alter the composition, including the number, of members of its trusts corporation.

There have been occasions when a diocese has entered into arrangements with another denomination for the sharing of facilities, particularly in country areas. The Anglican Church in New South Wales and the Uniting Church in Victoria, in their acts regulating trusts corporations, have power to use trust property for joint arrangements between churches. The Anglican trusts corporations are not so empowered. It has proved difficult to make satisfactory arrangements with other denominations where Anglican property is sought to be used on a joint basis.

This bill amends the act to enable diocesan synods to approve the joint use of church property in appropriate circumstances.

The bill also makes a small number of minor amendments to the act to correct outdated references.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. C. A. FURLETTI (Templestowe).**

**Debate adjourned until next day.**

## CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL and CONSTITUTION (PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION) BILL

*Concurrent debate*

**Debate resumed from 4 October; motions of  
Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations).**

**Hon. W. I. SMITH (Silvan)** — The Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill and the Constitution (Amendment) Bill are flawed — because they are undemocratic. The bills are an attack on, and are not based on, the principles of democracy. They are hurried. They are based on an agreement with the Independents. There has been no community consultation. There is no mandate. And they have come out of nowhere. They are based on political motivation rather than on a democratic process.

There has been no bipartisan discussion seeking agreement on those proposals. There has been no community debate. Compare that to the debate we have had during the past 12 months on changing the national constitution. That debate was long term, consultative and involved the community at every level of government. Victoria's constitution is important and fundamental to the Victorian community. It has given us stability for 50 years.

The two bills before the house reveal the true political agenda. The Bracks government has held government for one year, and now we see the real agenda. What has it done with democracy in its first year? It has sacked the Governor, and now by stealth it wants to sack the upper house. Hidden under the guise of changing the bills is an agenda to reduce democracy and subsequently sack what would be a powerless, useless upper house. The Legislative Council is a valuable part of our democracy. It is distinctly different to the lower house on purpose.

A look at the Constitution (Amendment) Bill reveals that its provisions reduce the term of the Legislative Council to one term of the Legislative Assembly, fix the term of Parliament to four years unless there is a vote of no confidence, and remove the power of the Legislative Council to block supply. The bill is undemocratic. It was John Cain who with bipartisan support in a democratic manner in 1987 introduced the current upper house electoral model. Where is the democratic bipartisan call for change now? Cain used the democratic process but Bracks certainly is not doing so.

The upper house operates as a Senate-style house, providing more reflective and sustained debate on issues. The eight-year term offers stability to the house of review. In established democracies throughout the world — we heard it time and again yesterday — it is overwhelmingly characteristic of upper houses to have differential terms. In Australia the Victorian, New South Wales, South Australian and West Australian upper houses have longer terms than their respective lower houses. Queensland is a classic example this century of a state with no upper house, and we all know of the excesses that the government of the time permitted in the absence of the scrutiny an upper house provides. The existing structure has served Victoria well for 50 years. It has a track record of stability. A Senate-style house enables longer term vision and planning.

Turning to the third point in the bill, which is the removal of the power of the Legislative Council to block supply, history shows that the Victorian upper

house has never blocked supply. In fact, far from being a stumbling block for John Cain and Joan Kirner, during the 10 years in office of the Labor government the upper house passed 1179 bills it introduced and rejected only 36. So 97 per cent of the Labor government's legislative program went through a process of upper house review, debate, and where appropriate, amendment. In fact it was the upper house that exposed the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, Tricontinental and Pyramid scandals of the 1980s. The hidden agenda behind this bill is to reduce the effectiveness of the house of review and to reduce accountability and scrutiny in the lower house. The Bracks government wants a blank cheque.

The second bill is the Constitutional (Proportional Representation) Bill. It provides for a reduction in the numbers of members in the Legislative Council from 44 to 40 and the election of members of the Legislative Council using proportional representation. Again I say it is undemocratic. When taken together the bills are undemocratic. If proportional representation is so democratic and the Premier is really serious about introducing more democracy in Parliament why is he not introducing it in the lower house? If he is so keen about introducing democracy by getting rid of by-elections in the upper house why does he not abolish by-elections in the lower house? The answer is that at the bottom line it is undemocratic.

The aim is to reduce the effectiveness of the Council, to make it powerless. Proportional representation is undemocratic. At present the upper house is elected on a system of one vote, one value. There are fewer Labor seats in the upper house because the community has not voted Labor into more seats. In the *Dictionary of Australian Politics*, 'proportional representation' is defined as follows:

Proportional representation: a system of voting in multimember electorates based on the proportion of votes candidates receive, rather than on one candidate's ability to obtain a majority or plurality of votes cast in a single electorate.

In other words it is not based on one vote, one value, it is not democratic. Proportional representation creates a political system that enables a lone member of Parliament without great support in the community, such as the classic One Nation candidate, to be elected without broad electoral support and to represent a small minority. Currently if the community wanted to elect such a candidate it could. During elections the Greens, Independents and special interest groups stand for election to the Council, but they do not get elected because the community just does not vote for them.

Tasmania is a classic example of where proportional representation has not worked. It failed and was instrumental in ensuring that Tasmania's lower house was gridlocked for many years. It was instrumental in grinding Tasmania to a halt. And it was a Labor government that finally recognised that proportional representation had not worked and abolished it.

The proportional representation bill is also undemocratic in its provision for eight new super provinces, each of which would elect five members and have 10 districts. Can honourable members imagine how well a member would be able to get around those super provinces and how much communication he or she would have with the electorate? Where would be the increase in democracy? Out of the eight super provinces three would be non-metropolitan, which would have the effect of significantly reducing the country voice in Parliament. Where would be the increase in democracy? It would be undemocratic for rural areas because it would reduce the numbers of members and therefore the level of advocacy available on behalf of the community.

Proportional representation introduces inequalities in political expression. It gives minorities a greater political say over the majority of political opinion. The combination of super provinces and proportional representation would simply reduce democracy. The proposed changes would weaken the local voice in Parliament. Eight-year terms give upper house members a chance to be involved in long-term projects in their communities. I have been a member of this house for five years and in that time I have been involved in two long-term projects in my community. One has been a youth employment program that has managed to get jobs for 160 young people. It is an ongoing program and I have no doubt that more young people will gain jobs through it.

I have also been involved in setting up a foundation for kids who are at risk of dropping out of school and leaving home. It has been funded by local business. It has managed to give scholarships to 60 kids, and they will be given a weekend away through an outreach program. It has taken two years to set up that foundation. Had I had to worry during those two years about fighting elections and doing a different style of campaigning in my electorate I would not have been able to concentrate on setting up those programs.

The upper house system facilitates debate, scrutiny and public input, and ensures discussion of issues that are not allowed to be discussed or about which discussion is severely reduced in the lower house. The upper house in Victoria is unique. It has no gag and no guillotine.

There is an ability for each member of Parliament daily to ask a question of a minister, for debate on legislation to proceed in a committee stage and be amended, and for the opposition to be guaranteed three hours every Wednesday to debate motions scrutinising the government of the day. This is truly democracy.

I conclude as I commenced. These bills are undemocratic and are aimed at reducing the capacity of the Legislative Council to function as a house of review and make accountable the government of the day.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** (Chelsea) — I start by saying that there has always been long-term conservative resistance to reform, particularly in Victoria and particularly when it refers to this chamber. We saw an example of that yesterday when we listened to the Honourable Mark Birrell's contribution to the debate, which I felt was very disappointing. I say that because it was apparent that his heart was not in it. Clearly he did not believe half of the nonsense he was going on with. In fact, all he did was follow the unwritten script the conservatives have had for 150 years in Victoria — that is, resist, resist, resist all changes, particularly those that apply to this chamber.

Mr Birrell went to great lengths to refer to a political reporter by the name of Ray Cassin who writes for the *Age*. He particularly referred to some Sunday articles Mr Cassin wrote about the proposed reforms to the upper house. Mr Birrell gushed over the quality of this political reporter in a way I have not heard from him before. I wondered why he was so selective in his quoting of Mr Cassin. When I read this article written by Mr Cassin on 11 June 2000 in the *Sunday Age* it became clearer. I intend to read this into *Hansard*. The article states:

Being misinformed is sometimes a blessing. As several readers have pointed out, the basic premise of last week's undercurrents was false: the existing boundaries of Victoria's Legislative Council provinces do not, as I had claimed, inherently favour the overrepresentation of rural voters. But one of these readers, the former Liberal MLC James Guest, went further. Mr Guest also claimed that the staggered system of elections for the upper house, under which members serve eight-year terms with half retiring every four years, do not favour any party. And, he said, the introduction of proportional representation (PR), under which the size of a party's representation is directly proportional to the size of its electoral support, would result in damage to 'good, fair and honest government'.

I had not discussed the issues raised by the proposals for the use of PR in the Legislative Council elections, and for the abolition of the staggered system so that all MPs face the voters at the same time. I had assumed that anyone with a commitment to democracy would see the worth of these proposals, but Mr Guest's comments suggest my assumption was naive. So my mistake was a happy one, because it has

flushed out views that, if Mr Guest is not alone in holding them, are a serious obstacle to the democratic reform of Parliament.

It may be true in principle that the staggered system has no partisan bias, but it is undeniable that in practice this system virtually ensures a permanent conservative majority in the Council, because of the combined effect of eight-year terms and the concentration of Labor's vote in northern and western Melbourne. For Labor to win enough seats in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs to acquire an upper house majority, it would regularly have to attract levels of support that cannot reasonably be expected in normal electoral politics.

The adoption of four-year terms and PR would break the spell, and PR would have the added merit of providing greater representation for minor parties and Independents, thus increasing the diversity of opinion to be heard in what, notionally at least, is a house of review.

Mr Guest will have none of this. With dubious consistency, he claims that there is no partisan bias in the upper house and that a proper role for an upper house is obstructing the legislative program of a reformist government. 'The fact is,' he writes, 'that most sensible people would be very happy with the idea that a new, untried government coming in with no experience of anything much except being schoolteachers, suburban lawyers and union officials should not be able to change the world until it had learned what the world was about and been given a renewed mandate to govern'.

Just what is being said here? That the real purpose of the upper house is not to review legislation, but to prevent duly elected Labor governments from governing? Mr Guest would presumably shrink from so flagrantly undemocratic a construction of his views, but how else can they be construed? There is only one party whose ranks are liberally sprinkled with schoolteachers, suburban lawyers and union officials.

Mr Guest apparently thinks that people with these backgrounds are devoid of worldly wisdom, and that a government composed of them ought to be elected twice before it could be assumed that the voters actually want it to govern. Does he also think that if another party were to be elected to office — a party whose ranks might, for the sake of argument, be liberally sprinkled with corporate swindlers, Collins Street lawyers and union bashers — their worldly wisdom will be so obvious that the voters' judgment could be trusted immediately?

Again, I doubt that Mr Guest would relish this inference being drawn from his views. But his views nonetheless seem to be consistent with that inference.

The Guest view is a reminder that the original purpose of second chambers was not to review legislation but to frustrate democracy. The house-of-review role is one that second chambers have acquired as democratic ideals got the upper hand, and sometimes — the Senate is a notable instance — performance of this role has made a second chamber an important part of democratic process.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, Mr Smith is reading a huge amount from an article in a newspaper. We have a tradition in this house that members can quote from

newspapers but cannot construct their speeches about what was written in a newspaper article. Mr Smith's contribution to his speech so far has been about 30 seconds; the rest has been quoting from a newspaper article. I ask you, Mr Acting President, to ask him to desist from quoting so much from the newspaper.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**  
(**Hon. E. G. Stoney**) — Order! On the point of order, I encourage Mr Smith to enlarge on the quotes he is making and move on.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I am almost finished. The article continues:

But the Legislative Council does not function as a genuine house of review. It functions pretty much as Mr Guest describes it: Labor governments get 'reviewed', coalition governments get rubber-stamped. Did this fearless house of review object to the Kennett government's nobbling of the Auditor-General, or to its commercial dealings? We can be sure that the Bracks government's legislation will get 'reviewed', though — especially if it is legislation aimed at bringing democracy to the upper house.

Mr Birrell referred to this reporter in gushing terms and as a highly credible political journalist. I wonder what he thinks about that article.

About three weeks ago an opposition member of this house made comments in the local media in my province of Chelsea. Mr Boardman asserted that to remove the right to block supply would set a dangerous precedent. I would argue that the precedent has already been set. A book entitled *Introduction to British Government* written by S. G. Richards in 1978 describes how the House of Lords gave up its right to block supply in 1908. How conservative can members opposite be? Until 1911 the House of Lords had enjoyed virtually the same powers but refused to pass supply and went to the people twice. The King threatened that if the Lords did not change he would knight X number of liberals and they would get the changes through; the Lords suddenly changed their minds. So much for precedent, Mr Boardman: 1908, removal of supply.

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — I only just walked in.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — You got an honourable mention.

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — Did I? Thank you very much.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — Enjoy it.

The current debate on electoral reform has special significance. The details of the subject matter are

important but there is a broader significance. This debate on electoral reform and others on electoral matters show clearly that there is a fundamental difference between the parties political — that is, the Labor Party and the conservatives.

Conservative opposition to electoral reform reveals that the non-Labor parties are, at best, lukewarm towards the principles of democracy and place much more importance on maintaining power and privilege than on establishing and maintaining true democracy.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — Are these your own words or is this a quote?

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — They are my own words. Throughout the history of politics in Victoria conservative politicians have belonged to parties with many different and changing names, but their born-to-rule attitudes have remained unquestioned, and they still oppose electoral fairness and true democracy when it adversely affects their electoral prospects.

Over time the only real difference is that they are now less frank in admitting their prejudice or in using blunter language. They are now less open and honest than their fellow conservatives of former times, and forthright assertions of superiority and the right-to-rule have been replaced by hypocrisy.

**Hon. N. B. Lucas** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, it is obvious that the Honourable Bob Smith is reading a prepared speech. I believe it is fair to read a quotation but he has finished doing that. I have been watching carefully, and Mr Smith is obviously reading the document he has before him. It is obvious that he is reading from a written document. Many decisions have been made by the Chair in this place to the effect that it is not permitted by standing orders for a member to read a speech.

I put to you, Mr Acting President, that a written speech could have been prepared by anybody. The test of a member giving a speech is whether the member can deliver his or her own thoughts. It is common for people to use notes to assist them in delivering their speeches and for members to refer to quotations, and it is logical for the lead speaker to read from prepared notes.

But with the following speakers we are looking to hear from members opposite about their own thoughts rather than having them deliver the thoughts of other people who have prepared speeches for them.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, yesterday I witnessed Mr Birrell

reading from copious notes, just as the Honourable Wendy Smith did 5 minutes ago. I am doing nothing different from that.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**

**(Hon. E. G. Stoney)** — Order! I noticed Mr Smith was reading from notes. Members are expected to put their own thoughts. The lead speaker is allowed to read from notes because he is setting the parameters of the debate. Having said that, the house is tolerant of members referring to and speaking from copious notes, which is a different matter. I ask and encourage Mr Smith to develop his own thoughts.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I appreciate your latitude, Mr Acting President. Throughout the history of the Legislative Council spanning nearly a century and a half, the representatives of the rich and powerful have resisted electoral reforms to make the house fairer and more representative of the people of Victoria. I say we need a fair electoral system.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — Who says that?

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I say we need a fair electoral system. No politician has any doubt that voting methods are important, and at times most of us become interested in what is commonly called the numbers. A healthy democracy needs a fair and efficient collection system so that Parliament will truly represent the citizens. It should be said that a flourishing democracy — —

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, you gave Mr Smith a direction about speeches. He has continued to read word for word and to turn the pages. He never lifts his head from the page. I ask you to tell him to desist from reading his prepared speech.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**

**(Hon. E. G. Stoney)** — Order! I uphold the point of order and ask Mr Smith to express his own thoughts and refer to his notes only when he has to.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — They are copious notes, and I shall continue to refer to them.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I do not agree that they are copious notes. I believe it is a prepared speech, in which case Mr Smith should table the papers and we will see whether they are copious notes or whether it is a speech.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**

**(Hon. E. G. Stoney)** — Order! I again ask Mr Smith to

express his thoughts and not solely to refer to notes or read slavishly from them.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — It should be said that a flourishing democracy needs more than a good voting system. It is essential that all of us — everyone in the community — take a continuing interest in public affairs so that we will not be bamboozled by sensational headlines and slick and superficial television advertisements at election time. Nevertheless, a sound and workable parliamentary structure and a good voting system are essential for a fair and effective democratic system. That is why we need electoral reform. History shows that this house has been biased.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — Tell us how?

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I am about to. I claim to be a practical person, and my main concern is the future, but we cannot decide on changes to our voting system and the structure of government without understanding the past. We must take notice of history and acknowledge the facts and the failures.

The picture we see when we look at the history of the Legislative Council is a miserable one. It has lacked the basic characteristics of democracy from its beginnings in 1850 when Victoria first became a self-governing colony. When it began as a second chamber in the 1850s it was designed as a defender and supporter of the wealthy and the privileged.

I do not intend to go through the whole and long history of the Legislative Council, but to properly consider the current proposals for reform — —

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I refer to standing order 141(e), which deals with a member wilfully disregarding the authority of the Chair.

You, Mr Acting President, have warned the honourable member twice about reading his speech, and he has continued to do so. He is reading from a set speech. He has more than copious notes. In fact, he is not looking around the Council while going through his speech. I request that the matter be dealt with more severely.

**Hon. M. R. Thomson** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, I have been watching the honourable member during the delivery of his speech since you requested that he refrain from reading. He has been looking around the chamber as he has been speaking. I do not believe he has been reading verbatim from a speech but has been referring to notes, which may be quite detailed. This is important legislation.

**Hon. N. B. Lucas** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, I also have been watching the Honourable Bob Smith. I have the advantage of being able to directly watch the honourable member. From my point of view he is obviously reading from notes and has disregarded your ruling. We have now had three points of order rather than two, as my colleague suggested. If the Acting President of this chamber on three occasions gives a ruling and it is disregarded, that is a serious matter. Mr Smith is still reading word for word what is in front of him. The way of getting around that is for him to table the document so we can check against *Hansard* in due course whether that is what has occurred.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**

**(Hon. E. G. Stoney)** — Order! I, too, have been listening very carefully. I believe Mr Smith has improved from reading slavishly to referring to his notes. I partly accept the minister's view on the matter and I am prepared to give Mr Smith one more chance to improve his performance. If not, I will call the next speaker.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — On the previous point of order, Mr Acting President, I ask Mr Smith to table the speech from which he is reading.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT**

**(Hon. E. G. Stoney)** — Order! I am not prepared to allow that to happen at this point. Mr Smith, continuing his contribution.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I do not intend to go through the long and sorry history of the Council but, to properly consider the current proposals for reform, one should look at the need for reform in a broad context. It is true that at times the Council has performed a useful role in debating and proposing amendments to bills.

**Hon. N. B. Lucas** — He is turning the page!

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — What do you do with notes, you fool!

It is sad and shameful that the power of the Council has frequently been misused. Personal, factional and party political tactics have motivated many of the decisions by Council members. Political party tactics have loomed large. The claim that it is an impartial house of review flies in the face of the facts that are plain for all to see. The Legislative Council began in accordance with a British act of Parliament in 1950. That established Victoria as a separate colony. It was an advisory body to the government, which had the real power.

**Hon. N. B. Lucas** — You read out the wrong date.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — You said 1950.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — You can check *Hansard*. It is 1850.

The parliamentary structure of two houses followed a few years later after approval of a constitution for Victoria was given by another British act of Parliament in 1855. In the context of the present debate it is significant that the role of the Legislative Council was already assumed to be that of a watchdog for the interests of the wealthy and the powerful to protect them from possible radical proposals from the Assembly. Those fears may seem odd to us now as we know the original lower house was far from democratic. There were restrictions on those permitted to be members — ownership of property was the main requirement — and restrictions on the right to vote. The qualifications were similar to those required of members, but lower standards of property ownership would suffice compared to members of Parliament. Women did not have the right to vote unless they owned property.

The Legislative Assembly was far from a people's house, as we understand the term today, despite the fears of affluent people at that time. The present-day conservatives may be less fearful than their predecessors, but they still believe the reformist hopes and aspirations of ordinary people may be dangerous and should be restrained.

Why do conservatives oppose reform in the house? A fundamental factor is the attitude and motives of conservative politicians and their supporters. The question is: why have conservatives in the Victorian Parliament been so opposed — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I ask honourable members to stop interjecting and to give Mr Smith an opportunity to find his feet. I urge Mr Smith not to refer to the notes so often. He does not have many chances left, and I urge him to refer to his notes only when he absolutely needs to.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I hope this standard will now be consistent across both sides of the house.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Smith, you will not debate the issue with the Chair. You have the opportunity to speak; I have made a judgment on the issue.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — All honourable members know it in their hearts, including the conservatives in this place — although they dissemble and even the less politically aware among us know it. Labor people know it and say it. However, to explain it we should go back to basics and ask why the conservative party exists.

No-one can suggest that Australian society is thoroughly egalitarian or fair to all. It is not and has never been so. We are certainly not equal in wealth or influence, and those who are extremely affluent and influential possess a high degree of power that is separate and independent of the democratic process, which honourable members opposite regard as a competitor or even as an enemy.

I can only assume that honourable members in this place know exactly what I am talking about. They know the people who support them in this place are the wealthy and the powerful. I have no problem admitting that the people who support members on this side of the house into Parliament are the working class, the middle class and ordinary people — not the wealthy and the powerful. Of course, those people are correct in believing that democracy, the power of the ordinary people, is a threat to them, their power and their wealth. In their struggle for power they seldom admit this publicly; instead they pay lip service to democratic principles.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, apart from the outburst a few minutes ago, Mr Smith is again blatantly reading his speech. I ask you to call the next speaker.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Smith, the Chair has been very reasonable on this matter and I urge you, for the last time, not to slavishly read your notes. I have observed quite clearly that you are reading slavishly from notes and I offer you this opportunity.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — There is no better example of the conservatives' attitude about their position in this house than a report in the *Age* of 1950 that at a branch meeting in Hampton a delegate from the Liberal Party talked about adult suffrage being a mere pandering to the public.

Democracy is a threat to the rich and powerful; that is a given. Members on this side of the house will admit it, but for obvious reasons members opposite will not. They protect their own. In some ways I can understand that. We know who we represent, and we are quite open about it. Members opposite struggle and are incapable of publicly admitting that they are conservatives.

The term 'conservative' is a useful one, and I shall explain my repeated use of it. When dealing with historical matters the use of the specific names of the conservative parties is impractical because they have changed so frequently and have at times been inappropriate or misleading. However, the term 'conservative' is well understood.

The word 'conservatism' is a useful generic term when applied to political parties from the right that oppose the Labor Party. Historically the opposition to the Labor Party from the various conservative parties has taken precedence over their own policies. That is shown by the unlikely coalitions and partnerships that occur.

A well-known example was the merging of the free traders and the protectionists to form the Fusion Party in the early 20th century. Then followed the Nationals, combining dissident Labor people with long-time conservatives. The Bruce–Page government combined city and country conservatives. There was the special relationship between the conservatives and the Democratic Labor Party and the more recent alliances between the Liberals and the Nationals. The word 'liberals' is a misnomer, as is the term 'nationals'.

To say that they are anti-Labor will not do, as there are parties and people who have attacked Labor from various positions. So the term 'conservative' is convenient, because it identifies the main conservative party or grouping, whatever the name adopted at the relevant point in Australian political history.

I now refer to the history of the Legislative Council during the 19th century. Returning from this diversion into party names and tactics, the history of the council to the end of the 19th century showed it was neither impartial or helpful to stable government.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I ask Mr Smith to desist from referring to his notes so frequently.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — This house has consistently blocked democratically elected governments and prevented social reform. It has behaved that way simply because of the ultra-conservative attitudes of its members, who believed in rule by the so-called upper class. Its performance was contrary to democracy and any fair-minded person of the 21st century would consider it a disgrace. Its disgraceful performance was made possible by its restricted system of election.

History shows that the conservatives of 100 years ago were worried about the trend to extend the franchise. That included allowing women to vote, which was repeatedly opposed by this house. At that time the aims

and identities of the parties were gradually becoming better known. Consequently, the conservatives feared they would have difficulty attracting sufficient votes from the expanded number of votes, especially if they acknowledged their true identity and their aims — a party with policies designed by the privileged for their own benefit.

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, surely five warnings are more than sufficient. After your most recent warning, Mr Acting President, I noticed Mr Smith's change of pitch and tone, but during the past few minutes he has blatantly disregarded your ruling and the standing orders. He is reverting to reading his speech. His language, tone and demeanour changes considerably when he is reading his speech. It is insulting to the chamber and an abuse of standing orders.

**Hon. N. B. Lucas** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, in supporting my colleague I indicate that I have been watching Mr Bob Smith carefully. During the time I have been in this place I have never seen an honourable member so blatantly disregard a ruling from the Chair. In fact, I have never seen an honourable member disregard five rulings from the Chair. I ask you to rule that the honourable member not be heard, given his total disregard for the rulings from the Chair.

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, the honourable member is obviously referring to copious notes. This house often gives leeway to honourable members who follow that procedure. Mr Smith has indicated that that is what he is doing. There is no point of order.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — Further on the point of order, Sir, Mr Bob Smith has blatantly disregarded your directions and the standing orders and has abused the procedures of the house. Extreme measures can be taken against a member who continually disregards the rulings of the Chair. For example, he may be suspended from the service of the house. I am not prepared to let Mr Smith abuse the privileges of the house. I have served in this place for 12 years and I have never before seen someone warned five times. If it is necessary, I will move a motion that Mr Smith be suspended from the service of the house.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! The Chair has been extremely lenient, but I warn Mr Smith that if he continues constantly to read his notes I will have no option but to name him. He has disregarded the rulings of the Chair. I remind him that he may refer to his notes, and when he has done that he has performed

well, but he is not entitled to read his speech. The house will not allow that. Mr Smith has one more opportunity. I am sure he has the capacity to do what I am asking, and I invite him to do so.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — Obviously I am rubbing the opposition up the wrong way. They are being cut to the quick. They have kept from the public domain what they really stand for. That has been their history. They have hidden behind the term ‘conservatives’. That is why there have been so many name changes to their parties over the years. They have ignored the political realities of the times, but instead have looked after their own interests. That has been the case since the inception of this place. I am pleased that my comments are forcing the opposition to come out into the open.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — Tell me the name of the left-wing academic who wrote that stuff and sit down.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — You do not know me very well, Mr Boardman.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I am sure Mr Smith has the capacity to make his contribution without reading notes.

**Hon. R. F. SMITH** — I have specific references about the performance of the conservatives to which I want to refer. It is difficult to do that without referring to my notes. I note the inconsistent approach of the honourable members opposite yesterday and today.

Yesterday Mr Birrell referred to a newspaper article that said the proposals from the Bracks government would enhance and improve the likelihood of better representation for rural constituents, but that was vehemently denied in almost screeching terms by Mr Hallam. Mr Hallam should read the article of 20 August to discover that the Labor Party’s proposals enhance opportunities for rural and regional Victorians.

In the spirit of goodwill and in recognition of your leniency with me, Mr Acting President, I choose to provoke you no longer. I am not fussed whether I provoke opposition members. I have probably got across the message I intended to transmit — that is, not only in this state but throughout Australia the Liberal Party represents the rich and the powerful. Its members do not want to give up what they have here — namely, the right to control Labor governments. I am happy that I have got that message across. Having said that, I commend the bills to the house.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** (North Western) — I am pleased to contribute to debate on the bills. My speech will be divided clearly into two separate components because I expected each bill to be debated separately; therefore, I prepared separate contributions.

During my contribution I will establish clearly and with a range of information how this house has acted as a house of review and how it has been used by the opposition parties of the day to their advantage by highlighting the deficiencies or scrutinising the legislation of the government of the day.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill purports to do three things. Firstly, it wants the Council to have the same four-year terms as the Legislative Assembly so that all members of Parliament would go to an election simultaneously. Secondly, it fixes the term of Parliament at four years. I am happy with the prospect that terms are fixed to established or identified dates to provide certainty not only for members but also so that party supporters, branches and the electorate may gain transparency on the performance and ability of the government of the day to deliver on the policies enunciated in the lead-up to the election. I am not fazed that that component of the legislation is to be agreed to at a later date so that four-year fixed terms will be established in Victoria. That is my personal view and I would welcome the measure.

The third component of the bill aims to remove the ability of the Legislative Council to scrutinise the financial performance of the government of the day. That component has been used effectively over the years. I particularly remember when I was elected to Parliament in 1988 that the whole agenda during the four years 1988–92 was to question the financial performance of the government, how it was managing the state’s finances and to scrutinise the way it was managing the state’s debt. The then opposition identified that aim as one to be highlighted in this house. It used it as a mechanism to inform the public on how the then opposition was monitoring the government of the day.

That is an important aspect because, as I will point out later, once one identifies a tactic or an area that one believes is sensitive to the government, the opportunity becomes available for a strategy to be formulated. The election result of 1999 reflects that statement because between 1992 and 1999 the then opposition, now the government, identified the strategy it intended to adopt. It aimed to scrutinise the government on its legislative program. Without question, the 1999 election result confirmed that the ALP was successful in using this

house to defeat the government of the day at that election.

That provides overwhelming evidence of the effectiveness of this chamber. Regardless of the numbers in the chamber — I will refer to that later when I move through the way numbers in different parties in the house have changed — the procedures of the house give oppositions enormous opportunities to scrutinise and review the performance of the government of the day. I am not concerned about individuals or about my position as the representative of North Western Province, but as part of Victoria's bicameral system the institution is more important than the individual.

The forum this chamber provides to opposition parties through sessional orders and standing orders gives the opposition the opportunity to review the performance of the government of the day. It is interesting, particularly given Mr Bob Smith's contribution — —

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — You would have thought he could have shown some courtesy by remaining in the house and listening to your response.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — I am a little disappointed, Mr Baxter, but I have suffered disappointment before in this place.

The ALP members are criticising or complaining about the way representatives are elected to this house. They say the election process for this house is undemocratic. That is outrageous, particularly given the fact — it is important that facts are put on the table — that during the 1980s former Premier John Cain provided the legislation that saw the establishment of single-member electorates and gave voters in province seats or Assembly seats the opportunity through the same voting system to choose the members they want in both houses. The ALP of today created the rules by which people are elected to this chamber. The bottom line is that if you cannot convince the electorate, you do not win the seats. If you do not win the seats, those who win them have the opportunity to mount arguments on the performance of the government of the day.

This is not the first time the ALP has attacked the role of the Legislative Council in Victoria. I am reminded of that because, like most honourable members, I have friends on all sides of politics — some closer than others. One of the adages most famous within the ALP is that if you cannot control it, wreck it. That is not an unkind saying of the ALP.

**Hon. J. M. McQuilten** — I have never said that.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — You are a gentleman, Mr McQuilten, you would not say that, but some members in the party and its factions live by that adage — that is, if you cannot control it, wreck it. A symptom of the ALP is that it is factionalised and very much concerned about control. But the nature of the bicameral system in Victoria, with its two houses elected using the same voting system, means that as an individual member or a candidate you have to convince the people to vote for you so you can take your seat as a member of Parliament.

The two-member electorate system provides country Victoria with a good opportunity of having local representation. As a colleague who shares North Western Province with me, I know that you, Mr Acting President, also travel an enormous number of miles servicing the four lower house seats in our province. That is the expectation country people have. They demand that their local members are locals, and the need for members to be accountable and responsive to their own electorates is paramount in their thoughts.

Many of our predecessors have created high expectations among country communities about the level of representation that is required. I know of the wonderful work that the Honourable Bill Baxter has done over many years, and I also commend the work of the Honourables Ken Wright and Bernie Dunn — former members of Parliament — and the Honourable Roger Hallam, all of whom have served not only members of the National Party but their electorates extremely well.

The National Party has demonstrated that when its members service their electorates they get results. I will give an example of the dynamics at work in our society when I discuss proportional representation, because in my province there has been a dynamic demonstration of democracy at work. The representation of all the lower house seats has changed, except for the honourable member for Swan Hill — —

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — And he got very close.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — Yes, much to our chagrin things got close in the last election.

I refer to the opportunity that exists for upper house members — and I shall cite some history — to review the performance of the government of the day. I am particularly concerned about the suggested change to the sessional orders in the lower house, because currently the two chambers work very differently.

The Victorian upper house system is similar to the systems used to elect the upper house in New South

Wales, where members' terms are staggered, and the South Australian upper house. The majority of parliaments across Australia have upper houses the terms of whose members are staggered. That provides an important foundation for ongoing representation, as the Labor Party learnt between 1992 and 1996 — and I shall refer to that shortly.

The proposed changes to the sessional orders in the other place mean that our colleagues in the Legislative Assembly are adopting a more strident system that will restrict their ability to debate issues and review government legislation. There is a suggestion that the sessional orders will be changed to such an extent that sitting times will be reduced, thereby creating the potential to truncate debate. That would only add to the problem Assembly members already have as a result of debate on bills being guillotined at 4.00 p.m. on Thursdays. That means the ability of the Legislative Assembly to scrutinise the government of the day is already limited. Often bills are passed by this house without being debated in the lower house. Again, in that situation this house has the opportunity of reviewing government legislation.

I am concerned that the Premier is expressing an opinion that is at odds with his statement about openness and accountability. Already, as I said, legislation often comes to the Council without having been debated in the Assembly. If the proposed changes to the sessional orders in the other place further restrict the Assembly's ability to debate issues, that will only highlight the need for the Legislative Council. By its own actions, the government is confirming the relevance of the upper house and the need for it to increase its scrutiny of the legislation of the government of the day. It is hypocritical of the government to push for a review of the way upper house representatives are elected, particularly when that is at odds with the majority of upper houses across the commonwealth.

Commonwealth senators are elected for two terms of the House of Representatives. Upper house members in New South Wales are elected for two Assembly terms. South Australia has a system similar to Victoria's, where upper house members' terms last for a minimum of six and a maximum of eight years. The upper houses of Western Australia and Tasmania are able to reject supply. The majority of Australian states have an upper house system similar to Victoria's.

It is important to remind inexperienced or new members — not only in this chamber but particularly in the Assembly, where some have not yet had the opportunity of seeing the colour of governments change — that the current model of legislative scrutiny

provides for changes in government. It is important that we continue to have the opportunity to raise issues of the day and to demonstrate how important the Legislative Council is in being different from the other place.

It is worth putting on the record some of the things members of the Legislative Council do differently. We have the opportunity of sending any bill off to a committee for review and, in fact, of forming our own committees. I am privileged to be part of the Economic Development Committee, which is chaired by one of my Liberal colleagues from Eumemmerring, the Honourable Neil Lucas. The committee was established during this term of Parliament to examine economic development opportunities and government performance.

Since I was first elected to Parliament in 1988 members have had the opportunity of asking 10 questions during question time. That is unlike the experience of our colleagues in the other house. I was absolutely staggered when I discovered that the government of the day was able to get away with answering so few questions in the other place. Ministers in this place are scrutinised. I know from personal discussions with my colleagues the Honourables Roger Hallam and Bill Baxter that ministers do not always like it. The opportunity exists for opposition members to scrutinise ministers, and ministers are in the chamber every question time to answer questions.

A vastly different experience also exists in the Council during the adjournment debate. Every evening, particularly since we were relegated to the opposition benches, the opportunity is there to raise adjournment issues. When their party is in government honourable members have the ear of the minister and can arrange deputations; they do not need to raise issues publicly. They can organise in a far more orderly manner the opportunity for aggrieved or concerned parties to have access to a minister. In opposition honourable members do not have that luxury and need to have the opportunity of raising genuine issues of concern with ministers on behalf of their electorates or the shadow portfolios for which they have responsibility.

In this house the ministers, to their credit, are all available and all give answers, unlike in the Assembly where one minister will take all the adjournment issues — of which I think there are only five from each side every night. Last night in the Council I believe about 17 issues were raised.

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — And that was a short night.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — That was a quiet night. I sometimes sympathise with the ministers. In reality that demonstrates a transparency and a forum that is unique to this place. It demonstrates how this place is unique and is important for the democracy of Victoria. As I have said, it is not the individual who is important; it is the institution — a theme I will repeat throughout my contribution.

What has been most effective for opposition parties in this house has been the Wednesday morning 2-hour opposition business opportunity to raise notices of motion. Unquestionably, it was the forum the conservative side of politics used between 1988 and 1992 to highlight the financial mismanagement of the former Cain and Kirner governments — and used effectively. I will refer to those notices of motion shortly.

That opportunity is restricted in the Legislative Assembly. Apart from grievance days that opportunity has not been available — until recently, with members now being allowed to make 90-second statements; although having read some of those statements I am concerned that the time is becoming more of an opportunity for members to say thank you rather than raise issues of concern.

That highlights the opportunities that exist in the Legislative Council and the differences between those opportunities and those that exist in the Assembly to make the government of the day accountable. I am concerned that so many members of the Legislative Assembly believe in their heart of hearts that that chamber is the only chamber that should exist. That is a concern, because I do not believe it provides opportunities for review, for access to ministers, and to raise questions on notice. Honourable members should not forget that under sessional orders ministers in this house are required to answer a question on notice within 30 days of its appearing on the notice paper, unlike the Assembly, where they can be unanswered for the whole session.

Unequivocally, this place provides greater opportunities for opposition parties. That highlights the point that is the burr in the saddle of the Premier. I congratulate government members who were part of the former opposition because they effectively used this forum to defeat the former government. It was the Wednesday morning sessions that proved so successful. I do not say that everything that was said during the notices of motion was accurate, but as we know in politics, perceptions mean a lot in the community.

I will take the house on a bit of a history lesson. Having provided some commentary on the opportunity that exists for moving notices of motion on Wednesday mornings, it would be remiss of me to not refer to some of them, particularly those that occurred between 1988 and 1992 which attacked the government financial records. I will not hold up the house by referring to every notice of motion that I have marked, but I would like to personally thank the papers office for the work it has done in helping me research the whole issue. This issue alone demonstrates how important Wednesday morning business is for opposition parties and how it has been used for the benefit of both sides.

Between 1988 and 1992 in opposition we moved a number of motions. In October 1988 Mr Birrell commenced to move motions about the FOI legislation which questioned the government's honesty and preparedness to provide information to the then opposition, and to change the FOI laws, highlighting the issue of freedom of information and its importance in good government.

Mr David Evans, whom I remember fondly as a fierce advocate of conservation issues, raised issues concerning what was to me one of the most emotional issues of that time, between 1988 and 1992 — the Land Conservation Council recommendations for expansion of the Wyperfeld and Murray–Sunset national parks. That caused the National Party some pain. Other members of Parliament moved many other notices of motion.

In November 1988 when in opposition Mr Hallam moved motions about home ownership, interest rates and sporting club rentals, and Mr Birrell moved motions on the independence of the Auditor-General and on the management of the state. In early 1990 we started to increase our scrutiny of the government and looked into the State Bank and VEDC cover-ups.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — We remember that.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — We have been here long enough, Mr Baxter. We do remember it.

We looked at the Auditor-General's inquiry into the State Bank, and also the fire sale of assets of the then state government to fund its commitments under the state budget.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — And the borrowing of money to pay wages every week.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — Exactly right, Mr Smith; that came a bit later, and I will refer to it. In 1989 Mr Baxter moved a motion that brought the government's

attention to the rural crisis in Victoria and its effect on the state economy. It is amazing how history repeats itself, as I will show in a more colourful manner shortly.

In November 1990 Mr Rod Mackenzie — the Independent, as claimed by Mr Smith, even though he was elected as a Labor member and decided to become an Independent after falling out with the Labor Party — moved to establish a select committee to investigate the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society. No more devastating an impact has been felt in the city of Geelong than that felt when Pyramid went under. It was a very sad occasion from which it has taken the city an enormous time to recover.

**Hon. R. M. Hallam** — We had a couple of grand final losses that were pretty tough.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — I do not think I want to get into football, Mr Hallam.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** interjected.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — You can add that to your contribution, Mr Smith. I am just putting on the record the issues that are of concern to me.

Other issues raised included the one raised by Mr Hallam for the Auditor-General to undertake an inquiry into the funding arrangements for the World Congress Centre.

Another issue was unprofessional and deceptive practices surrounding the management of the state debt. The then opposition moved to establish a select committee to look at government contracts and tendering arrangements for those contracts. I was a member of the committee representing the National Party, together with the Honourable Geoff Craige and the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, who was chairman of the committee. So far as the transport area was concerned the then Labor government minister, Mr Peter Spyker, was reluctant to attend a hearing of the committee. Mr Chamberlain had to move a substantive motion in this place to encourage the minister to attend.

The former Minister for Health, the Honourable Rob Knowles, was looking at issues associated with his then shadow portfolio, particularly the disastrous home loan schemes established by the Labor Party during the mid 1980s, including HOLS, the home opportunity loan scheme, and SHOS, the shared home opportunity scheme.

Rather than go through all of the notices of motion between 1988 and 1992, I will refer to only one. It was to move:

That this house deplores the reduced priority given to road funding by both the commonwealth and Victorian governments, and calls for a fairer distribution of the vast sums raised from motorists to address the serious decline in the standard and effectiveness of the Victorian road network in general, and the local roads category in particular.

Does that sound familiar?

**Hon. R. M. Hallam** — It does to me.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — It does to Mr Hallam, because on 22 November 1998 Mr Hallam moved that motion. It has as much relevance today as it had then. Between 1988 and 1992 the then opposition moved motions that questioned the financial management of the state, the State Bank cover up, the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and Tricontinental scandals, the government's management of the state debt, the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society, the funding arrangements for the World Congress Centre and the review of home loan schemes established during the 1980s. The election result in 1992 was overwhelming because, again, the then opposition used the forums afforded by this house to maximise its opportunities by scrutinising the then government's financial and overall performance. When in opposition between 1988 and 1992 the Liberal-National coalition used the house effectively to help it win government.

The question arises: how did members of the former opposition use this house between 1992 and 1999? I have to answer that they used it very effectively. I congratulate them on that because they used the house to point out the shortcomings of the government of the day. That is what this house is for. In 1992 the Honourable Caroline Hogg moved a motion regarding the state deficit levy. We all remember that. It was not popular and it caused much pain. The Honourable David White passed motions on the privatisation of the Transport Accident Commission. The Honourable Theo Theophanous moved motions condemning the government for the closure of the Accident Compensation Tribunal and its transfer to the Victorian Workcover Authority. Mr Nardella moved a motion to do with the closure of schools. From 1992 to 1999 there was a range of motions that highlighted the shortcomings of the former government.

**Hon. R. M. Hallam** — The claimed shortcomings?

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — I apologise for my loose terminology, Mr Hallam. I should have referred to the claimed shortcomings of the former government.

Former opposition members challenged the former government over its policy directions on issues such as the state deficit levy, privatisation of the State Electricity Commission, hospitals, school closures, the health system, the Auditor-General, changes to the Workcover system, local government amalgamations and the casino tendering process — and don't we remember that? I find it illuminating that during debate of one of those substantive motions that are moved on Wednesday mornings — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! The Leader of the Government and the Honourable Ken Smith will remain silent. The Honourable Ron Best will continue, without assistance.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting President. Former opposition members did not know the facts and some of the claims they made were not based on any real information but on innuendo and rumour. However, perception is everything in politics.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — And they flushed out a few facts.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — Yes, and as the Minister for Industrial Relations attests, the casino contracts have been released and there is nothing untoward in them. But the then opposition foreshadowed notices of motion on the ills of gambling and the reliance of the government on the gambling income from poker machines. It castigated the government for its reliance on gambling revenue when, as history attests, it was the Labor Party that introduced the legislation for the establishment of the casino and the introduction of gaming machines.

The then Labor opposition also questioned the former government over the money that was spent on the grand prix. In one of his notices of motion the Honourable David White called for the sacking of Mr Ron Walker. He demanded that Ron Walker be sacked! It is interesting that not only has Ron Walker remained as the chairman of Melbourne Major Events, he is still on behalf of this government proactively trying to attract events to Victoria.

Labor also attacked the then government over Intergraph and the Metropolitan Ambulance Service, yet only this week the government has moved to change the terms of reference of the inquiry. Again, perceptions mean a lot in politics. The then Labor opposition attacked the Kennett government over the use of credit cards and the tolls on the City Link

project. The reality is that those attacks and assertions were sufficient to convince a number of people to change their vote and support candidates other than conservative candidates.

In conclusion I remind honourable members, particularly members of the Legislative Assembly, of the value of the Legislative Council. Regardless of the side of politics from which you come this house provides a wonderful opportunity for scrutiny and review of the government of the day, and it is incumbent on oppositions to use their opportunities effectively. I have been here sufficiently long to know that is the case, having seen the government change in 1992 and 1999.

I can understand why the Premier has a burr under his saddle. He does not want the scrutiny. He does not want this chamber questioning what he does. He does not want members of Parliament from the opposition questioning the government's policies and the implementation of them.

I find it enormously interesting that once again we have a government that purports to be open and transparent — and it is trying to say it often enough so people will believe it — but is acting in a heavy-handed way in trying to get rid of representation in the Legislative Council. The fact is the Premier has sacked the Governor.

*Government members interjecting.*

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — The fact is the government wants to change sessional orders to truncate debate in the lower house. The government is also looking to dismantle the opportunity of this house to scrutinise the government of the day. Undoubtedly there is opportunity for opposition members to question the government. This house provides a unique forum — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order!

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting President. This house provides a forum which is unique in that it actually has the opportunity to question the government of the day.

The first purpose of the Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill is to provide for the election of members of the Legislative Council using a proportional representation system. Secondly, it aims to reduce the number of legislative councillors, and thirdly, it provides for the filling of casual vacancies

consistent with the intention of the electorate, which is a very interesting turn of phrase.

As I have just pointed out, one of the strengths of this Parliament and of our single electorate system of voting is that the people in the lower house are elected by the same method as people in the upper house. We in the National Party are particularly offended that the Labor Party is once again trying to take the local out of local member. The Labor Party is espousing a system of representation and voting in the lower house that is inconsistent with that of the upper house. The government is saying that it wants members of Parliament to be elected to represent country Victoria but it does not necessarily care where those members live. Quite honestly I am proud to represent North Western Province in conjunction with you, Mr Acting President. I know the miles you cover in that representation. The change that has occurred in North Western Province under this voting system since 1988 when I was elected is interesting.

**Hon. J. M. Madden** interjected.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — There are some very naive and over-confident new members of Parliament, and a history lesson would help them to understand some of the important components of the use of this house. In 1988 we had a Liberal Party member in Mildura, a National Party member in Swan Hill, a Labor Party member in Bendigo West and a Liberal Party member in Bendigo East. We had a diverse range of representation in the province. I was elected as the National Party representative following my National Party colleague Bernie Dunn. At the 1992 election the Liberal Party won the seat of Mildura, the National Party won the seat of Swan Hill and the Liberal Party won the seats of Bendigo West and Bendigo East. All members of Parliament in the province were members of the conservative parties. I believe you, Mr Acting President, were elected in 1992. That reflects the ability of the government, between 1998 and 1992, to highlight the financial mismanagement of the former government and bring about an overwhelming swing to the conservative parties.

The ability of members of the Labor Party in opposition to highlight the council restructure, privatisation and a range of other issues regarding government policy led to an independent member being elected to Mildura in 1996. The National Party member in Swan Hill retained his seat and the Labor Party won back the seat of Bendigo West, but the Liberal Party retained the seat of Bendigo East. We had a change: a Liberal lost his seat in Mildura and an Independent was elected, and in Bendigo West a Liberal Party member lost his seat,

which was taken by a Labor Party member. However, in the upper house the people again voted for me and the National Party retained the seat.

The interesting thing about the 1996 election, and something I am quite proud of, is that I outvoted all of my lower house colleagues, which is unusual. That demonstrated the situation that occurs: Labor Party supporters voted for me in the upper house.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — And you put local into local member.

**Hon. R. A. BEST** — And put local into local member. That is another thing I am particularly proud of. In 1999 the Independent in Mildura held his seat, the National Party just held on in Swan Hill, and the Labor Party won Bendigo West and Bendigo East. It was the first time the Labor Party had ever held Bendigo East. Again, it was the Labor members and their use of the Legislative Council to highlight the perceived deficiencies in the policies of the former government that convinced rural and regional Victoria to support them. I was disappointed about that, but the issue is the effective use of this chamber to allow democracy to be an effective voice of the people — the people have had their say. I say that that is fair: it is not the individual but the institution that is important, and democracy has been well served by the use of this house by all parties.

I am very conscious of time and I would like to put on the record the concerns of country municipalities about the reforms before the house. I would like to cite two letters from rural councils. One is from the West Wimmera Shire Council and is signed by its chief executive officer, Kevin Hannagan, and the other is from the Buloke Shire Council and is signed by its chief executive officer, Peter Overington. Rather than reading the letters into the record I will paraphrase them. They say the councils are concerned that the boundaries being proposed, which would see 11 lower house seats elect 5 members of Parliament, actually remove effective representation from country Victoria. We would have people being elected to the lower house by people in the community casting their vote, but in the upper house we would have a party ticket. The Labor Party would choose its candidates 1 to 8 or 10 on its ticket; the Liberal Party would do the same, and the positioning on the ticket would determine the representative who would be foisted on the communities.

The government and the Premier are advocating a voting system in which people will choose their lower house member but be asked to vote for a party under the upper house system. That is not democracy and it

does not allow this house to work effectively. The Labor Party used this house very effectively between 1992 and 1999. We used it between 1988 and 1992 to question the Cain and Kirner governments. I am sure we will effectively question the policies of the current government, but that is vibrant working democracy and it is healthy. It is healthy that governments change and that there is a turnover and a fresh injection of new ideas for the state of Victoria.

The current bills do not assist the Victorian democratic system or in any way help the people we most want to represent. The people in my area of country Victoria demand a voice and deserve a say on what should take place in any reforms or policies that are introduced.

Many untruths, misconceptions and myths have been circulated since this legislation was introduced. It does not provide for more effective representation or better government. Good government occurs when there are good oppositions. This chamber provides an opposition to make a government better than it may otherwise be. I vigorously oppose the proposal before the house.

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** (Geelong) — As a member for Geelong Province I am pleased and proud to be speaking on this important debate in support of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill on behalf of the government.

The aims of these bills are: to reduce the term of legislative councillors to one term of the Legislative Assembly; to fix the term of the Parliament to four years unless there is a vote of no confidence; to remove the power of the Legislative Council to block supply; to reduce the number of members in the Legislative Council from 44 to 40; and to elect members of the Legislative Council using proportional representation.

The bills are about making this place more accountable to and representative of the people of Victoria. The passage of the bills would see the implementation of a policy to reform the upper house which the Labor Party took to the people of Victoria prior to the last state election. The policy reform of the upper house was clearly stated in two of its policy documents, 'Restoring our rights — Labor's guarantee' and 'Integrity in public life — Labor's plan'.

In the policy documents under the heading 'Reform of the Legislative Council and a leaner Parliament' the government's policy is clearly outlined. It states:

Labor will reduce the number of MPs ...

We will make the Legislative Council a harder working house of review and the public's watchdog rather than a rubber stamp for the government by:

introducing proportional representation ...

reducing the terms from eight to four years, synchronised with Legislative Assembly elections;

removing the right to block supply ...

It is interesting and important to note, with the first anniversary of the Bracks Labor government in a couple of weeks, that the government is delivering on its commitment to introduce this legislation to the Parliament, a commitment it made to the Victorian people, a commitment that saw it elected to government almost a year ago.

When I was a candidate for Geelong Province I campaigned heavily throughout Geelong on this issue of making the Legislative Council more accountable and more representative of the people of Geelong. The campaign I ran was complemented by similar campaigns run by other candidates for Geelong Province in the lead-up to the state election. The three candidates opposing the sitting Liberal member for Geelong Province formed an alliance on this issue, and it worked. I formed an alliance with the Democrats candidate and the Greens candidate known as the Geelong Province Democratic Alliance.

In the lead-up to the state election on 13 September 1999 we jointly released a statement under our three names. It states:

We, the ALP, Democrats and Greens candidates for Geelong Province have formed a democratic alliance for Sunday's election in an attempt to restore integrity and accountability to the democratic process in Geelong.

We recognise that the Victorian Legislative Council has become a mere rubber stamp for the Kennett government, rather than a genuine house of review.

The non-coalition vote in the 1996 state election was 49.2 per cent across Victoria but non-coalition parties won only 22 per cent of the upper house seats.

The Legislative Council is currently therefore most unrepresentative and affords no checks on the Kennett government.

...

We, as candidates for Geelong Province, find that totally unacceptable.

...

As candidates for Geelong Province we are determined to support each other in the election on Saturday.

If elected, we pledge to work to introduce a proportional system of representation in the Legislative Council to ensure a healthy democracy in Victoria.

The rest is history. I am confident that the voters of Geelong Province knew the Labor Party's policy on reform of the upper house and voted accordingly.

A year ago in the lead-up to the Frankston East supplementary election and shortly after, an agreement was formed with the Independent members of the Legislative Assembly. One key provision of the agreement formed with the Independents is reform of the upper house. This legislation honours the Bracks government's commitment to the Independents.

Articles in the *Geelong Advertiser* and the *Age* attest to our policy commitment prior to the election and our agreement with the Independents. The *Geelong Advertiser* of 26 November 1999 at page 7 under the heading 'Upper house reform bill to be Labor's first real test' states:

The reforms were a key Labor election pledge and were demanded by the state's three Independent MPs as a condition of their support.

The article by Gabrielle Costa in the *Age* of 7 March at page 11 under the heading 'Leaders to discuss reform of chamber' states:

Labor promised in the lead-up to the last election that it would reform the Legislative Council, cut the number of MPs from 44 to 35, and introduce fixed four-year terms and proportional representation.

The *Age* of 5 September this year, under the heading 'MPs blast Bracks on reform', states in an article by Adrian Rollins:

Mr Savage and Mr Ingram, along with Gippsland West MP Susan Davies, put Labor into government last year after the knife-edge state election result.

Part of the agreement for forming government was a commitment by Labor to reform the upper house, and included four-year terms and proportional representation.

It is clear that the government in this legislation is honouring its commitments prior to the state election and honouring the Independents charter.

I clearly remember, and *Hansard* will provide evidence, making reference to our intention to reform the upper house in my inaugural speech in this place in November last year, when I said:

It is well known that during the life of this Parliament the government will introduce bills to reform the chamber in which honourable members now sit. The government aims to make the Legislative Council more representative and allow it to be a true house of review designed to effectively monitor executive government.

In the address-in-reply debate every government member in this chamber spoke about the government's intention to reform this place. Despite the public acknowledgment of Labor's policy commitment in opposition, during the election campaign and since forming government almost one year ago with the support of the Victorian people, sadly the opposition intends to defeat the Bracks government's legislation to reform the Legislative Council.

They will use their numbers in this place to fly in the face of public support to protect themselves by removing the opportunity of the Victorian people to scrutinise their work and make a judgment about the level of representation afforded to them by members of this place every four years.

It is ironic that the very first time opposition members are prepared to defeat the Bracks government's legislation, it is to protect themselves. They are the same people who in government refused to stand up for the Victorian people.

**Hon. M. A. Birrell** — I am standing up.

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** — You are not in your place, Mr Birrell; you are not entitled to speak. Members opposite refused to stand up for the Victorian people. They refused to stand up for Victorian schools, hospitals, workers, the Auditor-General and kindergartens. In government the people opposite were a rubber stamp to all the Kennett government's legislation. Today members opposite are signalling that they will not be a rubber stamp; they will become an obstructionist opposition. They will use their numbers to make sure that this house does not become more accountable and more representative.

The introduction of four-year terms for members of the Legislative Council is welcome. It will allow Victorian voters to reflect on the performance of upper house members of Parliament and judge them accordingly at the ballot box every four years. In that way the government's reforms will make the members of this place much more responsive and more accountable to the Victorian people.

In a flurry of erroneous accusations by the Leader of the Opposition in this place — both in the media and in this place — regarding the intent of the government's legislation, it was curious to note that he avoided scrutiny of the fact that the opposition does not support four-year terms for members of this place. The Victorian public is entitled to know why the opposition parties refuse to be judged on their record every four

years. One can only assume that they are afraid of the ballot box test.

Mr Birrell put out a press release in Geelong on Sunday. Nowhere in that press release did he mention the fact that the opposition would oppose four-year terms for members of this place. On Sunday I was telephoned by a journalist from the *Geelong Advertiser* wanting to get a comment from me. I was also telephoned by a journalist from the Bay FM radio station on Monday who also wanted a comment. I took the journalists through the debate and explained that Mr Birrell was desperate to avoid any media scrutiny of the fact the opposition opposed four-year terms for members of this place. I said I was more than happy to stand on my record every four years as the honourable member for Geelong Province.

I will tell honourable members what one of the journalists said to me, because it is very interesting. The journalist suggested that perhaps Mr Birrell did not realise the bill contains that provision? I replied, 'He realises, but just does not want you to realise'. He got absolutely no coverage in the Geelong media for his efforts. Bad luck, Mr Birrell!

The introduction of four-year terms will ensure that the mandate for this house is fresh and reflective of the current political climate in Victoria. The bills are about revitalising democracy, a concept that obviously the opposition parties fail to grasp. One has only to reflect on contributions from members opposite to the Melton debate earlier this week to understand that point.

Premier Bracks was quoted in an article on page 6 of the *Age* of 16 August as having said:

...the government's legislation was 'about rejecting privilege, rejecting the sinecure of eight-year terms and saying we need a fresh new mandate every four years'.

He said the obstruction by the Liberal and National parties was clear evidence of why reform of the upper house was needed.

'No-one else in the community has eight-year contracts and yet they want one. Why do they want it? Because they don't want to be accountable,' Mr Bracks said.

I note with interest that my fellow Geelong Province member, the Honourable Ian Cover, is in the house, and I am delighted he is here. He was very reluctant to engage in this debate in Geelong. On 11 July page 5 of the *Geelong Advertiser* states under the heading 'House reform challenge':

Mr Cover said the Liberal Party was still discussing whether it would support four-year terms ...

That was in July. I have no problems with that statement, but then Mr Cover became a little confused. In an attempt to justify the rubber-stamping of the bills under the Kennett government Mr Cover recalled that the Kennett government had been in power between 1990 and 1997. I am a bit worried about that, considering Mr Cover was elected as a member of the Kennett government in 1996. Obviously reform of this place is necessary.

In a letter to the editor on page 6 of the *Geelong Advertiser* of 29 August Mr Kevin Russell of Geelong wrote about Mr Cover. It has the heading 'Responsibility of local MPs'.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** interjected.

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** — I take extreme exception to that interjection from Mr Ken Smith, and I ask him to withdraw it.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. G. B. Ashman)** — Order! Mr Smith, the interjection you made has been picked up by Mrs Carbines, and I invite you to withdraw it.

**Hon. K. M. Smith** — I withdraw.

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** — Thank you. Mr Russell of Geelong says:

I must add my voice to the chorus calling for greater accountability from our local politicians.

Last year I wrote to Mr Cover requesting his views on the proposed changes to the Legislative Council.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Is this from one of your branch members?

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** — Definitely not. The letter continues:

After receiving what I considered to be a cursory reply, I wrote again.

I requested specific answers to specific questions. In particular I asked whether the principle of one vote, one value had a place in the Legislative Council.

To date I have received no reply.

Was Mr Cover still making up his mind, or did he not want to let Mr Russell know that he was opposed to reform of the upper house?

The situation became a little clearer in the 7 September edition of the *Geelong Advertiser*. On page 5 under the heading 'Libs stall on reform: Carbines — Time's up:

ALP calls for upper house action' Mr Cover made his position clear. The article states:

Mr Cover said he believed the upper house worked well and there was no need to change.

I hope Mr Cover wrote to Mr Russell and informed him of that point.

**Hon. I. J. Cover** — I had written to him earlier, and spoken to him on the telephone.

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** — Good. Once it became clear that the opposition parties intended to defeat the government's legislation on reform of the upper house, the *Age* ran an editorial on 7 September. On page 24, under the heading 'Democracy put on hold again — Reform of Victoria's upper house is overdue' the editorial concluded by saying:

If the people of Victoria were asked in a plebiscite to choose between the existing upper house, with its entrenched conservative majority, and a democratic upper house with powers appropriate to a house of review, they would surely take the democratic alternative.

The opposition parties are out of step with the call from the Victorian people for greater accountability and better representation from their members of Parliament. The Liberal and National party members of this house deserve the condemnation of the Victorian people for their preparedness to put their own interests as members of Parliament before those of the people they were elected to represent.

The introduction of proportional representation for the election of members to this place is essential for the house to function as a proper house of review and not the product of major political parties. Proportional representation will lead to a healthy revitalisation of this place and should be encouraged as it would mean greater representation by Independents and minor parties.

The bill will establish multimember electorates — eight electorates of five members each. Electoral boundaries will be drawn up by the Electoral Commissioner and will of course change over time, as will the names of the electorates, but that has always been the case. Electoral boundaries constantly change, as do the names of the electorates. It is ridiculous for members of the National Party to say that it will remove the concept of the local member. It is amazing that they justify their opposition to the bill on that basis. It takes more than a sticker on a car to be a local member.

The opposition parties are scaremongering, and we need to ask why. The answer lies yet again in protecting

vested interests. That approach is outlined distinctly in an article by Tim Colebatch in the *Age* of 14 October 1999, the week before the Frankston East supplementary election, which Labor convincingly won. The report in the *Age* is entitled 'Why the upper house vote suits the coalition just the way it is'. It states:

A strange thing happened in last month's Legislative Council election. The coalition won less than 50 per cent of the votes, but ended up with 64 per cent of the seats.

Final counts released by the Victorian Electoral Commission show that after preferences 50.12 per cent of Victorians voted for Labor-endorsed candidates in the council while 49.88 per cent voted for the coalition.

Yet the coalition won 14 of the 22 councils seats and Labor won just 8 ...

But for Labor to have won a majority at the 18 September election it ... would have needed to win almost 54 per cent of the final vote after preferences.

...

Moreover, under the way Legislative Council electorates are now drawn up, the coalition will almost always be over-represented in the Council. In the three elections held under these boundaries, Labor would always have needed at least 53.4 per cent of the vote to win a majority of seats.

...

It explains why Mr Kennett is so determined to resist pressure from the Independents to reform the Council so that its members are elected by proportional representation. Under the present system, the coalition is virtually guaranteed control of the Council ...

So much for one vote, one value, for democracy and for proportional representation for all Victorians.

The bills deserve the support of all members of this place. They reflect a clearly enunciated policy taken to the Victorian people at the state election last year and followed up at the Frankston East supplementary election, which the Labor Party won, the Burwood by-election, which the Labor Party won, and the icing on the cake, the Benalla by-election, which the Labor Party won convincingly.

By opposing the bills, the Liberal and National parties stand condemned for their failure to support the will of the Victorian people. Their unwillingness to make the Legislative Council more accountable and representative of the Victorian people will be condemned by history. I commend the bill to the house.

**Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** (Monash) — I put on the record my opposition to the bills presented to this house by the government and reiterate the opposition to those bills that honourable members on this side of the house have expressed.

Honourable members on this side of the house are opposed to the bills because the government has misrepresented not just the intent of the bills but the wonderful institution that is the Legislative Council. In misrepresenting it the government is deliberately denigrating this institution and reducing its standing in the eyes of the public.

It is part of the Labor Party's longstanding dogmatic policy on the Legislative Council. It wants to abolish this place or alternatively to render it a useless and incompetent house that has no control or ability to scrutinise executive government. It is especially important in this case, because the Bracks government is a minority government with no mandate and no support from the majority of Victorians. Its ability to govern is based on a sweetheart deal with three Independents who between them gathered no more than a few percentage points of the vote at the last general election.

Just as happens in the Legislative Assembly, where the tail is wagging the dog, the implementation of these bills would result in the people of Victoria being subjected to that same tail wagging the dog in this chamber, because the votes of a small minority of people electing single-issue candidates with little broad-based support would have a greater weighting and more say in the exercise of democracy than the votes of the vast majority of the people who vote for the two major political parties. That is what Labor is about.

It knows that it cannot introduce a bill to abolish the upper house, so it is introducing bills that will effectively emasculate the upper house. Why does it do that? For a long time the Labor Party has sought to avoid scrutiny in government. During the Cain and Kirner years, as indicated by members of the opposition yesterday and today, it sought to avoid scrutiny of its legislation and actions in government. The Bracks minority Labor government is even more duplicitous than the Cain and Kirner administrations because it won office on a platform of open and accountable government, yet it wants the people of Victoria to take it at face value when what it is really doing is emasculating the right of the Legislative Council to act as a house of review when scrutinising the government's actions.

Government members continue to talk about a mandate; they believe that somehow or other they have a mandate to introduce reform. I do not accept that because, as many commentators have repeatedly said, the Bracks government is a minority government. However, for argument's sake allow me to assume the

government has some sort of mandate to introduce a bill to reform, in some way or other, the upper house.

If it had any mandate it would have only one chance; if it dogmatically believed in something it would introduce a bill and stick to it, saying, 'We want this done on principle'. The bill introduced in the other place last November, with the grandiose title Constitution (Reform) Bill, should have been the government's principled position when it came to something as important as reviewing the constitution and permanently changing the structure of the institution of the Legislative Council that has existed in Victoria for nearly 150 years. One would imagine that that principle would stand the test of time and the government would be able to argue, on the basis of principle, what it had enshrined in the bill and wanted to be passed into legislation and the constitution.

But, no, that one chance to stand up and say, 'We are taking a principled position because we believe in it' was thrown out the window because on 14 February 2000 one Independent member — one of the Independent members on whom the government relies for its existence and continued survival — said, 'Sorry, your proposal is not a good option and I will not support it'. All the principle, dogma, beliefs and everything the ALP supposedly took to the election as part of its platform was thrown out the window.

I am amused that the decision taken by that Independent member, the honourable member for Mildura in the other place, Mr Savage, was made on 14 February — that is, Valentine's Day, when the government and the three Independents had a lovers' tiff. It is instructive that since then the government has run around, like a dog chasing its tail, to make the Independents happy. It threw away the supposed reformist bill introduced in November in the other place and brought to this place watered-down versions of the original bill, only to appease the Independents who are, in many ways, the puppeteers of the government. It introduced two bills that could be described as being less grandiose than the original bill but with minor changes that essentially are aimed at doing the same thing — that is, emasculating this house as a house of review.

One would think that although the government had its chance and blew it that it would try to argue sensible or logical reasons why the changes should be adopted. Instead, however, government members have come into this place with their eternal class hatreds, spitting bile, and spreading hatred and fear throughout the community. One member, Mr Bob Smith, thought he was still fighting the class war. Talk about living in the

past and having no vision for where the party is heading in the future! The government is wrong if it thinks reform of the upper house is about stopping democratically elected members of Parliament from executing their duties to effectively scrutinise government.

It is again wrong if it thinks it can bludgeon members of the opposition into accepting its ill-conceived, ill-thought-through, ill-drafted and badly argued proposals because Victorians have shown throughout the entirety of the debate on the bills what they think of the government's proposals.

The public has shown its utter contempt for the proposals contained in the bills. I have not received one inquiry in my electorate office — personally, by phone, letter, fax or email — from any single constituent supporting the government's proposals. Conversely, I have had dozens of people contact me by many means: they have written, emailed, phoned and visited me personally. They all say they are concerned at what the government is up to. Victorians value stability in government and the ability of the upper house to act as an appropriate mechanism for the scrutiny of executive government.

At the same time, as evidenced from what people have said to me about the issue, Victorians have a wonderful contrast between the way the upper house operates, regardless of whether it is controlled by the government or the opposition of the day, and the Senate with the horse-trading that occurs with minority parties to effect what is often important legislative change, where principles and good government are thrown to the wind to appeal to the prejudices of a small minority of senators elected with a small proportion of the vote at any election, and who, through the nuances of an electoral system that is fraught with danger, end up controlling the destiny of a nation.

A small group of individuals often force significant legislative change and, instructively, it was Prime Minister Keating, a Labor icon, who was forced in exasperation to refer to the Senate as an unrepresentative swill.

The government does not place much store on the fact that it wants to convert the Legislative Council members from serving a period of two terms of the lower house to serving one term of the lower house. Many members of the opposition have reminded the government that that is the exact system that operates in New South Wales and South Australia, and is what was introduced by John Cain, the Labor Party Premier, in the 1980s.

One fact that needs to be put on the record about four-year versus eight-year terms is that when the federal Labor government under Prime Minister Bob Hawke introduced a referendum to alter the term of the House of Representatives from three to four years, lo and behold, also included in that proposal was that the Senate move from six to eight-year terms.

It is not some sort of conservative Liberal or National party conspiracy. John Cain, Jr, introduced the eight-year term for the Legislative Council in — —

**Hon. M. M. Gould** interjected.

**Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — Yes, that's right, in a bipartisan way. In the federal sphere, former Prime Minister Bob Hawke attempted to convert the Senate from six-year terms to eight-year terms. It was logical to do that. The longevity of the terms is what gives this house its unique character. That is what makes the upper house different from the other chamber and what gives it its ability to be an effective house of review.

Labor members have talked about the fact that during the period of the Kennett government coalition members of the Council did not vote down any government legislation. Labor members tried to make that out to be some sort of sin of commission or omission that proves this place does not work effectively. In the one year that Labor has been in government, how many times have Labor members of this chamber voted against government legislation? The answer is none — zero. Of course government members will not vote against government legislation. To argue otherwise is illogical and insane. That proves once again that this government is wrong, because its members put up illogical arguments. The record proves the hypocrisy of their arguments because, as I said, it is logical that government members do not vote down government legislation.

If the government wanted to talk about the real reform of this chamber, opposition members would be interested. But unfortunately, none of this is about real reform. With the indulgence of the house, I will talk about some reforms that could be made. But the government is not about real reform, it is about stopping scrutiny of its actions in this chamber. The government is about emasculating the upper house and turning it into a carbon copy of the other place. It wants to achieve Labor's long-cherished dream of abolishing the Legislative Council so there are no fetters on, no control over and no scrutiny of the executive government, which usually has a majority in the other place.

If the government wanted to be open, honest and accountable — as it claims it wants to be — if it wanted to introduce democratic processes and, importantly, if it wanted this place to function as an effective house of review and scrutiny, regardless of which party was in power or who sat on the Treasury benches in the other place, it could seriously consider real reform. I am sure that if it were done in the appropriate manner and in the right spirit, the government would gain the support of the opposition members in this place.

There are examples of upper house chambers in other parts of the world that are even more effective forums for government scrutiny than Victoria's upper house. One simple reform would be to allow supplementary questions at question time, as occurs in the Australian Senate. Another reform would be to enable the opposition, at the end of question time, to immediately take note of ministers' answers to dorothy dixers.

Unfortunately, the government has turned question time into a forum where, in answering their dorothy dixers, ministers simply read out press releases and make ministerial statements. They have debased the whole notion of question time, which is meant to be a forum for the genuine exchange of questions and answers. If government members favour effective scrutiny, they will consider a proposal to enable the opposition to take note of ministers' answers at the end of question time.

Many other procedural reforms could be introduced to provide for open and accountable government. Another procedure that operates in the Australian Senate enables senators to call for the tabling or production of documents. If the government wants open and accountable government — if it wants to open itself up to scrutiny and to be seen to have clean hands in its dealing with the Victorian public — I invite it to enable members of the Legislative Council to order the tabling and production of documents that are of interest to the public of Victoria. Those are some legitimate reforms that would enhance the ability of this house to effectively scrutinise the day-to-day actions of the executive government.

However, the government is not talking about those sorts of reforms. It is not about genuine reform or making this place a house of review. It is not about allowing the Legislative Council to properly scrutinise government actions. It is about emasculating this place, or, as my colleague the Honourable Ken Smith said, gutting it. The government is about turning the Council into a bland carbon copy of the Assembly so that in future it believes it will have a legitimate ground to argue for its complete abolition.

The legislation is deceitful and unprincipled, as can be proved by the way the government quickly shunned its original bill and introduced two meek and pale imitations in its place. The bills deserve the contempt that the Victorian public has shown for them. It is instructive to note that government members are not prepared to engage in a real debate on the proposed legislation, wanting instead only to harangue opposition members.

Members of the Victorian public have seen through these bills. They have seen — as is the case with many things involving the Bracks government — that the emperor truly has no clothes. The bills will be defeated because they do not enhance democracy in Victoria. They have been designed specifically to impede the democratic process, and it is an honour to stand up in this place and defeat them!

**Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. D. G. HADDEN (Ballarat).**

**Debate adjourned until next day.**

## **TRAINING AND FURTHER EDUCATION ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL**

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time for Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) on motion of Hon. M. M. Gould.**

## **LAND (ST KILDA SEA BATHS) BILL**

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time for Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) on motion of Hon. M. M. Gould.**

## **PUBLIC LOTTERIES BILL**

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time on motion of Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation).**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Adjournment**

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

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 24 October.

**Motion agreed to.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

That the house do now adjourn.

**Regional Infrastructure Development Fund**

**Hon. N. B. LUCAS** (Eumemmerring) — I raise a matter for the Minister assisting the Minister for State and Regional Development. I note that the minister is not in the chamber. I presume she has gone home.

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — No. I will take the matter.

**Hon. N. B. LUCAS** — The minister is now here. I ask the minister to raise with the Minister for State and Regional Development an issue concerning the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund, which was established under an act of the same name. The definition of 'regional Victoria' in the schedule to the act does not include the shires of Cardinia or Yarra Ranges, and the minister in this house well knows my concern about that.

On 8 December last year during the committee stage of the bill the minister said the area defined by the councils listed in the schedule is seen by the Bracks Labor government as a suitable definition of regional Victoria. Some confusion exists over the matter. I received a letter from the Minister for State and Regional Development, to which I have previously referred, suggesting that my constituents should apply for funding under the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund, but none of them lives within the area defined in the act. That created certain confusion. Then Premier Bracks suggested the Shire of Cardinia should apply under the funding arrangement for the Pakenham bypass, which of course it could not do.

The Transport Act uses the former Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works schedule for defining the metropolitan area, but it does not include the Shire of Cardinia. The funding of a bus service trial in the

Cardinia area has to be met 100 per cent by the local community, but over the river in the Drouin area the funding is split 60:40.

The Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill, which has been debated in the house today, contains a definition of regional Victoria. I draw the minister's attention to the schedule at the back of the bill, which defines metropolitan areas as including a number of municipalities. Interestingly, the bill does not include the Yarra Ranges as being in the metropolitan area. So for the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund, Yarra Ranges is deemed to be metropolitan, but under the Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill it is deemed to be regional.

There seems to be some confusion over definitions for rural and regional areas coming through in both existing and proposed legislation. Accordingly, I ask the minister to clear up the mess with a view to correcting what must be an oversight in that the shires of Cardinia and Yarra Ranges have not been included in the definition of regional areas and therefore cannot receive funding from the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund.

**Rail: regional links**

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — I raise for the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources, as the representative in this house of the Minister for Transport, the issue of the return of rail services to Bairnsdale.

Earlier this year the Minister for Transport announced a review of closed rail lines in rural Victoria. In May the Save Our Trains Community Action Group, which is based in Bairnsdale in East Gippsland, met with the minister, and has since made huge efforts to demonstrate the enormous public support in East Gippsland for a return of rail passenger services, which included holding a public rally at which more than 2000 people attended and 11 000 signatures in support were collected.

On 6 July National Express, the operator of the existing rail service between Melbourne and Sale, called a public meeting in Bairnsdale at which it announced the findings of its own evaluation for the reopening of the rail passenger services. I attended that public meeting. The evaluation showed that a return of the service is economically viable and demonstrated a cost assessment of improving the existing infrastructure to enable passenger services to run right through to Bairnsdale.

In early July a submission by National Express was put to the government. A response from the government was expected to be given in either late July or in August at the latest. To date there has been no response from the government. We are now in the month of October. Given that the government has committed more than \$550 million for a return of fast rail services to some of the regional centres in Victoria and that the return of rail passenger services to Bairnsdale would cost only a fraction — about 2 or 3 per cent — of that amount, and given the huge support that exists for a return of rail services to Bairnsdale, I ask the minister when a decision on this important matter will be given.

### **Courts: intervention order support service**

**Hon. D. G. HADDEN** (Ballarat) — I raise with the Minister for Small Business, as the representative in this house of the Attorney-General, the intervention order court support service which has been operating at the Ballarat Magistrates Court for the past few years.

It is the only court support service of its type in this half of Victoria. This important court support service continues to provide advice, practical assistance and support to victims of domestic violence needing intervention orders under the Crimes (Family Violence) Act from the Ballarat Magistrates Court. The service is currently funded until December by a one-off grant from the United Way Ballarat Community Fund. However, the service's legal practitioner resigned last month and the project worker, who holds a law degree but is not admitted to practice, is now trying to keep the service continuing.

It is absolutely vital that the intervention order support service continue to represent complainant victims. Currently the ability of the service to assist victims is restricted because the project worker cannot appear in court and represent the victims. I therefore seek the urgent assistance of the Attorney-General in continuing the service beyond December 2000. Perhaps a pro bono practitioner could be released for a period from a large Melbourne law firm to provide this very important service to the Ballarat Magistrates Court to keep it operating for the victims of domestic violence in rural and regional Victoria.

### **Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre**

**Hon. C. A. FURLETTI** (Templestowe) — I raise with the Minister for Industrial Relations for the attention of the Minister for Health in another place the situation of a constituent of mine, a lady of more than 70 years of age, who requires a total hip replacement.

My constituent received confirmation that she would be admitted to the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre on 8 September for the operation. Her expected stay in hospital was to be seven days, which indicates that it is a major procedure. However, that type of operation is classified as elective surgery, notwithstanding that my constituent is in constant extreme pain and has almost totally restricted mobility. On 30 August she was advised by letter that her date of admission to the hospital had been put off for a week, until 15 September. She has been awaiting the operation for many months and the pain of her condition was causing her considerable distress. On 7 September she was contacted by the hospital and told that as part of the government's actions her operation had been put off indefinitely, which caused this elderly lady extreme trauma.

As one would, she contacted her local member, the honourable member for Ivanhoe in the other place. After discussing her concerns with him she was told in effect that he could do nothing for her. In a letter to her, he stated he was advised that elective surgery would be reduced, not cancelled, across all metropolitan hospitals for the next three weeks. Honourable members know that that is misrepresentative, at best. The letter went on to state that unfortunately of all the metropolitan hospitals affected by the lack of beds, the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre had been hit the hardest, and had waiting lists for patients aged over 65 years who were waiting for care.

I ask the Minister for Industrial Relations to pass on to the Minister for Health my concern for my constituent's condition. I also ask what the government will do about reducing the waiting list, as was promised in its pre-election campaign, so that my constituent can be admitted.

### **Goulburn Valley University of the Third Age**

**Hon. E. J. POWELL** (North Eastern) — I raise with the Minister for Small Business a matter for the Minister for Aged Care in the other place. On 1 June this year I raised with the Minister for Aged Care accommodation needs for the Goulburn Valley University of the Third Age (U3A). As honourable members will remember, the university's programs are delivered right across the Goulburn Valley. It was looking for one place to hold those programs.

On 15 August I received a response from the minister acknowledging an increased shortage in free or low-cost accommodation for U3As right across Victoria, but more particularly in country Victoria. The minister advised that the U3A renegotiate

accommodation with Goulburn–Ovens Institute of TAFE in Shepparton, where it previously used a room. On behalf of U3A I contacted Peter Ryan, the director of Goulburn–Ovens TAFE institute. I have received a letter that states that while it totally supports the U3A's programs the institute has no office space at all and it would be impossible to accommodate the university's needs.

At the moment the Goulburn Valley U3A is running some programs from the North Shepparton Community House and Learning Centre in Shepparton at a nominal fee, and a very positive relationship is forming. The community house put in a submission to the housing supervisor at the Department of Human Services to acquire an empty house next door to its premises which would allow it to increase its own programs and also provide increased space to the U3A. Importantly that would enable the U3A to run all its programs in the one area. At the moment it has 90 members and is actively trying to increase its membership, but it cannot do so because its activities are spread across the Goulburn Valley.

I ask the minister to support the submission by the North Shepparton community house, which will allow it to build on its current programs as well as secure the long-term accommodation needs of the U3A in that area.

### **Students: absenteeism**

**Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA** (Melbourne West) — I raise with the Minister for Sport and Recreation a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education in the other place. A report was recently released regarding absenteeism in Melbourne's west. It covered the municipalities of Brimbank, Maribyrnong and Wyndham. The report was compiled by Catholic Social Services and is entitled *Keeping Our Kids in Class*. It indicates that girls are more likely to be kept at home for family reasons and therefore to be absent from school.

I am extremely concerned about the way in which absenteeism has a discriminatory effect on young women. I am also concerned about the high levels of absenteeism from schools in the western suburbs, which is the area that I represent. In light of the government's commitment to social justice, I ask what strategies have been put in place to address this discrimination?

### **Cooper Street, Epping: duplication**

**Hon. E. G. STONEY** (Central Highlands) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Energy and Resources in raising with the Minister for Transport in another place the issue of the very important upgrade to Cooper Street, Epping. I have been a long-time supporter of the Cooper Street upgrade, which was announced some time ago by the then Minister for Transport, the Honourable Geoff Craige.

Last night in the other place the honourable member for Yan Yean attempted to link the views of a private citizens of Epping, a Mr Tom Love, with the views of the Liberal Party and of Mrs Fran Bailey, the federal member for McEwen. Mr Haermeyer implied that the Liberal Party did not support the upgrade of Cooper Street, and nor did Mrs Bailey. That is patently ridiculous because Mrs Bailey, Mr Craige and I have been long-time supporters of the upgrade, and of other issues in the area.

To make crystal clear the position of the Liberal Party on the upgrade of Cooper Street at Epping, I ask the Minister for Transport to ensure that the upgrade goes ahead and that the promises of the former government are met.

### **Public sector: unfair dismissals**

**Hon. R. M. HALLAM** (Western) — I ask the Minister for Industrial Relations what measures the government has implemented to ensure that state public servants have adequate protection against unfair dismissal, and what cost has been incurred to the public purse as a result of those measures?

### **Paralympic Games: funding**

**Hon. E. C. CARBINES** (Geelong) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I am sure everyone in the house is very proud of the success of the Sydney Olympic Games and of the key role that Victorian athletes played in them. The Victorian public has embraced the spirit of the Olympic Games, as evidenced by its response to the torch relay and the parade held yesterday to honour the Olympians.

However, the Olympics are not over. In the coming weeks the Paralympics will be held in Sydney. This is the culmination of years of hard work and training for the competing athletes. Today we had the lighting of the Paralympic torch and its relay around the city of Melbourne. I am sure that our athletes will go to Sydney with the very best wishes of every member of this house for their success. Accordingly, I would like

the minister to outline to the house the assistance that the Bracks government has afforded our Paralympic team.

### **Housing: survival kit funding**

**Hon. ANDREA COOTE** (Monash) — I raise a matter with the Minister for Small Business, representing the Minister for Housing in the other place. I recently met with representatives of the Prahran–Malvern community housing group, which performs a vital service in the community. It provides housing to people in need of crisis or specific housing. It is a dedicated group that does an extremely good job. The group has a quite specific clientele, and when people come to visit them the group workers provide a great deal of verbal information in addition to written information dedicated to their clientele. The group members went to the Office of Housing in the area to ask for funding for a survival kit to meet the specific needs of their clientele but were knocked back.

I remind the Minister for Housing of Labor's election promise to work with housing organisations and local government to improve the level of housing available at a local level. This is a very real example of that and I call on the minister to direct adequate funds to the Prahran–Malvern community housing group to enable it to produce its survival kit.

### **Tertiary education and training: Melbourne West Province**

**Hon. S. M. NGUYEN** (Melbourne West) — I ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation to seek the assistance of the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment in the other place regarding unemployment. I am aware that the minister has launched many good programs in her portfolio recently. There is a high unemployment rate in my electorate, especially among people of non-English-speaking backgrounds. I have been approached by many community groups and organisations that are keen to assist those in need of help to find jobs. I ask the minister to see whether her department can work with these community groups to tackle the problem of unemployment.

### **Eastern suburbs: palliative care**

**Hon. A. P. OLEXANDER** (Silvan) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Small Business, who represents the Minister for Aged Care in the other place. The issue I raise is very important and concerns hospice beds and palliative care services in the outer eastern region of Melbourne. A group of general

practitioners (GPs) in the outer east recently brought to my attention the fact that there is a severe shortage of palliative care hospice beds in the region. After consulting with a number of elderly citizens groups and other individuals in the community, I concur with the GPs' view. The group that brought this matter to my attention is the eastern palliative care GP advisory committee. It has directly lobbied the Minister for Aged Care for an extra 10 beds to be assigned to the Angliss hospital in Upper Ferntree Gully. The minister has had this proposal and request for some months.

I ask the minister to inquire of the Minister for Aged Care the status of the group's request for those urgent palliative care hospice beds. Only 10 are being requested and the shortage of these beds in the outer eastern region is acute. I believe and hope that the minister will decide in the affirmative and assign the beds to the Angliss Hospital as soon as possible.

### **Foxes: control**

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** (South Eastern) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Energy and Resources, representing the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place. I refer to an article in yesterday's *Herald Sun* headed 'Cyanide blitz on killer foxes'. The article talks about the release of cyanide capsules on Phillip Island to destroy a significant number of foxes that are causing a great deal of havoc with the penguin population at the Phillip Island Nature Park. I have no objection to this program; I understand that it has been well thought out and planned, and I am not indicating any objection to it.

**Hon. G. R. CRAIG** — You didn't ask the foxes, though.

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** — The newspaper describes them as 'thrill-killing foxes'. The information in the article suggests that this is an urgent program because so far this year 260 penguins have been killed by the foxes and last year only 80 were lost, and that is 80 too many.

I seek the minister's assistance because the issue of foxes is a significant difficulty in South Eastern Province. We have a great deal of trouble with foxes on the Mornington Peninsula. I seek the minister's assistance in the expectation that this program on Phillip Island will be successful. I ask that the department closely monitor the program and its results with the hope of transferring aspects of the program and the technology to a series of areas on the Mornington Peninsula to get rid of the foxes that are causing a great deal of trouble there.

### Monash: by-election

**Hon. M. T. LUCKINS** (Waverley) — I raise an issue with the Minister for Small Business, representing the Minister for Local Government in the other place. It relates to a by-election that has been called in the City of Monash in my electorate. This follows the resignation of Cr Paul Klisaris, who was elected in March this year to represent a ward in Oakleigh. The election of Mr Klisaris was challenged by another candidate and a complaint has been lodged with the Municipal Electoral Tribunal. The issue relates to the nomination address Mr Klisaris provided. He led voters to believe that the address he provided — which is actually a child care centre he owns in Warrigal Road in Oakleigh — was his residential address. Mr Klisaris has resigned from council, and an article in the *Waverley Gazette* of 19 September states:

A council spokesman said the by-election would be held on December 8, at an estimated cost of \$50 000. No money had been allocated for a by-election in the budget and it would have to be found from somewhere.

Mr Klisaris was quoted in the same article as saying:

To continue a legal fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would absorb too much of my time and attention ...

Should an election be called, I would be honoured to have the opportunity to complete what I wanted to achieve ... over the next two and a half years.

Having caused a by-election to avoid legal costs of an investigation by the Municipal Electoral Tribunal Mr Klisaris is planning to stand again. In the wake of his resignation he has left vacancies on a number of council boards, including the Oakleigh district centre advisory committee, the local environment conservation group, the Monash aquatic and recreation steering committee, and the economic development forum.

In the *Waverley Gazette* of 26 September it was estimated that \$50 000, the estimated cost of the by-election, would pay for a new drainage system on a 200-metre stretch of road, 20 new swing and slide sets in parks throughout the municipality, or a complete makeover of a park and new playground.

In the same newspaper the Minister for Local Government, Bob Cameron, described the resignation of Mr Klisaris as very irregular. I ask the minister what action he will take to clarify eligibility criteria for nomination address details in future to ensure that this debacle is not repeated elsewhere at great cost to ratepayers.

### Carlton Soccer Club

**Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** (Monash) — The matter I raise with the Minister for Sport and Recreation relates to access by the Carlton Soccer Club to the Bob Jane Stadium in Albert Park. It has been made public that the Carlton Soccer Club has reached an agreement with the current tenant to share the Bob Jane Stadium during the soccer season, but it appears that the attitude of Parks Victoria to that type of agreement has been less than welcoming.

The minister would be aware that finding an appropriate venue, such as the Bob Jane Stadium, is critical for the survival and performance of the Carlton Soccer Club. What action will the minister take to ensure that a national soccer club will be able to use the Bob Jane Stadium in the coming national soccer club season and therefore ensure its survival in the National Soccer League?

### Industrial relations: task force

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Industrial Relations. I note that three times this week the minister has received questions from her side on the independent industrial relations task force report. I have a copy of correspondence from Neil Jacobs, the chief executive officer of the Hindmarsh Shire Council, which states:

The council has received advice that the state government industrial relations task force report recommends the return of a comprehensive state-based industrial relations system.

This prospect is viewed with concern as it could lead to the return of mandatory penalty rates, an increase in existing leave provisions, and duplication of many aspects of the federal system, including re-establishment of a separate state tribunal and separate state laws. This will increase the council's administrative and employment costs.

Undoubtedly such changes, if implemented, would have a deleterious effect on Victoria's employment and business competitiveness.

What can the minister do to allay the concerns of the Hindmarsh Shire Council?

### Cruise ships

**Hon. I. J. COVER** (Geelong) — I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Ports. Earlier today the minister was bragging about cruise ships visiting the port of Geelong, which brought to my attention a matter involving a charter boat operator in Geelong, Mr David Peters, who operates the *Hygela*, a former Queenscliff–Portsea ferry.

Mr Peters met with the ALP mayor of Geelong, Mr Michael Crutchfield, a former running mate of Mrs Carbines at the last election, seeking advice about a permit to operate on the Geelong waterfront. According to the report in yesterday's *Geelong Advertiser* the meeting degenerated quickly because the mayor decided on the spot to tell Mr Peters:

... that it was his decision and it was all over and you don't come up to scratch.

Instead of helping this Geelong business, the mayor launched into a hot-headed, aggressive attack on the operator of the *Hygela* and told Mr Peters that he would never get a permit. Cr Santalucia was at the meeting and apologised to Mr Peters, but no apology is forthcoming from the mayor.

What process has been followed in issuing permits for activities in the port of Geelong? If that is outside the minister's responsibility, will she refer it to the appropriate minister?

### Herald Sun Tour

**Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN** (Chelsea) — I am compelled to raise a matter with the Minister for Sport and Recreation because I do not think he could make a mistake about sport. Today was the commencement of the Herald Sun Tour, of which Vicroads is a major sponsor. I am led to believe the minister launched the tour some four weeks ago and that today's launch consisted of a 30-lap criterium around the CBD.

Considering the wonderful weather Melbourne had today a huge crowd was in attendance but a number of people were conspicuous by their absence, one being the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I challenge honourable members to guess how many government members were present at the launch of the Herald Sun Tour today? Zero. The Honourable Bob Smith was not present, nor was Mrs Carbines. Will the minister explain why he snubbed Ballarat and Benalla events when such sporting events will benefit the whole of Victoria?

### Fishing Week

**Hon. G. R. CRAIGE** (Central Highlands) — I raise a matter with the Minister for Energy and Resources. I was pleased to hear that the minister participated in the launch of Fishing Week with none other than the great fishing legend, Rex Hunt, and Paul Salmon. In particular, the minister made mention of important areas that affect recreational fishers in Port Phillip Bay, the King George whiting fishery and the snapper fishery. She also said that the Marine and Freshwater

Research Institute will be conducting chemical tagging of snapper.

The matter I raise is about the recent opening of the trout season. An invitation was sent to the minister to attend the official opening on Friday, 1 September, at 9.30 a.m. at Lake Wendouree, specifically at the Boatshed Restaurant. A media release headed 'Trout season opens at Lake Wendouree' was issued for the opening.

On 3 September the trout season at Snobs Creek was opened, at which Rex Hunt attended. Until Thursday prior to the opening the Minister for Sport and Recreation was attending, but he pulled the plug on the Friday. The trout season at Snobs Creek was opened by the honourable member for Benalla.

What is more important is that the Minister for Energy and Resources did not open the trout season on 1 September. In fact, the honourable member for Ballarat East launched the trout season. In view of the absence from the opening by both ministers I ask the Minister for Energy and Resources whether she supports recreational fishing for trout in Victorian waters.

### Human Services: consultancies

**Hon. D. McL. DAVIS** (East Yarra) — I direct the attention of the Minister for Industrial Relations, as the representative of the Minister for Health in the other place, to a consultant called Socom, whose managing director is Sheila O'Sullivan.

I am interested to know about the consultancy on the inquiry into food regulation. I am interested to know what processes were followed when tendering for the public relations and consultancy work undertaken and the value of that contract.

### Electricity: tariffs

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** (Higinbotham) — I raise an issue for the Minister for Energy and Resources. It deals with her response to a question without notice from the Honourable Elaine Carbines on Tuesday. In essence the question was about electricity in country Victoria. In her answer the minister said that the government would take action to see that people in regional Victoria were not disadvantaged by the introduction of full retail competition.

I will paraphrase *Hansard* fairly accurately. The minister said that the government has legislated to ensure that it has the reserve power to regulate retail prices for electricity, if that proves to be necessary in

order for the commitment to be honoured. To the best of my knowledge and belief the only legislation passed to regulate electricity tariffs has been for the transitional period of phasing-in for full retail contestability, and there is no ongoing power for the government to regulate tariffs after 2003 when that full introduction will have taken place.

I also note in the minister's second-reading speech that when the bill was introduced earlier in the year the transitional power that has been legislated for had very significant caveats built around its use. The minister at the time said that it is the government's view that the power should be exercised only if a de facto monopoly exists, and that the party holding that de facto monopoly has or appears to have set retail prices resulting from a monopoly rent — in other words, a monopoly rather than just competition coming into place.

Is the minister signalling a change of policy by the government that it intends to regulate retail tariffs, or does she intend to simply have that for the transitional period as the legislation currently stands? Is this a change of policy?

### Mobile phones: emissions

**Hon. K. M. SMITH** (South Eastern) — I raise for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs an issue that is of grave concern to me and some honourable members in the chamber. I have just been handed a copy of an editorial in the Ballarat *Courier* of 20 September. The editorial states:

Locally, Mr Bracks' MPs have registered not much more than a blip on the political radar.

That statement refers to Ms Hadden and Mr McQuilten. My concern relates to the fact that Mr Lucas has asked a number of questions about the electromagnetic field that is emitted from telephones. The issue I raise with the minister is: have either of those two members become more than just a blip on the political radar?

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, the matter the honourable member is raising obviously does not have anything to do with government business. Last night the Chair reminded honourable members of the matters that can be raised on the adjournment. I ask that the honourable member's matter be ruled out of order.

**Hon. K. M. SMITH** — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, this most certainly is an issue of concern because I have only just been handed the paper. The electromagnetic field issue started off in the

house as a very small issue, but it has blown up to be something much larger. I have genuine concerns about members who may be sitting around these people.

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — On the point of order — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! There shall be no debating the point of order. Up to this point Mr Smith's contribution has nothing to do with government business. However, the honourable member is only part way through his contribution. I look forward to his reaching a conclusion on the issue shortly.

**Hon. K. M. SMITH** — I ask the minister to investigate whether there is any threat to the members in this house.

**Hon. M. M. Gould** — Further on the point of order, Mr Acting President, I ask you to rule that question out of order because according to the rules for debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting it is not relevant.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I feel I have no other option but to rule the adjournment issue of Mr Smith out of order.

### Responses

**Hon. M. M. GOULD** (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The Honourable Carlo Furletti referred a matter to the Minister for Health. I will ask the minister to respond.

The Honourable Roger Hallam asked what action the government is taking on unfair dismissals for state public servants. That matter was raised in connection with the industrial relations task force, and the government is considering it. That issue will be covered when the government makes its response to that report.

The Honourable Bill Forwood referred to the concerns of the chief executive officer of the Hindmarsh Shire Council, Neil Jacobs, about the recommendations of the task force. The government is still considering those recommendations. When it has considered them I will be happy to talk directly with the council on the outcome. I will be able to have discussions when the government has formed its view. I would be happy for the officers to get in touch with me, or I can get in touch with them to discuss the matter.

The Honourable David Davis raised a matter to which I believe a response is inappropriate. The matter should be put on notice because it relates to the cost of consultancies by the Minister for Health.

**Hon. D. McL. Davis** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT** — Order! I rule that the request of the Leader of the Government is fair and reasonable, and I am sure the honourable member will be able to do that.

**Hon. C. C. BROAD** (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The Honourable Neil Lucas asked the Minister for State and Regional Development to clarify the definition of regional areas as between the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund legislation and the Constitution (Proportional Representation) Bill. I will refer that matter to the minister.

The Honourable Peter Hall asked the Minister for Transport to indicate when a decision will be made on the matter of returning rail services to Bairnsdale. I will refer it to the minister.

The Honourable Graeme Stoney asked the Minister for Transport to ensure that the Cooper Street upgrade at Epping goes ahead and for the minister to implement the promises of the previous government on the matter. I will also refer the matter to the minister.

The Honourable Ron Bowden requests the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place to ensure the Department of Natural Resources and Environment closely monitors the program to control foxes at Phillip Island with a view to extending the program to the Mornington Peninsula, where foxes are causing extensive damage. I will refer that matter to the minister.

The Honourable Maree Luckins requests the Minister for Local Government to indicate what action he will take to clarify the name and address details required for local government elections in order to avoid costly by-elections. I will refer that matter to the minister.

The Honourable Ian Cover referred to a charter boat operator in Geelong, a Mr Peters. I am not aware of the matter nor of the accuracy or otherwise of newspaper reports referred to by Mr Cover, but I undertake to examine the matter with interest.

The Honourable Geoff Craige referred to the opening of Fishing Week and asked for an indication of my support for trout fishing in Victorian waters. That is support I am most happy to give. It was unfortunate that, at the last moment, I was not able to attend the opening of Fishing Week on 1 September. I was grateful that the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment was able to undertake that responsibility on my behalf.

The Honourable Chris Strong asked whether I was signalling a change of policy regarding the regulation of retail prices of electricity and referred to legislation passed in the last session of Parliament. The government has been clear about the exercise of reserve powers and my answer was not signalling any change of government policy regarding that matter.

**Hon. M. R. THOMSON** (Minister for Small Business) — The Honourable Dianne Hadden raised for the attention of the Attorney-General in another place the intervention court support service operating in Ballarat, the only one in the region. It is currently funded until the end of September, but it has only a project officer who is not able to present to the court. Ms Hadden seeks to keep the service open and asks for assistance from the Attorney-General to see whether some solution can be found, perhaps through legal practitioners from Melbourne doing pro bono work. I will pass that on to the Attorney-General for his attention.

The Honourable Jeanette Powell raised for the attention of the Minister for Aged Care in another place the University of the Third Age, an issue that she raised on 3 June, which was responded to on 15 August. Since then some developments have occurred regarding the North Shepparton community house, which seeks funding to purchase a house next door to it that would accommodate the Goulburn Valley University of the Third Age. That would advance the program and assist the community. I will pass that on to the minister.

The Honourable Andrea Coote also raised for the attention of the Minister for Housing in another place support for funding for a survival kit that the Pahrnan–Malvern community housing group wants to provide to its client base. The application was rejected, and she seeks the minister's assistance in having the application reconsidered. I will pass that on to the minister.

The Honourable Andrew Olexander raised for the attention of the Minister for Aged Care in another place hospice and palliative care beds in the outer eastern suburbs where he says there is a critical shortage. The honourable member states that the GP group in a submission to the government requires 10 extra beds and he wants to know the status of the submission and whether it is supported by the minister. I will pass on that issue to the minister.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — The Honourable Kaye Darveniza referred to the attention of the Minister for Education in another place the high level of school absenteeism

among young women in the western suburbs. I will refer that issue to the Minister for Education.

The Honourable Elaine Carbines referred to the Paralympics and the torch-lighting ceremony. There has been plenty of excitement over the past few weeks with our Olympic representatives, but honourable members will appreciate that the Sydney Paralympic Games will be held from 18 October to 29 October. With the Minister for Community Services I was fortunate enough to attend a send-off for the Paralympians. It was an excellent event and served as an inspiration not just to those in attendance but to youngsters from the Whiteline program.

The government has provided \$150 000 to the Paralympic team fund, and honourable members will appreciate that a number of the athletes are supported by the Victorian Institute of Sport. Victoria will be represented by 54 athletes in 18 sports — archery, athletics, basketball, Bocce, cycling, equestrian, fencing, soccer, goal ball, judo, power lifting, rugby, sailing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, tennis and volleyball.

On behalf of all honourable members we wish them well and look forward to their participating as they rightly deserve in the manner they do because they commit so many hours and are so dedicated. Although they may be an inspiration to all of us, they prefer not to be seen as an inspiration, but as athletes who compete at the highest level they are able to achieve. I again wish them all the best and hope they have a wonderful time and enjoy themselves. Whatever they bring home, we will hold them in the highest esteem.

The Honourable Sang Nguyen raised for the attention of the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment the linking of community organisations working with groups in his area concerned about high unemployment. I will refer that matter to the minister, who will reply in due course.

The Honourable Peter Katsambanis raised with me the Carlton Soccer Club. As I have said on a number of occasions, in my former life I was the honorary chairman of the club and I am well aware of the situation regarding the Bob Jane Stadium. I have instructed officers of my department to contact Parks Victoria and hold discussions about a range of issues relating to sports facilities in areas managed by Parks Victoria. Parks Victoria may not have sports facilities at the top of its priorities, so we need to arrange suitable management arrangements in the parks that are managed by Parks Victoria.

**Hon. B. C. Boardman** — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I believe the Minister for Sport and Recreation has sat down prematurely.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — I thank the Honourable Cameron Boardman for his question in relation to the Herald Sun Tour. It is a great event that traverses regional Victoria. We are fortunate this year that the major sponsor will be Vicroads. It is an excellent partnership that will promote a range of issues. Not only does it promote cycling throughout regional Victoria, it gives Vicroads the opportunity to promote road safety, particularly issues associated with cycling safety.

Over a number of years Vichealth has provided excellent sponsorship for this event, and I look forward to it contributing some sponsorship in future years.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned 6.21 p.m. until Tuesday, 24 October.**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.  
Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.  
The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

**Tuesday, 3 October 2000**

**Education: Adult, Community and Further Education Board appointments**

**732. 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 person appointed to the Adult, Community and Further Education Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The question you have asked more directly relates to the responsibilities of the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment. The question needs to be redirected to that Minister.

**Education: Board of Studies appointments**

**733. 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 person appointed to the Board of Studies since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

On 21 December 1999, the Governor-in-Council made the following appointments:

- Professor Kwong Lee Dow (member and chairperson)
- Mr Peter Allen
- Ms Susan Pascoe
- Ms Bronwyn Valente
- Ms Margaret Bode
- Professor Merran Evans
- Mr John Maddock
- Ms Lynette Watts
- Mr John Sweetman
- Ms Chris Kotur (Acting CEO Board of Studies) is also a Board member

**Education: Council of Adult Education board appointments**

**734. 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 person appointed to the board of the Council of Adult Education since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The question you have asked more directly relates to the responsibilities of the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment. The question needs to be redirected to that Minister.

**Education: Registered Schools Board appointments**

**736. 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 person appointed to the Registered Schools Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The members of the Registered Schools Board appointed since 18 September 1999 are:

- Mr Robert Fearnside
- Ms Pauline Audley
- Mr Geoffrey Ryan
- Mr Maurice Wenn

**Education: Standards Council of the Teaching Profession appointments**

**737. 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 person appointed to the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

No person has been appointed to the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession since 18 September 1999.

**Education: State Training Board of Victoria appointments**

**738. 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 person appointed to the State Training Board of Victoria since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The question you have asked more directly relates to the responsibilities of the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment. The question needs to be redirected to that Minister.

**Women's Affairs: Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust board appointments**

**807. 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 person appointed to the board of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Since 18 September 1999, the following people have been appointed to the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust:  
Mesdames Baylor (Chair), Lau and Wise.

**Women's Affairs: Victoria Women's Council appointments**

**808. 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 person appointed to the Victoria Women's Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There have been no appointments to the Victoria Women's Council since 18 September 1999. In December 1999, members of the Victoria Women's Council were informed by the Minister for Women's Affairs of the discontinuance of the Council.

The Minister for Women's Affairs has established a new forum consisting of regular consultations by the Minister for Women's Affairs, and other Ministers with relevant portfolio responsibilities, with Victorian women and women's organisations. This new forum allows a broader range of women's views to be put directly to Government, and will inform the Bracks Government across a wide range of issues of relevance to women.

**Consumer Affairs: Business Licensing Authority appointments**

**809. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Business Licensing Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No new appointment has been made to the Business Licensing Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**Consumer Affairs: Defence Reserves Re-Employment Board appointments**

**810. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Defence Reserves Re-Employment Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Three people have been appointed to the Defence Reserves Re-Employment Board since 18 September 1999:

- G Logan, Chairperson, sessional, new appointment
- LWG Phillips, sessional, new appointment
- RS Webster, sessional, re-appointment

**Consumer Affairs: Estate Agents Council appointments**

**811. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Estate Agents Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Three people have been appointed to the Estate Agents Council since 18 September 1999:

- F Trimboli, Deputy Chairperson, sessional, re-appointment
- JW Cain, Chairperson, sessional, new appointment
- P Watson, sessional, new appointment

**Consumer Affairs: Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee appointments**

**812. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Two people have been re-appointed to the Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee since 18 September 1999:

- JE Collins (sessional)
- RS McLennan (sessional)

**Consumer Affairs: Patriotic Funds Council appointments**

**813. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Patriotic Funds Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Fifteen people have been appointed to the Patriotic Funds Council since 18 September 1999:

- FJ Bell, Re-appointment
- CW Edrich, Re-appointment
- WH Hall, Re-appointment
- JL Lambrou, New appointment
- G Logan, New appointment
- B Lynch, Re-appointment
- DN Parrot, Re-appointment
- LWG Phillips, New appointment
- AM Robb, Re-appointment
- SJ Ryan, New appointment
- MC Storey, Re-appointment
- GJ Tobin, New appointment
- KJ Walsh, New appointment
- T Walsh, Re-appointment
- RH Ward, Re-appointment (All sessional)

**Consumer Affairs: Prostitution Control Act Advisory Committee appointments**

**814. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Prostitution Control Act Advisory Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Eleven people have been re-appointed to the Prostitution Control Act Advisory Committee since 18 September 1999:

Ms AJ Arnot-Bradshaw  
 Ms KE Beggs  
 Ms PM Burgess  
 Det Sen Sgt S Clemence  
 Mr GP Code  
 Sr RA Crumlin  
 Ms JL Dixon  
 Captain SM Gibb  
 Ms ML Goldsmith  
 Ms M Pheonix  
 Ms DA Saad (All sessional)

**Consumer Affairs: Residential Tenancies Bond Authority appointments**

**815. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The Residential Tenancies Bond Authority is a one person Authority, consisting of the Director of Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria. On 7 February 2000 Ms Bernadette Steele assumed the position of Director, Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria, and in effect was also appointed to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority.

**Consumer Affairs: Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee appointments**

**816. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee ceased operation 20 December 1999 and will be abolished on 1 October 2000. No new appointment has been made to the Committee since 18 September 1999.

**Consumer Affairs: Victorian Financial Institutions Commission appointments**

**817. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each person appointed to the Victorian Financial Institutions Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

On 1 July 1999 the Commonwealth implemented the recommendations made in the Financial System Inquiry. This resulted in a transfer of the Victorian Financial Institutions Commission's functions in relation to building societies and credit unions to the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. The Commission's functions in relation to co-operative housing societies were transferred to the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance. The Commission wound up its administrative tasks on 30 September 1999.

**Agriculture: Food Science Australia board appointments**

**827. 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 person appointed to the board of Food Science Australia since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following people were appointed to the board of Food Science Australia during the period referred to in the question:

Mr John Claringbould, Mr Grant Latta and Dr Bruce Kefford.

**Agriculture: Melbourne Market Authority appointments**

**828. 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 person appointed to the Melbourne Market Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following people were appointed to the Melbourne Market Authority during the period referred to in the question:

Ms Diana Duck, Ms Virginia Falls and Mr Geoffrey Webb, Mr Michael Cook and Mr Maurice Pitard.

**Agriculture: Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board appointments**

**829. 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 person appointed the Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee appointments**

**830. 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 person appointed to Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Northern Victoria Fresh Tomato Industry Development Committee appointments**

**831. 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 person appointed to the Northern Victoria Fresh Tomato Industry Development Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following people were appointed to the Northern Victorian Fresh Tomato Industry Development Committee during the period referred to in the question:

Mr Anthony Mercuri, Mr Carlo Tartaglia, Mr Carmelo Vraca, Mr Ilahn Tanrikulu, Mr Raymond Holland, Mr Ross Wall and Mr Stuart Holland.

**Agriculture: Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria appointments**

**832. 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 person appointed to the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Victorian Broiler Industry Negotiation Committee appointments**

**833. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Broiler Industry Negotiation Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following person was appointed to the Victorian Broiler Industry Negotiation Committee during the period referred to in the question:

Mr Anthony Acciarito.

**Agriculture: Victorian Dairy Industry Authority appointments**

**834. 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 person appointed to the board the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the board of the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Victorian Emu Industry Development Committee appointments**

**835. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Emu Industry Development Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the Victorian Emu Industry Development Committee during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Victorian Meat Authority appointments**

**836. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Meat Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the board of the Victorian Meat Authority during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee appointments**

**837. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There were no appointments to the Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee during the period referred to in the question.

**Agriculture: Office of the Mining Warden appointments**

**838. 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 person appointed to the Office of the Mining Warden since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

This questions deals with issues outside my portfolio responsibilities and should be directed to the Minister for Energy and Resources.

**Energy and Resources: Sustainable Energy Authority board appointments**

**839. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What is the name of each person appointed to the board of the Sustainable Energy Authority (Formerly Energy Efficiency Victoria) since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following people were appointed to the board of the Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria during the period referred to in the question:

Mesdames Anthony, Lloyd and O’Sullivan, Messrs Bourne, Hill and Fitzmaurice and Dr Schaap.

**Environment and Conservation: Melbourne Water — added chemicals**

**840. THE HON. J. W. G. ROSS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Environment): What chemicals are added to Melbourne Water supplies and what are the total annual quantities of each added chemical.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

(a) Chemicals that need to be added to Melbourne’s water are:

**To disinfect water:**

- Chlorine
- Sodium Hypochlorite
- Ammonia

**To adjust the pH of water:**

- Lime
- Carbon Dioxide

**To provide effective water treatment at Winneke and Yan Yean Treatment Plants:**

- Alum
- Aluminium Chloro Hydrate

**To comply with the Health Act:**

- Fluoride

(b) On average the following quantities of the above chemicals are added to Melbourne's water.

- 550 tonnes per annum of **Chlorine Gas** is added to the water at a concentration typically between 0.6 and 1.2 mg/L (milligrams per litre or parts per million).
- 250 kilolitres per annum of **Sodium Hypochlorite** is used as an alternative to Chlorine Gas at some sites.
- 8 kilolitres per annum of **Ammonia** is used in conjunction with Sodium Hypochlorite at some sites.
- 2070 tonnes per annum of **Lime** is added to water after chlorination to stabilise the pH of the water and is dosed at a concentration typically between 3 and 5 mg/L.
- 12 tonnes per annum of **Carbon dioxide** is added to water after chlorination to stabilise the pH of the water and is dosed at a concentration typically between 3 and 8 mg/L.
- 1750 tonnes per annum of **Alum** (Aluminium Sulphate) is added to water as a coagulant and is dosed at a concentration typically between 12 and 18 mg/L.
- The alum is removed with particles from the water as part of the conventional water treatment process.
- 7 kilolitres per annum of Aluminium Chloro Hydrate is used as an alternative to Alum.
- 1030 tonnes per annum of **Fluoride** is added as required under the Health Act. Fluoride is dosed at a typical concentration of 0.9 mg/L.

**Community Services: Vic Parenting primary schools pilot project**

**847. THE HON. M. T. LUCKINS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): Will the Minister provide details of any agreement to fund any part of the Vic Parenting primary schools pilot project proposed by the Children's Taskforce in conjunction with the Victorian Parenting Centre.

**ANSWER:**

The Department of Education Employment and Training has provided \$55,000 to the Victorian Parenting Centre to employ a coordinator for the VicParenting in Primary Schools project. The coordinator will oversee the 12 month pilot phase of the VicParenting program in 20 primary schools. The VicParenting program is a school based parenting and family support strategy that will provide resources, information and education programs for parents in schools that have developed a family friendly environment.

The Government is currently considering the future directions of parenting services in Victoria and is committed to the provision of a range of prevention and early intervention services that are delivered in accessible, non-stigmatising environments.

**Arts: Regional Arts Infrastructure Fund**

**857. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): With regard to the government's election policy to develop the Regional Arts Infrastructure Fund to "tackle the backlog of arts infrastructure projects in Victoria" and to benefit the arts in Regional Victoria:

- (a) How many rural and regional communities, municipalities, public art galleries and museums have received funds from Categories One (Regional Performing Arts Centres) and Two (Regional Galleries and Museums) of the Regional Infrastructure Fund.
- (b) What portions of these funds were acquired from the Commonwealth Government and State Government, respectively.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

In response to part (a) of your question:

- Since the Fund was launched in April 2000, four grants have been approved. Three have been for performing arts centres and one for a regional gallery. A number of other projects are also being assessed for funding under the program and announcements of further grants are anticipated in the near future.

In response to part (b) of your question:

- All funds for the Regional Arts Infrastructure Fund are provided through the State Government

**Arts: metropolitan arts infrastructure projects**

**860. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): With regard to the growing demand on the arts in metropolitan Melbourne:

- (a) How many arts infrastructure projects have been developed by the government since October 1999.
- (b) What is the nature of the arts infrastructure projects in place.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

In response to part (a) of your question:

- Malthouse Plaza Project has received project-funding approval since October 1999.

In response to part (b) of your question, current arts infrastructure projects include:

- Melbourne Museum - construction finalised
- Royal Exhibition Building - refurbishment
- State Library of Victoria - refurbishment
- National Gallery of Victoria - refurbishment commenced
- Federation Square (including The Ian Potter Centre NGV: Australian Art, and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image)
- Sidney Myer Music Bowl – refurbishment
- The Museum of Modern Art at Heidi project is also being progressed with State Government funding.

**Treasurer: asset investment projects**

**861. THE HON. R. M. HALLAM** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What are the major new asset investment projects in 1999–2000 and 2000–01 from which the comparative investment in rural and regional Victoria, as cited at page 5 of Budget Information Paper No. 1, is drawn.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the total cost of new rural and regional asset investment projects that commenced in 1999-2000 (\$302 million) included the following major projects:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Total estimated investment \$ thousand</b>
Geelong Road – WWR section to Little River, road construction	77 000
Geelong Road – Little River to Geelong, road construction	41 500
Wangaratta Base Hospital – Stage 2 – redevelopment	14 650
Ballarat – Camp St – renovation of State building for Ballarat University	12 000
South Gippsland Highway – Swing Bridge Project (Sale to Longford) – Stage 1 – Bridge replacement	10 500
Rural Modal interchanges – amenities improvement	10 000
Rural School bus safety – improving bus bays, shelters and paving	10 000
South Gippsland Highway – develop road between Lang Lang and Loch – route improvements	7 000
Lorne Community Hospital	6 000
Barwon Health Geelong Community Health Centre redevelopment at Geelong	5 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>194 150</b>

The balance of the new projects in 1999-2000 contain smaller projects including new and upgraded school facilities, redevelopments to rural health centres and other rural road works.

I am also informed that the total cost of new rural and regional asset investment projects commencing in 2000-01 (\$516 million) includes the following major projects:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Total estimated investment \$ thousand</b>
Goulburn Valley Hwy (135.0km. to 150.0km.) - bypass / new road links - Murchison East deviation construction - (Strathbogie Shire)	94 000
Fast Rail links to regional centres - (Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon)	80 000
Accident Blackspots - various locations - treatments (Various rural and regional)	60 000
Nursing Home - upgrades (rural)	47 500
Calder Highway to Bendigo – Carlsruhe Section - duplication	25 000
Barwon and Loddon prison expansion – construction (Castlemaine and Lara)	20 300
Warrnambool and Mildura Court Houses - construction	16 800
Colac Hospital – redevelopment of facilities	13 500
Kyneton Hospital – new hospital	11 000
Agriculture Victoria Institute redevelopment – Horsham and Sunraysia – Research Institute	10 000
Radiotherapy – service in Bendigo	10 000
Bruthen /Nowa-Nowa Rd – resheet, widening, realignment and regrading	7 900
Ballarat Health Services - redevelopment	6 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>402 000</b>

The balance of the new projects in rural and regional areas commencing in 2000-01 contain smaller projects including a large number of new and upgraded school facilities, a further \$12 million for rural arterial bridge and

road projects and just under \$15 million for the construction of new police stations in Bacchus Marsh, Kinglake, Moe and Seymour.

**Treasurer: asset investment projects**

**862. THE HON. R. M. HALLAM** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Will the Treasurer explain the variance in the total of major new asset investment projects in 2000–01 as cited at pages 5 (implicitly) and 7 and 9 (explicitly) of Budget Paper No.1.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the \$1 278.9 million cited on page 7 represents the total budget sector investment in assets in the year 2000-01. This figure **includes** minor asset investments that fall below the threshold of \$100 000 for inclusion in the document. Table 2.1 on page 9 cites estimates expenditure in the year 2000-01 for total projects at \$1 253.6 million. This figure **excludes** minor asset investments. The \$1 253.6 million plus minor asset investments below the \$100 000 threshold make up the \$1 278.9 million. Pages 1 and 8 of the document note the threshold criteria.

**Community Services: Workcover premiums — non-government intellectually disabled centres**

**864. THE HON. M. T. LUCKINS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): Will the minister provide details of the total Workcover premium liability for all non-government intellectually disabled centres with service contracts and funding from the Victorian government for each of the periods 1999–2000 and 2000–01.

**ANSWER:**

There are some 330 non-Government agencies with Service Agreements and funding from the Victorian Government for the provision of services to Victorians with a disability. The majority of these agencies provide services to people with an intellectual disability. Many of these agencies may also receive funding from a number of sources, not just from the Victorian Government

The levels of the WorkCover premiums paid by individual agencies are part of their day to day commercial operations, vary according to the size of the agency and their individual WorkCover claims history. This is not information held by Government.

**Consumer Affairs: Associations Incorporation Act**

**865. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: Further to the answer to Question No. 629 given in this House on 29 August 2000:

- (a) What process is followed to ascertain whether or not a breach is inadvertent.
- (b) Who undertakes this process.
- (c) What appeals are available to a person or body who believes that the decision on whether a breach is inadvertent or not, is wrong.

**ANSWER:**

In response to the Honourable Member's question I advise the following:

- (a) 1. The process that is undertaken is that the complaint is investigated by an Inspector appointed pursuant to section 114 of the *Fair Trading Act* 1999.

2. Following the investigation the evidence obtained is examined, keeping in mind both the elements of proof required and the intention of the legislation, to ascertain whether in fact a prosecutable breach has occurred, whether the breach was inadvertent or deliberate and whether or not a prosecution is warranted.
3. The evaluation of the evidence is conducted by the Investigator concerned, with the assistance of the Legal Development Unit of Consumer and Business Affairs. These decisions are subject to managerial endorsement.

(b) Refer to paragraphs 1 and 3 of (a)

- (c) 1. Administrative decisions may be reviewed in the Supreme Court.
2. Alternatively the person concerned may wish to commence their own action against the Association and any persons involved for any alleged breaches of the legislation.

### **Environment and Conservation: tree spraying**

**867. THE HON. W. R. BAXTER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation):

- (a) What sums were expended in each of the past three financial years in spraying peppercorn trees on certain roads in Northern Victoria.
- (b) Under which program were these funds allocated
- (c) Is it intended to remove the now unsightly dead trees.
- (d) Is it intended to control regrowth that is now occurring.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

As the roads along which spraying of peppercorn trees was conducted have not been specified, the Minister is unable to answer the question.

### **Planning: responsibilities of minister assisting**

**954. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning: In the minister's assisting role, since March 2000 what specific responsibilities or tasks has the minister been allocated by the Minister for Planning, specifying in each case — (i) the responsibility or task involved; (ii) the date or dates when the responsibility or task was allocated; (iii) how this responsibility or task was communicated to the minister assisting; (iv) the duration of each responsibility or task; and (v) the precise nature of the work undertaken.

**ANSWER:**

I inform that:

I have a range of general responsibilities across the Planning portfolio in my capacity as Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning. In addition to those general responsibilities, I provide assistance to the Minister for Planning in the areas of administrative and policy functions, meetings with delegations, and attending public events on the Minister's behalf.

In addition to those general responsibilities, since March 2000 I have been allocated particular responsibility for assisting the Minister for Planning in the following area:

— Chevron

My responsibility for this matter is ongoing.

**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, 5 October 2000**

**Treasurer: Minister for Industrial Relations office**

**609. THE HON. D. M. DAVIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to the Minister for Industrial Relations' occupancy of her office at 9th Floor, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne 3002:

- (a) What was the total lease costs incurred during the period between the date the Minister for Industrial Relations and her staff occupied the office and the date the Minister for Industrial Relations and her staff vacated the office.
- (b) What is the total lease cost incurred in the period since the Minister for Industrial Relations and her staff vacated the office.

I am informed that:

- (a) At the time this Government took office the Department of Treasury and Finance already leased space on level 9, 35 Spring Street. This lease was due to expire on the 30 June 2000. The Minister established her office in vacant space on this level from the period 23/10/99 to 28/1/2000. The lease costs of \$35,552 for the period the Minister occupied this space were met by DTF under the terms of their existing lease. No additional lease costs were incurred by DTF as a result of the Minister's occupation of this space.
- (b) After the Minister vacated the office, the space was used to accommodate other existing DTF tenants during renovations elsewhere in the building.

**Planning: Building Advisory Council appointments**

**774. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Building Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Building Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999 are:

- Mr. Owen Lennie
- Mr. Tony Arnel
- Mr. Greg du Chateau
- Mr. John Gaffney
- Mr. Michael Kefford
- Mr. Jock Rankin
- Mr. Tony Cutcliffe
- Mr Bryan Miller
- Mr. Brian Welsh

**Planning: Building Appeals Board appointments**

**775. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Building Appeals Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Building Appeals Board since 18 September, 1999 are:

Ms. Ann Keddie	Mr. Shane Leonard
Mr. Max Chester	Mr. Peter Jacobs
Mr. John Williams	Mr. Brett Rogers
Mr. Glenn Eagles	Mr. Michael Norris
Mr. Paul Gardner	Mr. Peter Luzinat
Mr. Sean McGarrity	Mr. Stuart McLennan
Mr. Tony Zoanetti	Mr. Dominic Lai
Mr. Paul England	Mr. Peter Rodrigues
Mr. Mick Batskos	Mr. David Pumpa
Mr. James Mornane	Mr. Geoff Goddard
Mr. Glenn Evans	Ms. Gaye McKenzie
Ms. Judith Nicholson	Ms. Vivienne Topp

**Planning: Building Control Commission appointments**

**776. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Building Control Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Building Control Commission since 18 September, 1999 are:

Mr Peter Nassau  
Mr. Tony Arnel

**Planning: Building Practitioners Board appointments**

**777. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Building Practitioners Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Building Practitioners Board since 18 September, 1999 are:

Mr Len Barlow	Mr. Frank Masten
Mr David Curtain	Mr. David Newnham
Mr. Geoff Stephens	Mr. David Urie
Mr. William Brazenor	Mr. John Lee
Mr. Brian Marklew	Mr. Geoff Hardy

**Planning: Building Regulations Advisory Committee appointments**

**778. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Building Regulations Advisory Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Building Regulations Advisory Committee since 18 September, 1999 are:

Mr. Tony Arnel	Ms. Maggie Edmond
Mr. Glenn Evans	Ms. Virginia Kirton
Mr. David Nicholson	Mr. Michael Theisz
Mr. Tony Bratt	Mr. Neil Evans
Mr. John Kennedy	Mr John Permewan
Mr Peter Rodrigues	Mr. Geoff Swan
Mr Ross Thomson	

**Planning: Docklands Authority appointments**

**779. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Docklands Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as the Docklands Authority is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Planning: Heritage Council appointments**

**780. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Heritage Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Heritage Council since 18 September, 1999 are:

Ms Leonie Kelleher  
 Mr Andrew Lemon  
 Mr Peter Beaumont  
 Mr. John Dwyer  
 Dr. Walter Phillips  
 Mr. Brian Bubbers

**Planning: Marine Board of Victoria appointments**

**781. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Marine Board of Victoria since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as the Marine Board of Victoria is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Transport: Melbourne City Link Authority appointments**

**782. 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 person appointed to the Melbourne City Link Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Melbourne City Link Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**Planning: Melbourne Port Corporation appointments**

**783. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the board of the Melbourne Port Corporation since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as the board of the Melbourne Port Corporation is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Planning: Plumbing Industry Commission appointments**

**784. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Plumbing Industry Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Plumbing Industry Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**Transport: Public Transport Corporation board appointments**

**785. 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 person appointed to the board of the Public Transport Corporation since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the board of the Public Transport Corporation since 18 September, 1999 as it no longer exists.

**Transport: Vicroads board appointments**

**786. 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 person appointed to the board of Vicroads since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the board of VicRoads since 18 September, 1999.

**Planning: Urban Land Corporation board appointments**

**787. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the board of the Urban Land Corporation since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the board of the Urban Land Corporation since 18 September, 1999 are:

- Ms. Angelika Dickschen
- Mr. Owen Stuart Lennie
- Mr. Desmond John Glynn
- Mr. Mark William Sibree

**Planning: Victoria Grants Commission appointments**

**788. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Victoria Grants Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as the Victoria Grants Commission is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Planning: Victorian Channels Authority appointments**

**789. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Victorian Channels Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as the Victorian Channels Authority is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Transport: Accessible Transport consultative Council appointments**

**790. 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 person appointed to the Accessible Transport Consultative Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Accessible Transport Consultative Council since 18 September, 1999 as it no longer exists.

**Planning: Local Government and Planning Advisory Council appointments**

**791. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each person appointed to the Local Government and Planning Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Council.

**Transport: State Bicycle Committee appointments**

**792. 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 person appointed to the State Bicycle Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the State Bicycle Committee since 18 September, 1999 as it no longer exists.

**Transport: State Boating Council appointments**

**793. 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 person appointed to the State Boating Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

I am unable to provide an answer to this question as State Boating Council is not within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Transport: Victorian Public Transport Forum appointments**

**794. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Public Transport Forum since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Victorian Public Transport Forum since 18 September, 1999.

**Transport: Victorian Bicycle Advisory Council appointments**

**795. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Bicycle Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the Victorian Bicycle Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**Transport: Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council appointments**

**796. 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 person appointed to the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The appointments to the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999 are:

Mr. Ralph Green	Mr. Steve Chiodo
Mr. Michael Czajka	Mr. Cameron Cuthill
Mr. Peter Dunphy	Mr. Peter Ellard
Dr Narelle Haworth	Mr. Geoff Farrington
Mr. Geoff Kloot	Mr. Detlef Lamp
Mr. Graeme Laing	Mr. Ray Newland
Mr. Bob Nordlinger	Mr. Rob Smith
Ms. Moira Stewart	Dr Marcus Wigan
Mr. Paul Tierney	Mr. Ken Wootton

**Transport: Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council appointments**

**797. 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 person appointed to the board of the Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointments have been made to the board of the Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**Attorney-General: Law Reform and Advisory Council appointments**

**798. 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 person appointed to the Attorney-General's Law Reform and Advisory Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The Attorney-General's Law Reform Advisory Council ceased operation with the commencement of the new government in September 1999.

**Attorney-General: Crown Council appointments**

**799. 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 person appointed to the office of the Crown Council since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No new appointment has been made to the office of the Crown Council since 18 September 1999.

**Attorney-General: Judicial Remuneration Tribunal appointments**

**800. 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 person appointed to the Judicial Remuneration Tribunal since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No new appointment has been made to the Judicial Remuneration Tribunal since 18 September 1999. The part-time Member/Chairperson, the Honourable Dame Margaret Guilefoyle, and the part-time Members, Peter Salway and Sir Edward Woodward OBE, QC, have been re-appointed.

**Attorney-General: Legal Practice Board appointments**

**801. 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 person appointed to the Legal Practice Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No new appointment has been made to the Legal Practice Board since 18 September 1999.

**Attorney-General: Legal Profession Tribunal appointments**

**802. 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 person appointed to the Legal Profession Tribunal since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No new appointment has been made to the Legal Professional Tribunal since 18 September, 1999.

**Attorney-General: Municipal Electoral Tribunal appointments**

**803. 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 person appointed to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Eleven people have been appointed as sessional members to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal since 18 September 1999:

- Mr R F Betts, Magistrate, new appointment
- Ms AJ Bolger, Magistrate, new appointment
- Ms FA Broughton, Magistrate, new appointment
- Mr DH Corben, re-appointment
- Mr BF Docking, Retired Magistrate, re-appointment
- Ms CC English, Magistrate, new appointment
- Mr JW Hardy, Magistrate, new appointment
- Dr R Kiss, new appointment
- Dr C Mather, new appointment
- Ms JMJ Patrick, Magistrate, new appointment

Mr JC Tobin, Retired Magistrate, new appointment  
 Ms SM Wakeling, Magistrate, new appointment

**Attorney-General: Office of Solicitor-General appointments**

**804. 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 person appointed to the office of the Solicitor-General since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointment has been made to the office of the Solicitor-General since 18 September 1999.

**Attorney-General: Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal appointments**

**805. 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 person appointed to the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Section 19 of the *Victims of Crime Act* 1996 states that the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal consists of the Chief Magistrate and all other persons who hold the office of Magistrate under S.7 (or acting Magistrate under S.9) pursuant to the *Magistrates' Court Act* 1989. Consequently all eight Magistrates appointed since 18 September 1999 were automatically made members of the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal:

KH Auty  
 JW Hardy  
 MJ Patrick  
 FA Broughton  
 SM Wakeling  
 RF Betts  
 AJ Bolger  
 CC English

**Attorney-General: Victorian Legal Aid board appointments**

**806. 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 person appointed to the board of Victorian Legal Aid since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Two people have been appointed to the Victoria Legal Aid since 18 September 1999:

MJ Noone (sessional) Director  
 AW Parsons (full time) Managing Director

**Police and Emergency Services: Country Fire Authority board appointments**

**818. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the board of the Country Fire Authority since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Five people have been re-appointed to the Country Fire Authority since 18 September 1999:

- Mr PR Bishop (part time)
- Mr WE Davies (part time)
- Mr C Lang (part time)
- Ms H McGowan (part time)
- Cr FP Zeigler (part time)

**Police and Emergency Services: Country Fire Authority Appeals Commission appointments**

**819. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Country Fire Authority Appeals Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointment has been made to the Country Fire Authority Appeals Commission since 18 September 1999.

**Police and Emergency Services: Firearms Appeals Committee appointments**

**820. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed the Firearms Appeals Committee since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Thirteen people have been re-appointed to the Firearms Appeals Committee since 18 September 1999:

- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Mr T Clarke                   | Mr I Delacy   |
| Mr L Ford                     | Ms NC Ford    |
| Mr R Haugh                    | Mr D Hore     |
| Mr J Kelly                    | Mr P Martin   |
| Ms C Sparke                   | Ms M Thornton |
| Cr HM Wettenhall              | Mr C Whelan   |
| Mr B Woolmore (All sessional) |               |

**Police and Emergency Services: Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Appeals Commission appointments**

**821. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Appeals Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

No appointment has been made to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Appeals Commission since 18 September 1999.

**Police and Emergency Services: Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board appointments**

**822. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Three people have been appointed to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board since 18 September 1999:

- Mr C Caldwell re-appointment
- Mr JFX Dillon re-appointment
- Mr IO Spicer re-appointment (All sessional)

**Police and Emergency Services: Police Board of Victoria appointments**

**823. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to Police Board of Victoria since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The Police Board of Victoria was abolished on 2 April 2000. No appointment was made to the Police Board in the relevant period.

**Police and Emergency Services: Police Review Commission appointments**

**824. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Police Review Commission since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

The Police Review Commission was abolished on 2 April 2000. The Police Appeals Board came into effect on that day. No appointment was made to the Police Review Commission in the relevant period. Three people have been appointed to the Police Appeals Board since 18 September 1999:

- Mr JF Giuliano (full time)
- Ms R Hunt (part time)
- The Hon NM O'Bryan (part time) (previously a part time member of the Police Board)

**Police and Emergency Services: Private Agents Registry appointments**

**825. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Private Agents Registry since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Since 18 September 1999 appointments have been made in respect of the Private Agents Registry's (the Registry has five consultative committees):

**Police Security Liaison Consultative Committee**

No-one was appointed

**Crowd Control Consultative Committee**

Inspector D O'Brien (Deputy Registrar, Private Agents Registry)

Mr P Whitford

Mr P Ward

Mr S Elks

Mr M Siketa

Mr P Bennett

Mr P Hewett

**Guards and Patrols Consultative Council**

Inspector D O'Brien (Deputy Registrar, Private Agents Registry)

Mr P Whitford

Mr N Cook

**Private Agents Consultative Committee**

Inspector D O'Brien (Deputy Registrar, Private Agents Registry)

Mr W Gladman

Mr T Mangles

Mr N Wood

Mr S Simmonds

**Alarms Response Consultative Committee**

No-one was appointed

**Police and Emergency Services: Adult Parole Board appointments**

**826. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What is the name of each person appointed to the Adult Parole Board since 18 September, 1999.

**ANSWER:**

Nine people have been appointed to the Adult Parole Board since 18 September 1999:

Mr R Lucas (full time) Re-appointment

Ms P Carty-Salmon Re-appointment

Mr J Dugan (part time) Re-appointment

His Honour MB Kellam (part time) New appointment

Ms M Pitt (part time) Re-appointment

Mrs TA Sgambaro (part time) New appointment

Mr Justice BG Teague (part time) Re-appointment

Mr Justice FHR Vincent (part time) Re-appointment

Mr L Worth (part time) Re-appointment

**Transport: Vicroads enterprise agreement**

- 848. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):
- (a) What is the cost to Vicroads of the enterprise agreement between Vicroads and APESMA, signed in the first half of 2000.
  - (b) Does the agreement offer performance pay of up to 10% per year; if so, what is the anticipated cost to Vicroads in 2000–01.
  - (c) Does the agreement offer retrospective payments; if so, what was the cost in 1999–2000 and what will be the cost in 2000–01.
  - (d) What will be total increase in the salary bill for Vicroads staff between 1999–2000 and 2000–01.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) The agreement with APESMA offers three annual 3% salary increases. The cost to VicRoads is estimated at \$2.3M over three years.
- (b) The agreement with APESMA offers performance pay for outstanding individuals of up to 10% in a year. The cost to VicRoads is estimated at \$0.5M in 2000-2001.
- (c) The agreement does not offer retrospective payments.
- (d) Total salaries will increase from \$103.2M to \$108.6M. The total program to be delivered will increase from \$795M to \$946M in the same period.

**Manufacturing Industry: Furnishing Festival, July 2000**

- 849. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): With respect to the Furnishing Festival in July 2000:
- (a) What funds did the government allocate to the festival.
  - (b) What funds did the CFMEU allocate.
  - (c) Why was the CFMEU logo featured on advertisements for the festival alongside the Victorian government's logo.
  - (d) At whose direction was the union given such prominence.

**ANSWER:**

The Government provided a grant of \$150,000 to the Melbourne Furnishing Festival Inc. Sponsorship arrangements are the responsibility of the event organisers, Melbourne Furnishing Festival Inc.

**Transport: Port Melbourne — public transport**

- 850. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): With regard to the high level of development in the Port Melbourne area and the commensurate rise in population, has the Minister carried out a study to measure the rising need for increased public transport services in the Port Melbourne area; if so, will it be made available to the public

**ANSWER:**

At the present time no studies have been undertaken in the Port Melbourne area to determine the need for Public Transport Services.

The Department of Infrastructure and the City of Port Phillip are jointly preparing a study brief for a Traffic and Parking Strategy.

One of the key objectives of this study will be to consider the role of public transport, including linkages with other areas of the City of Port Phillip. This will include the St.Kilda and Elwood Foreshores and Carlisle Street Balaclava, as a legitimate solution to assist in the resolution of traffic and parking issues.

**Arts: Festivals Development Fund**

**851. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): With regard to the Festivals Development Fund as a significant part of the festival and event program and its status as being “currently under review”:

- (a) When did the review start.
- (b) When is its conclusion anticipated.
- (b) What are the terms of reference for the review.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Festival Development Fund review commenced in late July 2000 and the conclusion of the review is anticipated by 31 March 2001. The terms of reference of the review are not intended to be of a major or complex nature and are to examine areas of specific demand for festival and event development in the context of the overall Festival and Event funding program.

**Arts: Victoria commission funding grant**

**852. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): With regard to the Victoria commission’s funding grant and its status as being “currently under review”:

- (a) When did the review start.
- (b) When is its conclusion anticipated.
- (c) What are the terms of reference for the review.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The review has been completed. The closing date for submissions to the program is 30 October 2000. This information was advertised in the Melbourne Age on 2 September 2000 and is available from Arts Victoria’s website.

**Arts: digital media funding grant**

**853. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): With regard to the digital media funding grant and its status as being “currently under review”:

- (a) When did the review start.
- (b) When is its conclusion anticipated.
- (c) What are the terms of reference for the review.
- (d) Who is undertaking the review.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The review commenced in February 2000, and the conclusion of the review is anticipated by 30 November 2000. The terms of reference for the review are to chart current digital media funding programs offered by Arts Victoria and Cinemedia’s Digital Media Fund particularly in reference to the support of e-business and training strategies for small to medium size arts organisations. Arts Victoria is undertaking the review.

**State and Regional Development: Industrial Supplies Office**

**854 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): Further to the answer to Question No. 611 given in this house on 29 August 2000:

- (a) Why does the Minister’s answer not reveal what public funds were provided to the Industrial Supplies Office in 1999–2000 and will be paid to it in 2000–01.
- (b) Why did the Minister cite the annual report of the Department of State and Regional Development as a source for the funding details when the 1999–2000 Annual Report has not yet been published.

**ANSWER:**

My answer to question no. 611 made it clear that Government funding for the ISO is in accordance with existing, ongoing contractual arrangements and that, consistent with normal accountability requirements, details are reported annually to Parliament through the Department’s annual report. The 1999-2000 annual report will be tabled by 31 October 2000.

**Transport: Port Melbourne — vehicle study**

**858. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): With regard to the high level of development in the Port Melbourne area and the commensurate rise in population, pedestrians and traffic, has the Minister carried out a study on the types of vehicles using the roads and the noise levels that result.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that a number of traffic studies have been completed for the various individual projects within the Port Melbourne Development area.

The Department of Infrastructure and the City of Port Phillip are in the process of preparing a Port Melbourne Development Area Traffic and Parking Strategy which will identify and investigate the needs and issues associated

with traffic, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists, parking and in-line skaters for the existing and future development in this area. The proposed strategy does not include consideration of noise levels.

VicRoads, the Department of Infrastructure and the Melbourne Port Corporation (MPC) will jointly be developing a strategy to encourage port related traffic, particularly trucks to access the port via West Gate Freeway, rather than using alternative routes. The overall study and consultation process examining the traffic impacts of port development including truck volumes and noise on Williamstown Road is expected to take around 12 months.

**Transport: Port Melbourne — traffic planning**

**859. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): Given the level of development in the Port Melbourne area and the commensurate rise in population, pedestrians and traffic, what attention is being directed toward appropriate planning alterations to cater for the increase in population and traffic levels regarding traffic speed, traffic levels and pedestrian safety.

**ANSWER:**

The Department of Infrastructure and the City of Port Phillip are in the process of engaging a consultant to assist in the preparation of a Port Melbourne Development Area Traffic and Parking Strategy.

The strategy will identify and investigate the needs and issues associated with traffic, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists, parking and in-line skaters for the existing and future development in this area.

The strategy will build on those studies which have previously been conducted for some of the major developments and fill the gaps of other areas not previously considered.

VicRoads, the Department of Infrastructure and the Melbourne Port Corporation (MPC) will jointly be developing a strategy to encourage port related traffic, particularly trucks to access the port via West Gate Freeway, rather than using alternative routes.

A consultative working party with VicRoads, the Department of Infrastructure, the City of Port Phillip, MPC, the truck industry and local resident representatives will be formed to assist in providing input and comment upon the overall network proposals and options for the reduction of truck traffic and improvement of amenity along Williamstown Road.

The overall study and consultation process examining the traffic impacts of port development including the impacts on Williamstown Road is expected to take around 12 months.

As part of the process to implement the Government's 50km/h urban speed limit on local roads, VicRoads is consulting with the City of Port Phillip to determine the appropriate speed limits on roads in the municipality.

**Police and Emergency Services: Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union**

**866. THE HON. B. C. BOARDMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services):

- (a) What are the details of the ongoing police investigation into allegations by the Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), Mr Martin Kingham, in early February, regarding an attack on a CFMEU shop steward, Mr Colin Reddie.
- (b) Will the Minister advise when the investigation is likely to be completed.
- (c) Will the Minister make public the results of the investigation.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed by my colleague the Honourable Minister for Police and Emergency Services that the investigation is still continuing and that it is not possible to provide further details of the investigation at this stage as to do so may prejudice the future conduct of the investigation.

**Arts: Touring Victoria fund**

**916. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): In respect of the published program objectives for the Touring Victoria fund, since October 1999:

- (a) Have regular touring circuits been established; if so, what are these circuits.
- (b) Which regional arts groups, producers and creators have maximised distribution opportunities.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

In response to part (a) of your question:

- An outcome of Touring Victoria has been that levels of programming in the regional performing arts centre and gallery networks has increased.

In response to part (b) of your question:

- Regionally based recipients of funding during the designated time period include Bairnsdale based Arts Network East Gippsland, Hothouse Theatre Company in Wodonga, and Just Shows to Go in Marysville.

**Arts: Touring Victoria fund**

**917. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): In respect of the published program objectives for the Touring Victoria fund, since October 1999:

- (a) Which rural and regional communities have been visited.
- (b) Which major metropolitan arts and cultural festivals have visited rural and regional Victoria.
- (c) How much did these visits cost.
- (d) How have these visits been evaluated to see how the fund has increased the quality, quantity and diversity of touring activity.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

In response to part (a) of your question:

- 58 regional communities have received tours supported by Touring Victoria since October 1999.

In response to part (b) of your question:

- The Melbourne International Festival, the Melbourne Fringe Festival, the Melbourne Comedy Festival and the Melbourne International Film Festival are all involved in extending elements of their programs to regional areas.

In response to part (c) of your question:

- I recommend that you seek this information from the relevant festivals boards.

In response to part (d) of your question:

- Funding proposals are recommended for support by the program's peer assessment panel.

**Youth Affairs: regional youth committees**

**921. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Youth Affairs: What is the name of each person and the date they were appointed to each of the fifteen regional youth committees.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

A list of all 15 Regional Youth Committee Chairs is attached for your reference, and is accurate to 31 August 2000.

There are over 150 Regional Youth Committee (RYC) members. The names of individual members of RYCs are not provided in the interests of protecting their privacy. Individual membership lists can be sought through the Chairperson of each Committee, names will be released only on the agreement of the individual member.

Terms of appointment shall normally be for two years, with current members appointed from 3 July 2000.

**SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Dave Glazebrook

**NORTHERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Ainslie Hannan

**EASTERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Di Childs

**INNER CITY REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Jack Melbourne

**WESTERN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Sally James

**BARWON REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Frank O'Neil

**SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Francis Broekman

**GIPPSLAND EAST REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Paul Harper

**GIPPSLAND CENTRAL REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Peter Craighead

**WIMMERA REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Christine Harrison

**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Dianne Noyce

**NORTH EASTERN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Julie Rawson

**GOULBURN REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE**

Rowena Allen

LODDON CAMPASPE REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Kerry Watson

MALLEE REGIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Cheryl Gray

**Youth Affairs: youth liaison officers**

**922. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Youth Affairs: What is the name of each of the seven youth liaison officers recently appointed and for which committee(s) does each have responsibility.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The following is a list of officers appointed to the Youth Liaison Officer positions (YLOs) and their respective DEET regions and Regional Youth Committees. They are:

Ms Alison Drysdale	Eastern and Southern Metropolitan Regions Eastern Metropolitan RYC Southern Metropolitan RYC
Ms Cathy Meynell-James	Northern and Western Metropolitan Regions Northern Metropolitan RYC Western Metropolitan RYC Inner City RYC
Ms Leonie Saundry	Barwon-South Western Region Barwon RYC South Western RYC
Mr Vincent Sully	Central Highlands-Wimmera Region Central Highlands RYC Wimmera RYC
Ms Tamara Mulherin	Goulburn-North Eastern Region Goulburn RYC North Eastern RYC
Mr Neil Smith (until 22 /9)	Gippsland Region Central Gippsland RYC East Gippsland RYC
Ms Sue Renn	Loddon Campaspe-Mallee Region Loddon Campaspe RYC Mallee RYC

**Youth Affairs: regional youth committees**

**923. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Youth Affairs: Do regional youth committee members receive a payment and/or other benefits for each day or half-day the committees sit; if so, how much or what other benefit.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

No member of a Committee or sub-committee shall receive any payment for his or her services as a member. However Committee members who are not government members, may be eligible for reimbursement for travel and other legitimate Committee expenses.

**Youth Affairs: regional youth committees**

**924. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Youth Affairs: How often does each regional youth committee meet.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

How often Regional Youth Committees meet varies per region. Generally metropolitan Committees meet on a monthly basis, while rural Committees tend to meet on a six weekly or bi-monthly basis.

**Transport: Traralgon line — V/Line passenger subsidy**

**957. THE HON. G. B. ASHMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):

- (a) What is the subsidy paid by the Government to V/Line Passenger per passenger on the Traralgon train line.
- (b) What is the total payment by the Government to V/Line Passenger for the operation of the Traralgon train line.
- (c) How many passengers travel on the Traralgon train line per day.
- (d) How many passengers travel on the Traralgon train line using a concession card, per day.
- (e) How many passenger services operate on the Traralgon train line per day.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) & (b) You have asked about the subsidy per passenger and the total payments made to V/Line Passenger in relation to services on the Traralgon line.

Under the V/Line Passenger Franchise Agreement payment an annual subsidy amount is payable. This is not broken down for services on a line by line basis.

- (c) Passenger numbers reported to the Department of Infrastructure by V/Line Passenger for the June Quarter for the Traralgon line are:

Route	Notes	Passenger Numbers June Quarter 2000
Traralgon	includes passengers on Melbourne – Warragul, Melbourne-Traralgon and Melbourne-Sale services	216,893

- (d) The Department of Infrastructure does not have the information you seek in relation to the number of concession travellers.
- (e) The number of V/Line Passenger services for the Traralgon line are:

Number of V/Line Passenger Trains on Each Route Per Day				
Route	Notes	Mon-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Traralgon	includes Melbourne – Warragul, Melbourne-Traralgon and Melbourne-Sale services	26	13	8

**Transport: Geelong line — V/Line passenger subsidy**

958. **THE HON. G. B. ASHMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):

- (a) What is the subsidy paid by the Government to V/Line Passenger per passenger on the Geelong train line.
- (b) What is the total payment by the Government to V/Line Passenger for the operation of the Geelong train line.
- (c) How many passengers travel on the Geelong train line per day.
- (d) How many passengers travel on the Geelong train line using a concession card, per day.
- (e) How many passenger services operate on the Geelong train line per day.

**ANSWER:**

(a) & (b) You have asked about the subsidy per passenger and the total payments made to V/Line Passenger in relation to services on the Geelong line.

Under the V/Line Passenger Franchise Agreement payment an annual subsidy amount is payable. This is not broken down for services on a line by line basis.

(c) Passenger numbers reported to the Department of Infrastructure by V/Line Passenger for the June Quarter for the Geelong line are:

Route	Notes	Passenger Numbers June Quarter 2000
Geelong	excludes passengers on West Coast Rail services	496,206

(d) The Department of Infrastructure does not have the information you seek in relation to the number of concession travellers.

(e) The number of V/Line Passenger services for the Geelong line are:

Number of V/Line Passenger Trains on Each Route Per Day				
Route	Notes	Mon-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Geelong	excludes West Coast Rail services	45	31	18

**Transport: Bendigo line — V/Line passenger subsidy**

959. **THE HON. G. B. ASHMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):

- (a) What is the subsidy paid by the Government to V/Line Passenger per passenger on the Bendigo train line.

- (b) What is the total payment by the Government to V/Line Passenger for the operation of the Bendigo train line.
- (c) How many passengers travel on the Bendigo train line per day.
- (d) How many passengers travel on the Bendigo train line using a concession card, per day.
- (e) How many passenger services operate on the Bendigo train line per day.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) & (b) You have asked about the subsidy per passenger and the total payments made to V/Line Passenger in relation to services on the Bendigo line.

Under the V/Line Passenger Franchise Agreement payment an annual subsidy amount is payable. This is not broken down for services on a line by line basis.

- (c) Passenger numbers reported to the Department of Infrastructure by V/Line Passenger for the June Quarter for the Bendigo line are:

Route	Notes	Passenger Numbers June Quarter 2000
Bendigo	includes passengers on Melbourne-Sunbury/Kyneton/Bendigo/Echuca/Swan Hill services	542,602

- (d) The Department of Infrastructure does not have the information you seek in relation to the number of concession travellers.

- (e) The number of V/Line Passenger services for the Bendigo line are:

Number of V/Line Passenger Trains on Each Route Per Day				
Route	Notes	Mon-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Bendigo	includes Melbourne-Sunbury/Kyneton/Bendigo/Echuca/Swan Hill services	50	20	15

**Transport: Ballarat line — V/Line passenger subsidy**

**960. THE HON. G. B. ASHMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):

- (a) What is the subsidy paid by the government to V/Line Passenger per passenger for operation of the Ballarat train line.
- (b) What is the total payment by the government to V/Line Passenger for the operation of the Ballarat train line.
- (c) How many passengers travel on the Ballarat train line per day.
- (d) How many passengers travel on the Ballarat train line using a concession card, per day.
- (e) How many passenger services operate on the Ballarat train line per day.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) & (b) You have asked about the subsidy per passenger and the total payments made to V/Line Passenger in relation to services on the Ballarat line.

Under the V/Line Passenger Franchise Agreement payment an annual subsidy amount is payable. This is not broken down for services on a line by line basis.

- (c) Passenger numbers reported to the Department of Infrastructure by V/Line Passenger for the June Quarter for the Ballarat line are:

Route	Notes	Passenger Numbers June Quarter 2000
Ballarat	includes passengers on Melbourne-Bacchus Marsh/Ballarat services	385,701

- (d) The Department of Infrastructure does not have the information you seek in relation to the number of concession travellers.

- (e) The number of V/Line Passenger services for the Ballarat line are:

Number of V/Line Passenger Trains on Each Route Per Day				
Route	Notes	Mon-Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Ballarat	includes Melbourne-Bacchus Marsh/Ballarat services	50	17	12

