

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Thursday, 19 April 2012

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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Standing Orders Committee — The Speaker, Ms Barker, Mr Brooks, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Green, Mr Hodgett, Mr McIntosh and Mrs Powell.

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Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Battin and Mr McCurdy. (*Council*): Mr Leane, Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mr Foley, Mr Noonan and Mr Shaw. (*Council*): Mrs Peulich.

Education and Training Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Ms Miller and Mr Southwick. (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr and Ms Tierney.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria. (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Bull, Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford. (*Council*): Mr Koch.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Mrs Bauer, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McGuire and Mr Wakeling. (*Council*): Mrs Coote and Ms Crozier.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Ms Campbell, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Graley, Mr Wakeling and Mr Weller. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Drum, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, and Mr P. Davis.

Law Reform Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Carbines, Ms Garrett, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Northe. (*Council*): Mrs Petrovich.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Graley, Ms Hutchins and Ms McLeish. (*Council*): Mrs Kronberg and Mr Ondarchie.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Hennessey, Mr Morris and Mr Scott. (*Council*): Mr P. Davis, Mr O'Brien and Mr Pakula.

Road Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Languiller, Mr Perera, Mr Tilley and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): Mr Elsbury.

Rural and Regional Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller. (*Council*): Mr Drum.

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Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

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The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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Brumby, Mr John Mansfield ¹	Broadmeadows	ALP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
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Campbell, Ms Christine Mary	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Mathew	Williamstown	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
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Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Tarneit	ALP
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D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
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Hodgett, Mr David John	Kilsyth	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
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Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wreford, Ms Lorraine Joan	Mordialloc	LP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Ballarat West	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP			
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP			

¹ Resigned 21 December 2010

² Elected 24 March 2012

³ Resigned 27 January 2012

⁴ Elected 19 February 2011

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Thursday, 19 April 2012

The SPEAKER (Hon. Ken Smith) took the chair at 9.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

Mr O'BRIEN giving notice of motion:

Ms D'Ambrosio interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! We do not call points of order when notices of motion are being made; we call them afterwards.

Mr O'BRIEN continued giving notice of motion.

Ms D'Ambrosio — On a point of order, Speaker, I believe the last notice of motion breached the word limit of 250 words. I ask that you make a ruling on that.

The SPEAKER — Order! We will have a look at that.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion: removal

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise the house that under standing order 144 notices of motion 12 to 21 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notices to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Victorian certificate of applied learning: funding

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the state government's axing of \$48 million funding for the Victorian certificate of applied learning program.

In particular, we note:

1. VCAL provides an important learning alternative to the VCE for students across Victoria.
2. Secondary schools stand to lose up to \$125 000 in funding which will impact heavily on teachers expected

to deliver the support and services despite having inadequate time and resources to do so.

3. Funding has been axed despite strong objections from principals, teachers, parents and students across Victoria.

The petitioners therefore request that the state government immediately reverse its decision and restore funding to this vital program as a matter of urgency.

By Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (505 signatures).

Liquefied petroleum gas: pricing

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of Jay de Silva of 7 Kristen Close, Glen Waverley, Victoria, 3150, points out to the house that:

the recent increase in the price of LPG in Victoria is unjustified and is caused by blatant profiteering because:

- a. the increase is not caused by the increase in the world price of LPG as maintained by the fuel industry because Victoria does not import any LPG;
- b. as LPG in Victoria costs only about 3 cents per litre (CPL) (2.087 CPL for naturally occurring LPG and 3.056 CPL for waste LPG collected from refineries), after adding storage, distribution costs and profits, its wholesale price is about 12 CPL and after adding retail costs, profits and the new tax of 2.5 CPL, it can be retailed for as low as 25 CPL, selling it for 88 CPL is profiteering at an exorbitant and unreasonable level;
- c. the ACCC advises that there is no legislation that permits the fuel industry to base retail prices on world prices (import parity price) or to add imaginary freight cost from Saudi Arabia plus imaginary insurance and wharfage costs, as none of these apply to LPG retailed in Victoria as no LPG is imported; and
- d. the threat by the oil industry that if it is not permitted to sell at the world price, it can export all LPG sourced from Victoria and not provide any for local consumption is baseless because the government of Victoria will not permit its citizens to be deprived of an essential natural resource that belongs to the people of Victoria.

The petitioner therefore requests that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria either reintroduces price control for LPG in Victoria or de-links the import parity price from the retail price of LPG in Victoria, because:

- e. it is the responsibility of the government of Victoria to protect the people from exploitation;
- f. introducing price control for LPG in Victoria or de-linking a non-existent IPP cost from the retail price is the responsibility of the government of Victoria and not the federal government;
- g. there is no legislation that authorises the use of the IPP to calculate the price of LPG in Victoria;
- h. it is probably fraudulent to include non-existing cost factors when calculating the price of an essential

commodity, thereby misleading consumers and lawmakers;

- i. the price of LPG was controlled until 1991 and though one of the justifications for deregulation of prices was that it would reduce prices through competition, the reverse has taken place; and
- j. the oil industry has proved itself unable to regulate itself to provide reasonable prices.

By Mr WELLS (Scoresby) (1 signature).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Ivanhoe be considered next day on motion of Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe).

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Financial and performance outcomes 2009–10 and 2010–11

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) presented report, together with appendices, minority report and extracts from proceedings.

Tabled.

Ordered to be printed.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

- Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Box Hill Institute of TAFE — Report 2011 (two documents)
- Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Chisholm Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Driver Education Centre of Australia Ltd — Report 2011
- East Gippsland Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Gordon Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE — Report 2011 (two documents)
- Holmesglen Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- South West Institute of TAFE — Report 2011
- Sunraysia Institute of TAFE — Report 2011

William Angliss Institute of TAFE — Report 2011

Wodonga Institute of TAFE — Report 2011.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 1 May 2012.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Shell Road Reserve, Ocean Grove: facilities

Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) — With the state budget only a couple of weeks away, I wanted to remind the Minister for Sport and Recreation about two critical projects in the Bellarine electorate that I have previously raised with him. The Shell Road Reserve project in Ocean Grove has the support of the federal government and the City of Greater Geelong, with the first stage of the federal funding having been provided. Despite this there has still been no commitment from the current government to enable the project to get under way.

The current facilities for netball, football and soccer are totally inadequate and desperately need to be upgraded. These clubs do a great job, and for them to grow and develop they need to have appropriate facilities for playing and training their teams and also for social and community events to promote the importance of participation, a healthy lifestyle and links with the wider community.

I was proud to announce the Labor government's pre-election commitment of \$5 million for this project because of its enormous benefits to the local community, and I urge the minister to give it serious consideration.

Clifton Springs: sports precinct

Ms NEVILLE — The other project is the Drysdale Clifton Springs sports precinct, which also has council support but no commitment from the current government for funding of this major local development. Drysdale and Clifton Springs is an area that is growing rapidly and has soccer, football and cricket teams that are strong and keen, but they need

more appropriate and bigger facilities to meet the needs of the local community. It will be a real asset for the Bellarine Peninsula, and in 2010 the Brumby government committed to a \$500 000 initial grant to the sports precinct if re-elected. Both these projects deserve the support of the current government and should be funded in this year's budget. So far the government has ignored these projects in another example of its ignoring the Bellarine Peninsula.

Anzac Day: commemoration

Mr DELAHUNTY (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — Next week is Anzac Day, and in my role as Minister for Veterans' Affairs I encourage all members to buy a badge and attend local Anzac Day commemorations to pay homage to our dedicated servicemen and women and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our great country, Australia.

BreastScreen Victoria: shire of Southern Grampians

Mr DELAHUNTY — Last Friday I also attended the launch of the challenge by BreastScreen Victoria to women in the Southern Grampians area to take care of their health and attend a free screening service specifically designed to target women 50 to 69 years of age. This is the age group most at risk of developing breast cancer.

Rip Curl Pro 2012

Mr DELAHUNTY — Over Easter I attended the Rip Curl Pro at Torquay. Along with thousands of surf fans I watched Australian Mick Fanning defeat Kelly Slater and collect this year's Bells Beach championship, while Sally Fitzgibbon won back-to-back championships in a hard-fought battle with Stephanie Gilmour.

Stawell Gift

Mr DELAHUNTY — My congratulations to Matthew Wiltshire from Ballarat, who won this year's Australia Post Stawell Gift. Matthew's win fulfilled a family dream of winning the iconic foot race. His grandfather, John Wiltshire, was favourite to win the 1958 Stawell Gift but injured his hamstring in the heats.

My congratulations also to Melissa Breen, winner of the women's gift, and also to the members of the Stawell Amateur Athletic Club, who organised a wonderful athletics carnival that provided an economic boost to western Victoria.

Police: Balmoral station

Mr DELAHUNTY — Last Friday I was honoured to represent the Deputy Premier to open the new Balmoral police station. A large crowd was present, and it included representatives of the Balmoral community, the Shire of Southern Grampians and Victoria Police. Law and order is a top priority of our government, and I congratulate Victoria Police, and particularly Leading Senior Constable Peter Mailes, on their dedication to the safety of the Balmoral and district community.

Rail: St Albans level crossing

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) — I rise today to call on this Baillieu coalition government to finally come good on its promise to grade separate the level crossing at Main Road, St Albans. Ranked at no. 3 on the Department of Transport's priority list, it was overlooked for the infamous New Street, Brighton, level crossing, then ranked at no. 223 and a crossing in the electorate of the Minister for Public Transport ranked at no. 394.

This project was promised by Ted Baillieu way back in 2008. Prior to the state election, in a radio interview on the ABC on 20 November 2010, the Minister for Public Transport pledged the grade separation would happen 'in the first term of government'. This budget will take us well past the halfway point of this term; will we still be waiting? It is time to put electoral mathematics aside and start funding projects based on need and not political expediency.

If — and I hope it is not true — this government fails to commit any real funding to the grade separation at Main Road next sitting week, there will be a revolution on the streets of St Albans. Enough is enough.

Rail: Caroline Springs station

Ms KAIROUZ — On another budgetary matter, I would like to raise an issue of deep concern to residents in the western suburbs, especially in my seat — that is, the Caroline Springs station. Pledged and funded by the previous Labor government, it was due to be completed this year. However, in the last budget the Liberal government stripped away funding and references to the project were removed from the departmental website — another project promised by Ted Baillieu in 2008.

The residents of the west are still waiting despite the money having been allocated by the previous Labor government. I have invited the minister to explain to the residents of Caroline Springs why — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member's time has expired.

Joshua Jensen

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — Joshua Peter Jensen, better known as Josh, Jenno and the new name I learnt of, Boy, passed away in tragic circumstances on 5 April 2012 at just 27 years of age. My thoughts are with Josh's family — his devoted dad, Peter; loving mother, Christine, and three sisters, Kelly, Narelle and Gene. I would be remiss to not mention his best mate, Nelson, his dog who never left his side.

Sometimes you meet someone in life who manages to touch the hearts of every person they meet. That was Jenno. I first met Jenno as an assistant coach to the Berwick under 17s. Josh was a leader in many ways, and throughout his life he was all about how he could help someone out.

At Jenno's funeral there were literally hundreds of people from all walks of life, including his family, football mates, local friends and work colleagues. They all had the opportunity to share in a celebration of the life of Josh Jensen. Josh's best mate, Brett Schumann — Shuey — spoke of the mate he grew up with, a mate who would help out whenever he could. He described Josh as the best Aussie bloke.

To a great Aussie bloke, a true Aussie larrikin, we will all miss you and your welcome smile every time we saw you.

Shadow ministry: performance

Mr BATTIN — On another matter, I note with interest the unrest of some opposites, like the up-and-comers, including some who are leaking emails to the national press regarding their opportunity for renewal. It must be frustrating for those sitting patiently on the back bench in opposition when former ministers will not move aside because they do not trust the new breed.

I agree with the leak about the weak Leader of the Opposition, who failed to take the opportunity to get rid of the incompetent dead wood from the front bench, such as the members for Essendon, Yan Yean and Richmond.

Schools: Ballarat East electorate

Mr HOWARD (Ballarat East) — Our schools are some of our most important assets because they provide opportunities for young people to learn and develop. That is why the former government declared schools

and education its no. 1 priority. We committed funding to employ more teachers to reduce class sizes. We committed funding for education programs such as reading recovery, special numeracy programs and the Victorian certificate of applied learning to support all students and lift those who may be falling behind or falling out of the school system. We also committed unprecedented funding to undertake major capital works. We recognise that school facilities are important in providing a positive sense of education. I was excited to see that during the term of the Bracks and Brumby Labor governments 22 state schools across my electorate received major upgrades, with two schools at Trentham and Napoleons being entirely rebuilt.

In line with Labor's plans, Daylesford Secondary College was funded to enable it to complete the first stage of a school rebuild, and we supported the Kyneton education community to develop its exciting plans for a K–12 college in Kyneton, with plans to significantly develop the present Kyneton Secondary College site. It is very disappointing to see that this program of school upgrades has come to a halt under the Baillieu government, with not one Ballarat East school receiving funding for upgrade works in last year's budget.

I call on the government to review this position and commit to a program of school upgrades and in particular allocate funding to the next phases of redevelopment for both Daylesford and Kyneton colleges.

Elizabeth Diffen

Mr KOTSIRAS (Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) — I pay tribute to Elizabeth Diffen, who sadly passed away suddenly at home on 11 April 2012. Elizabeth was a lifelong community member and a hardworking volunteer for numerous organisations who served her local community with pride and enthusiasm. She was involved with the Red Cross, the Probus Club of Templestowe Valley and various women's groups. She was also an active member of the Liberal Party and a great supporter of mine. Elizabeth donated her time and talent to help others, inspiring others to do the same. Elizabeth Diffen will be missed, and on behalf of the Bulleen electorate conference I express my sincere condolences on the loss of a dedicated and inspiring woman.

Dimitris Mitropanos

Mr KOTSIRAS — On another sad note, Greece and the Victorian Greek community lost one of their greatest singers during the week. Dimitris Mitropanos

passed away on 17 April 2012, aged 64. He was one of the leading interpreters of Greek Rembetika and popular folk music, who began his singing career in 1964 and worked with some of the best known Greek composers, including Theodorakis, Hadjidakis and Mikroutsikos, to name a few. Some of his songs, including *Σ' αναζητώ στη Σαλονίκη*, which is *Searching for You in Salonika* in English, and *Η Ρόζα*, which is *The Rose* in English, became national classics. Greece, including the Greek community here, has lost a great musician and a great entertainer but above all a gentleman who inspired thousands. He will be missed.

Greensborough College: funding

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — The Baillieu government stands condemned for scrapping the previous Bracks and Brumby Labor governments' Victorian schools plan, through which every Victorian school would have been upgraded or rebuilt by 2016. Labor had already delivered 553 school projects, as part of the Victorian schools plan, right across the state. There were very happy people up in Greensborough when in 2010 the Brumby government announced that Greensborough College in my electorate would be rebuilt. Of course this excitement turned to despair when the Baillieu government was elected and the new education minister cancelled the plan to rebuild at this great government school. This is a school whose school council considered changing its uniform policy so that students could bring blankets to school because the heating system was inadequate. This is a school where students' bags disappeared through a hole in the floor. There might be education capital projects meriting a higher priority, but I would like to see them.

In the lead-up to this budget the Greensborough College community is simply asking for planning funding to help kick-start the rebuilding project. There is concern in my local community that the Baillieu government will only fund education projects that are Liberal Party election commitments and not projects that are of high priority, based on demonstrated need. These concerns are compounded by the impacts of the Baillieu government's \$500-million cut to the education sector which affect every school. I call on the Premier to step in to ensure that capital planning funding is provided to Greensborough College in next month's state budget.

Shadow ministry: performance

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — The *Age* political reporter Josh Gordon wrote an article headed 'Time to shine not whine for opposition'. In that article he quotes a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the

other place, Adem Somyurek, as referring in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition to 'a penchant for allocating media opportunities to former Bracks and Brumby ministers at the expense of up-and-comers' — presumably including himself. The letter goes on to complain further about what Mr Somyurek perceives as a lack of attention.

After reading this it seems that the next generation of Labor is as media obsessed as the last, expecting everything to revolve around the all-holy media unit and not around the real needs of Victorians. It is great to see that the future of the Labor Party is as hardworking and energetic in resolving issues as was the previous government. However, you can understand Mr Somyurek's frustrations when you look at the dead wood sitting opposite. The former ministers and their lack of interest in doing their job is reflected in their lack of speaking in this house.

Around 30 bills have gone through this house, yet the member for Ripon has spoken on zero occasions — not once; the member for Melbourne, on one occasion; the member for Lyndhurst, one; and the member for Mill Park, three. The members for Richmond and Bellarine have spoken on four bills. The work ethic of these former ministers is non-existent. But take a look at the new up-and-comers: the member for Brunswick has spoken 7 times; the member for Albert Park, 8; the member for Thomastown, 10; and the top of the class is the member for Ivanhoe, with 11. But I have forgotten the member for Bellarine, who has spoken on four bills. And staying with the member for Bellarine, I make a very sincere offer to her — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member's time has run out, so she will not make her offer. The time has gone.

Budget: Bendigo West electorate

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — The coalition government has let down the communities of Bendigo West with broken promises and a failure to produce anything resembling an infrastructure program or plan to grow jobs in the region. Just as the grass grows long and unkempt under the feet of this dithering government, so does the list of backflips and promises that have been reneged on.

It has backflipped on its promise of \$10 million for the Castlemaine hospital made at the last election. This is despite a petition with over 2000 signatures demanding that the \$10 million be made available so the hospital can get on with building a new emergency department and so its application for federal funding will be

successful. With the coming budget I call on the government not to end the first home owners bonus that has enabled the construction of hundreds of new homes in regional Victoria and led the way in construction jobs, to put up its share of funding for the Ravenswood interchange on the Calder Highway so there is no delay once federal funding is made available, to fund additional V/Line carriages for the Melbourne–Bendigo service to end overcrowding, and to cough up the remaining \$81 million of the \$102 million in funding it promised for the new Bendigo hospital development before 2015.

I call on the government to let the people of Maldon, Marong, Heathcote and Huntly know when they will get the promised but not yet delivered gas connection. And I call on the government to earmark funding for the new aquatic centre proposed for Kangaroo Flat that a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place, Damian Drum, has made a personal commitment to and has said that this government will fund.

Jimmy Little

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I wish to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution to Australian community life made by the indigenous Australian artist Jimmy Little, who passed away aged 75 on 2 April 2012. Jimmy was the first indigenous artist to achieve mainstream success in Australia, and he became a household name in the 1960s. Jimmy performed twice in the Victorian Parliament House, firstly promoting the cause of kidney health and later singing in Queen's Hall upon the occasion of the Wilberforce awards marking the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in Britain.

Jimmy was named Aboriginal of the Year in 1989 for his services to the community, and he was inducted into the Australian Record Industry Association Hall of Fame in 1999. Jimmy taught and mentored children at the Eora Aboriginal Education Centre in Redfern, was ambassador for literacy and numeracy for the department of education, was made an Officer of the Order of Australia and was also appointed as a National Living Treasure. Jimmy made an outstanding contribution through his music and community work. I also pay tribute to the work of his manager for a time, Graham Bidstrup.

Lindsay Ingram

Mr THOMPSON — I pay tribute to Mr Lindsay Ingram, a constituent who, upon opening a bag of flour to make bread, discovered larvae and webbing from an Indian flour moth. Mr Ingram raised the matter through

a number of channels. The Kingston City Council did a great job following the matter up with an initial site inspection of the supermarket and referring the complaint to the manufacturer for further investigation. I commend Mr Ingram on the action he took due to concerns over the risks posed by contaminated food and also to protect the interests of the wider community.

Circolo Pensionati Italiani di Essendon: 36th anniversary

Mr MADDEN (Essendon) — I want to congratulate the Circolo Pensionati Italiani di Essendon on celebrating its 36th anniversary on Sunday, 28 March. It was a fantastic occasion. There were over 200 attendees at the luncheon at the Moonee Ponds Bowling Club. There was much merriment, much dancing and much food.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MADDEN — Yes, a bit of dancing. It was a great event and a great celebration of the association's 36th anniversary.

I want to congratulate Salvatore Ignaccolo for his volunteer work over the course of several years. I know that members of the group appreciate the work that he and other volunteers have done over that time.

Hedley Harris

Mr MADDEN — I also congratulate Mr Hedley Harris, who organises the Keilor East Uniting Church men's group. Whilst it is not specifically in my electorate, many of the members of that group come from my electorate. I had the chance to meet and greet the group and also speak to them last Monday night.

Essendon Stars: Auskick program

Mr MADDEN — I congratulate the Essendon Stars, formerly known as the Doutta Stars, for the introduction last Sunday of a new Auskick program to be held on Sunday mornings. It was the first time they had had a Sunday morning Auskick event. We saw the smiling faces of somewhere in the order of 30 to 40 happy boys and girls involved, and happy parents as well. I would like to congratulate Bradleigh Andrews for the great work that he continues to do on behalf of football in the local area.

Shadow ministry: performance

Mr McCURDY (Murray Valley) — It is ironic that the opposition has begun the culling of long-serving members. It appears that those who served it well in

government are no longer relevant or useful. The body armour that used to fit so well has been bruised and battered, but the infighting remains. It will take a great man with a plan to ensure that Labor members do not cannibalise each other. The eating of their young has already begun, and should that man choose not to take this mission, the Labor Party may well self-destruct within 12 months.

Wangaratta High School: textiles exhibition

Mr McCURDY — Congratulations to the senior students at Wangaratta High School for their Little Black Dress Exhibition — A Celebration of Young Textiles Talent held at the Wangaratta information centre. I had the pleasure of visiting this fantastic exhibition, and I was impressed with the terrific variety of outfits, which demonstrated just how creative our young people are. Well done to Wangaratta High School.

Royal Children's Hospital: Good Friday Appeal

Mr McCURDY — Congratulations to the communities of the Murray Valley electorate for their generous contributions to the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. The Wangaratta area was the second-highest regional contributor, raising more than \$110 000. Yarrawonga contributed \$14 000, Numurkah, Wunghnu and Katunga more than \$12 000, and Cobram more than \$35 000.

Cobram: skate park

Mr McCURDY — Congratulations to all involved in the establishment of the Cobram skate park, which was officially opened on Friday. The skate park committee raised \$78 000 towards the development of the park, and Moira Shire Council allocated \$149 000 via federal grants.

Country Women's Association: Yarrawonga and Border branch

Mr McCURDY — Yarrawonga and Border Country Women's Association members will be joining Women Walk the World as part of the focus on clean water for everyone, recognising that it is the women of Third World countries who walk to fetch the daily water supply. Members will meet at Belmore Street and cross the lake to Mulwala.

Glenroy West Primary School: student leaders

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) — Congratulations and best wishes to each and every one of the 2012

Glenroy West Primary School leaders — to the student leadership team, Eren G., Jackson H., Ridma G. and Samantha C.; to the student representative council members, Nelson M., Ozan D., Duru S., Bennyam K., Ben C., Dakoda H., Jake B. and Moataz D.; and to the house captains and vice-captains, Jasmina, Georgia and Talisha in Chapman, Alexander, David and Sharon in Clovelly, Joel, Monica and Sylvia in William, and Brandon, Aisha and Ben in York.

Congratulations to activity leaders Aisha, Alisha, Ashleigh, Ben B., Ben C., Bennyam, Connor, Courtney, David, Georgia, Hinckley, Ibrahim, Ishita, Jack, Jasmina, Jasmine, Jarod, Joel, Joshua, Katelyn, Kevin, Kyi Sin, Monica, Ram, Richard, Samantha, Sharon, Sylvia, Talisha, Tammy, Vaeluaga and Valentina; to the art leaders, Georgia, Isabella, Ishita, Jasmina, Monica, Stephanie, Sylvia and Talisha; to the assembly team, Connor and Jarod; to the Australian and Aboriginal flag team, Joshua and Taylah; to the bell monitors, Brandon and Jackson; to the bin monitors, Eren, Christian, James K., James P. and Yasar; and to the dress code award team, Archana and Nelson. Congratulations to everybody.

Monash Health Translation Precinct: upgrade

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — On Wednesday, 4 April, I attended the launch of the \$71 million Monash Health Translation Precinct upgrade in support of it. The upgrade will see new buildings and facilities in the precinct at a cost of \$71 million. I congratulate the commonwealth government, Southern Health, Monash University and Prince Henry's Institute on achieving the go-ahead for this upgrade under difficult circumstances.

Monash Children's: Easter visit

Mr GIDLEY — It was a pleasure to join the Easter bunny to share some Easter joy among sick children at Monash Children's on Thursday, 5 April. I was accompanied by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health; the member for Bentleigh; Professor Nick Freezer, the hospital's medical director; and Suzana Talevski, the hospital's senior manager of media and government relations. We visited Monash Children's to distribute Easter eggs and Easter wishes to the sick children there. I thank Monash Children's for the opportunity, and most importantly I wish all the children and their families the best of success in the health treatment challenges they face.

Monash Children's: project update

Mr GIDLEY — On Thursday, 5 April, I met with Professor Nick Freezer, medical director, and Suzana Talevski, senior manager of media and government relations, to receive a further update on the Monash Children's hospital project. It was great to have the opportunity to be updated on this important project and to again listen to the need for the new hospital to be built as soon as possible. I was also able to restate the coalition government's commitment to the new \$250 million children's hospital at Monash.

Taxis: Mount Waverley electorate

Mr GIDLEY — The taxi industry remains an important component of Victoria's public transport system. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with industry representatives and stakeholders servicing Waverley.

Budget: Ivanhoe electorate

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — With the state budget looming, the people of the Ivanhoe electorate, who make strong contributions to their local community and to Victoria's finances through the taxes they pay, are keen to see the proceeds of the hard work they do distributed in the Ivanhoe electorate. In particular I refer to Charles La Trobe P-12 College, which received \$20 million for stage 1 of its upgrade from the previous Labor government. The Minister for Education is coming out to open stage 1 next week, and it would be great if he could make a commitment to stage 2 of the project.

On that point, I commend the Heidelberg West community for contributing \$3000 to the Olympic Village primary school campus of Charles La Trobe College after part of the school was burnt down in a recent fire in Heidelberg West. Despite the fact that the barbecue we ran outside my office raised \$3000 for the school, we are yet to receive \$1 from this government for the upgrade of new toilets and classrooms for the Olympic Village primary school campus or for stage 2 of the upgrade of Charles La Trobe College. While the minister will come out next week to cut some ribbons for projects funded by the previous Labor government, I call on him to stop cutting funding to education services in my electorate.

Not only that, but the Heidelberg West police station also needs to be reopened, which is a great opportunity for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to provide some resources to see that it is delivered to the local community.

We will continue to lobby and fight for services in the Ivanhoe electorate.

Kokoda campaign: 70th anniversary

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — As we meet in the shadow of Anzac Day, I remind the house that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the Kokoda campaign, a defining battle for Australia. On 21 July 1942 Japanese troops landed on the north coast of what is now Papua New Guinea and began their march to Port Moresby. The Victorian-based 39th battalion was given the task of defending Kokoda, and B company was the first to cross the track. Following fierce fighting around Kokoda village, the Australians began a fighting withdrawal, reaching Isurava on 27 August. At Isurava the 39th battalion was joined by the battle-hardened 2/14th and 2/16th battalions, which arrived fresh from the Middle East.

During an intense five-day action the Japanese forces were temporarily halted. A series of ferocious attacks breached the Australians' defences despite a heroic counterattack for which Private Bruce Kingsbury earned a posthumous Victoria Cross, the first awarded on Australian soil. A series of fierce battles followed, including those at Brigade Hill, Eora Creek, Templeton's Crossing, Efogi, Mission Ridge and Ioribaiwa. By late September, after further reinforcements, the Australians were able to begin the push forward again. In November 1942 the Australian flag flew once more over Kokoda.

In 2008 my wife, Linda, and I were privileged to walk the wartime Kokoda Track in the footsteps of these heroes. Without their superhuman courage, the outcome of the campaign and the future of Australia may have been very different.

Minister for Public Transport: performance

Ms RICHARDSON (Northcote) — It is a little under two weeks until the state budget is handed down, and the pressure is on the Liberal Minister for Public Transport to crawl out from under his desk, stand up and deliver on behalf of commuters right across the state, because things are getting worse — far worse — on his watch. Calls for the minister's resignation may sound harsh given how little time he has had in the job; nonetheless, those calls have been made by Geelong commuters, who have not even had the courtesy of an apology or explanation from the minister as to why their service is getting worse on his watch.

Further revelations today that Metro Trains Melbourne has been given the green light to help meet its

punctuality targets by skipping stations come on top of the minister's admission that all he can do is rubber-stamp any timetable Metro puts before him. That decision has added more time to services and seen nearly two out of three new services being run against the peak hour rush, so it is little wonder Metro's performance bonus payments have skyrocketed to over \$4 million and its profits have soared. Meanwhile over 108 jobs have been lost, with another 700 on the chopping block. The minister clearly could not care less about those jobs, just as he could not care less about the increasing concerns of commuters.

The minister has the opportunity to deliver in this state budget at the very least the extra trams he promised before the last budget. He also needs to deliver at least 40 new V/Line carriages, as called for by V/Line CEO Rob Barnett. He needs to order new trains — not just to replace the old ones but to provide additional rolling stock; he needs to order new buses; and he needs to restore funding for compliance with the commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. He needs to do these things as a matter of urgency if he is to stem the calls for his resignation.

Regional Victoria Living Expo

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — Next week will see a significant event hosted in our great state, with Victoria's first ever Regional Victoria Living Expo to be conducted from 27 to 29 April at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The expo will provide an opportunity to demonstrate and showcase what regional Victoria has to offer, and I am sure visitor numbers and interest will be substantial. Exhibitors will come from a diverse range of sectors, including education, business, tourism, community and local government organisations. Already approximately 130 exhibitors will be on site over the three days, and the Gippsland region is well represented.

Information on the regions will focus on features such as regional businesses, sport and lifestyle opportunities, housing, careers, education and relocation services. One of the aims of the expo is to inform visitors of the benefits of living in regional Victoria and encourage them to consider our regional communities as places in which to reside.

This week the Deputy Premier informed the house that population growth in metropolitan Melbourne is increasing at a far greater rate than currently occurs in regional Victoria and of the economic differences that apply in terms of government spending on infrastructure as a consequence. It is therefore imperative that we promote opportunities for people to

live, work and enjoy all that regional Victoria has to offer. It is pleasing to see the number of prominent Victorians who have accepted the role of expo ambassadors, which will no doubt add to the attraction of the event. I commend the Minister for Regional and Rural Development for instigating an initiative such as the Regional Victoria Living Expo, and I am sure it will be a great success.

Cranbourne Secondary College: funding

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — Over \$8 million was gainfully invested by the previous Labor government in two stages to modernise Cranbourne Secondary College. Stage 3 of the works is now due to be done, and the parents of the 1300 students who attend the college, the school's staff and the broader Cranbourne community are waiting on the edges of their seats for an announcement in this year's budget of at least \$2 million to complete the stage. The government simply cannot leave this college in limbo and should not go down the path of a bandaid fix.

Seaford Park Primary School: funding

Mr PERERA — Seaford Park Primary School is also in need of a full upgrade. This is the school that in its first year in office the Baillieu government wished to close and sell off to developers. In view of the backlash this caused in the Belvedere Park area and in the media, the government did an about-face. This school needs a full upgrade right now, and funding for that should also be included in this year's budget.

Buses: Cranbourne electorate

Mr PERERA — The Sandhurst and Sandarra residential developments in the suburb of Sandhurst in my electorate have close to 1000 households. These households could be easily serviced by public transport by diverting the 832 bus route to travel along Sandhurst and Sandarra boulevards. It is a small funding task and could easily be included in this year's budget. This route also connects with the Labor-initiated 901 SmartBus service. The diversion would add only an extra 3 kilometres each way.

Shadow ministry: performance

Mr NEWTON-BROWN (Pahran) — The member for Broadmeadows is a two-time Walkley award winner. He is a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow. He has extensive journalism experience. He is a great salesman of the opposition message when it has one, and he regularly outshines his boss, Mr Pakula, a member for Western Metropolitan Region in the other place, in his

role as shadow parliamentary secretary for opposition scrutiny of government. The opposition frontbench is crying out for someone to deal effectively with the media, and the member for Broadmeadows is clearly the man to do it and should be elevated.

The member for Ivanhoe was a councillor at Banyule City Council. He has an honours degree in arts and law. He is parliamentary secretary to the shadow Minister for Local Government, and while the member for Richmond continues to dine out on his local government glory days of mid-last century, surely the member for Ivanhoe has more relevant experience for the shadow local government ministry.

The member for Niddrie, our newest member in this house, gave an inspirational inaugural speech yesterday. He has an honours degree in arts and law, he worked with the Victorian government solicitor and he could surely give the member for Box Hill a run for his money as shadow Attorney-General.

The member for Brunswick is a lawyer from a well-known law firm. She is a national vice-president of the ALP, was the youngest-ever mayor of the City of Yarra and serves as deputy chair of the Law Reform Committee. I am in a position to vouch for her talents, and I can say that they are wasted on the back bench. She serves as parliamentary secretary to the shadow minister for police. She is tough, she is smart and she should now be given the opportunity to step down to the front bench as shadow minister for police.

Broadmeadows electorate: government performance

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — My call is for the coalition to end its historic neglect of Broadmeadows, which for generations has underwritten the prosperity of Victoria.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! The time for members statements has expired.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — I move:

That the government business program agreed to by this house on 17 April 2012 be amended by omitting the order of the day, government business, relating to the National Energy Retail Law (Victoria) Bill 2012.

Motion agreed to.

LAND (REVOCAION OF RESERVATIONS) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 18 April; motion of Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Environment and Climate Change).

Mr FOLEY (Albert Park) — It gives me pleasure to rise and make a few brief comments in relation to the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012, which is not an unimportant bill but is far from the most pressing issue of public policy facing the state of Victoria, particularly given the shambolic mess we have just witnessed involving the Leader of the House pulling a bill at the last moment, reflecting what we have come to expect from this government. However, I might just refer to this important but relatively routine bill, which continues, as is required from time to time, the change in status of particular parcels of Crown and public land so as to ensure that that land is put to greater and higher use in many different contexts.

I will focus my comments on two particular items. I note that you, Acting Speaker, commented on part 8 of this bill, relating to the South Melbourne temperance hall, which is the home of the Anthill Theatre. It is a site known well to me; it is in my electorate and was initially a Rechabites hall in the 19th century, as the Acting Speaker correctly said. It has been home to a number of community-based arts organisations over time, and indeed it still is, particularly community-based theatre companies.

The site is surrounded by Crown land that had on it the former St Vincent De Paul Boys Orphanage, a site that I am sure will be the subject of substantial consideration by the joint parliamentary Family and Community Development Committee, which has received a referral on the treatment of sexual abuse claims by a range of churches and religious organisations. The site has a very dark history in that regard, but fortunately it also has a very empowering history running side by side with that.

Whilst it closed in the 1990s and has been more or less brought back to life in more recent times by MacKillop Family Services, it was under the former Bracks and Brumby governments that a complicated series of land deals between the Catholic Church, MacKillop Family Services, as agent for the Catholic Church, and the state saw the vast bulk of that site divided into two uses. The front third, now undergoing restoration works that were funded by the former government in the heritage-listed building, will be home to MacKillop Family Services.

In regard to the back two-thirds of the site, the current Minister for Health, who is also the Minister for Ageing, Mr Davis, came to my electorate early last year to formalise a process which had also been commenced under the former Bracks and Brumby Labor governments to transfer that land and make it the basis for a not-for-profit community aged-care facility that has brought together two wonderful local organisations — the Southport Community Nursing Home and its neighbours, Claremont Home, in South Melbourne — which will create a joint venture to deliver a new state-of-the-art facility for aged care on that site.

Hiding in the corner of that site is the South Melbourne temperance hall. Nobody, it seems, could find the documents that go into the history of that land and how the Rechabites had got there or indeed how all the various community organisations had managed the land arrangements in the way they did. Given that the hall had a viable and continued use, this issue had come up in that context, and this necessary final piece of the jigsaw to secure for the long term all the appropriate and community-based uses of that Crown land precinct is very important, not only to the local community that I have the privilege of representing but also because of the contribution that small but significant site has made to community-based arts organisations, particularly the community-based theatre networks. In that regard we wish part 8 of this bill every success.

Part 2 of the bill deals with land in the member for Caulfield's electorate and that is close to the boundary of my electorate. It is an area of land on the Chapel Street side of the St Kilda town hall and municipal precinct. Despite what I was interested to hear in the debate on this matter yesterday, when the member for Caulfield and others sought to clothe themselves in the hollow rhetoric of how the Baillieu government had delivered this project, any assessment will show that this was delivered through a combination of the money provided by the Rudd federal Labor government at the time of the 2007 federal election campaign and a number of commitments to provide integrated family hubs.

The federal member for Melbourne Ports, Mr Michael Danby, delivered two such projects in the federal electorate of Melbourne Ports. This is one of them. The other is in Liardet Street, Port Melbourne. It was then incorporated, via the City of Port Phillip, into a broader and indeed an increased value proposition to integrate services. With the St Kilda Primary School on one corner, it was intended to assist it with its before school and after school programs. The hub sought to provide a whole-of-early-childhood approach, where you would

have maternal health services and a range of extended and short-term child-care services integrated to flow into the neighbouring and indeed excellent St Kilda Primary School.

It was with great pleasure two years ago that I joined the then member for Prahran — a fine member, who the current member for Prahran should take great lead from — Professor Lupton, as he is now; Mr Danby from the federal Parliament; and the mayor at the time, to commence that project, which is well under way. This important measure deals with a council car park that abuts that area and involves playing catch-up with work that is well and truly under way. The site is not quite finished yet, but it is well and truly developed. It will bring added value to the community in an area that the honourable members for Caulfield and Prahran and I have the privilege of sharing. It is in the corner where our electorates all come together.

There are other similar instances of sensible transfers of Crown and public land to higher and more productive uses apart from the two examples I have referred to. Knowing that other honourable members wish to make important contributions, I might leave my contribution there.

Mr SHAW (Frankston) — You know, about a third of Victoria is Crown land; that is quite a substantial amount. For individuals, selling land is something that can be done pretty easily; we can talk to our spouse and our family and sell the land. If we own a business with land, we can talk to our board of directors or make that decision through the shareholders. In government, however, when dealing with Crown land we have to go through Parliament to sell or reuse land or to remove provisions relating to it.

That is what we are doing here; we are revoking the permanent reservations relating to a number of different pieces of land throughout Melbourne. They include one in St Kilda, the former Fitzroy gasworks site, land in Werribee, the former Inglewood hospital reserve, land in Barwon Heads and land set aside for the purposes of South Melbourne temperance hall. This was well said by the member for Seymour yesterday, when she was giving us a potato lesson with reference to the potato farm in — how do we pronounce it?

Mrs Bauer — Toolangi.

Mr SHAW — Toolangi. I learnt a lot about potatoes yesterday; it was fantastic, and I thank the member for Seymour for that. This is important in local areas. The main area I will refer to — I picked up some notes about this — was referred to by the member for

Caulfield, whom I listened to intently yesterday as he spoke about what is happening in St Kilda and the excitement surrounding the \$12 million integrated family and children's centre. The City of Port Phillip is putting in \$10.3 million, the state government is putting in half a million dollars and the federal government is putting in \$1.6 million.

Localising this a little bit — a lot of us obviously have a lot of Crown land in our electorates — I note that there can be anomalies that come up, such as in Frankston where there is Crown land at the back of some of the properties in Gould Street where Kananook Creek runs parallel to the bay. Many years ago that land was established as Crown land, because Frankston used to be a fishing village, and the authorities said, 'Right, you can take your boats up Kananook Creek, catch your fish and lay your nets out on the land, and where you lay your nets will be Crown land'.

Now of course no-one uses Kananook Creek for fishing anymore; in fact unfortunately it is used as a bit of a dump at times. Shopping trolleys go into it, as do stormwater and drainage — and we have an election commitment to clean that up, by the by. That laying out of nets no longer occurs on the Crown land, which is now used instead by residents of Gould Street, who have fences pretty much backing onto the land. Some of them pay a lease fee, and I think that works pretty well. It has worked well there for over 100 years. I note that the member for Carrum knows that area very well, having grown up in that part of the world.

This is a very sensible bill. The revocation of these grants frees us up, as the government, to sell the land or to merge the land with state forest, as with the example of the potato farm, or to use the land differently, as with the integrated family hub in St Kilda. I picked up particularly on the former Fitzroy gasworks site, which is a pretty interesting sort of site.

Mr Wynne interjected.

Mr SHAW — The member for Richmond interjects. The precinct is dominated by the old gasworks site, a 4-hectare site, in Smith Street, and that will go up for sale. I noticed yesterday when we were talking about the Royal Women's Hospital land, for which there is very similar legislation as far as revoking reservations over certain land is concerned, that certain members on the other side were saying, 'Well, we hope you do not sell it as a fire sale'. We do not do that on this side of the fence; we do not do that on this side of politics. It will be sold for what is reasonable. The money will go into Treasury. It will be allocated and go into consolidated revenue.

We need to increase revenue leading up to this budget and for future budgets. If we have to sell certain land assets for that — as I said before, Victoria is covered by over one-third of Crown land, and some of that land is no longer used for its original purposes — then Victorians would expect that we would utilise that land for its best purposes. If that is done by selling it for urban development, to turn it into a state forest or parkland or to use it as a service hub, then that is what we are about.

There was plenty of talk on the other side about listening to the community. I think the community has been listened to in relation to the St Kilda project. With some of the other land that is being sold off privately, the community does not have a say. Unless it has the money to purchase that land itself, it does not really have a say.

This is very sensible legislation. It is unfortunate that we have to take 3 hours to discuss this sale of certain assets, but that is what happens when governments own property. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) — I will make a few brief remarks in relation to the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. It is always a pleasure to follow on from the minister — he may well be promoted one day as a minister — the member for Frankston and my colleague the member for Albert Park.

The main purpose of the bill is to revoke a permanent reservation and an associated Crown grant of certain land next to the St Kilda town hall and to provide that the area that is taken be temporarily reserved for municipal purposes. Other speakers have indicated that this land sits at the back of the town hall, which we all know well, and is now being used for child-care facilities. The reservation of Crown land needs to be revoked. It is currently reserved for use as a town hall, a court and offices.

You would be aware, Acting Speaker, that the previous government made a very significant investment in relation to supporting the integrated family and children's centre; it was committed to by our government. You would have some recollection that at the time we had the support of 108 others. We on this side of the house understand how important it is to support centres that work with children and families, because that adds to the value and quality of life and supports families in a very practical and important way. I am delighted that we have done that work. These provisions have now been introduced, and they are

important. We need to do this. This legislation needs to come into this Parliament.

Without wanting to take anything away from this bill, in some ways it reflects how thin the government business program is. We do not have the serious legislation for which all Victorians are waiting. One example of this is that one of the government members who was going to speak on the energy bill was just removed from the list. Members have said the government is running out of energy. The member for Benalla is looking at me intently. I will not compromise him by saying he agrees with me; I cannot do that damage to him. But I think we need to get on with the business of very serious legislation. I will not take anything away from the important provisions in the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012.

Another important provision relates to the Fitzroy gasworks land, which, as I understand, is a small parcel of land that forms part of the old gasworks. This land, as members would be aware, has been contaminated. In fact the site has been closed since 1927, which is going back a long time. Only a small amount of land at the site is still under Crown reservation, and this requires revocation as the government prepares to sell off the Fitzroy gasworks land. As the government prepares to sell off this land, it is important for it to outline how it will undertake the remediation work and how it will finance it. That is an important question: how will the government finance this?

Another important provision is that relating to the Toolangi potato research farm. I learnt the pronunciation of Toolangi from the good member for Frankston. He got it from his neighbour, who understands how to pronounce it correctly. As I understand it, these two parcels of land are surplus to requirements. They are no longer used as agricultural research land, so they have been incorporated back into the Yarra State Forest, with which it shares a border. With these very few but important remarks made on behalf of my constituents, I commend the passage of this bill.

Dr SYKES (Benalla) — It is a pleasure to rise to contribute to the debate on this bill and to follow on from my good friend the member for Derrimut, who said such nice things about the member for Benalla. My contribution today is on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. As many speakers have mentioned, this is a piece of legislation which will enable the tidying up of land ownership in relation to seven parcels of land. In general this will be for community benefit. Each parcel of land has its own

story and its own future use, and this legislation will enable the land to be freed up for community benefit.

I would like to touch on three particular parcels: the former Fitzroy gasworks, the Toolangi Potato Research Station and Sneydes Road, Werribee. I want to do so in the context of community and of historical contribution in the case of the research stations.

In relation to Fitzroy — —

Ms Richardson — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Dr SYKES — The member for Ferntree Gully should hang about, please. I was just about to put the Fitzroy gasworks parcel of land in the context of the strong sense of community in the Fitzroy area. The member for Derrimut mentioned that the gasworks went back to 1927 or thereabouts. My association with Fitzroy does not go back quite that far, but it goes back to 1965, when as a young country lad at the age of 16 I went down to the old Brunswick oval, which is not very far from the gasworks site, where I was treated to an amazing and eye-opening experience.

Mr Weller — We don't want to hear about it!

Dr SYKES — But you are going to — I have the call! First of all, I saw the athletes, the footballers, there. Then I went to what was called the pleasant Sunday morning, after the training session, where I met many members of the Fitzroy community. They were an interesting group. I happened to have with me one of the senior players, who was a policeman. He said, 'See that lady over there? She's the madam of the local brothel. See that fellow over there, with a lot of stitches on his face? He was a good mate of Squizzy Taylor's. That fellow over there is on bail for murder'. It highlighted to me the very rich culture of old Fitzroy, a culture that should be preserved.

Honourable members interjecting.

Dr SYKES — In formalin! I will go to another part of the culture of Fitzroy that really does deserve to be preserved. When I subsequently played with the senior side of the then Fitzroy Football Club, we did not win a lot of games but it was always very moving when after a game we changed and went out into a cold Melbourne night to find people from the Fitzroy community there, just wanting to talk to a senior player who had pulled on the jumper to play for the old Fitzroy club, the Lions. That sense of community is what holds people together. The former Fitzroy Football Club was a very

strong part of that community. We should encourage that sense of community to continue.

I know that the demographics of Fitzroy have changed and now there are many different groups in that area, but still if we can encourage a sense of community such as can be enabled by a change in the ownership of the old Fitzroy gasworks site, then we will have a community whose members will work together and support each other when times are tough — and everyone will be a winner. The member for Ferntree Gully can go now, as I have dealt with Fitzroy. I should mention that one of the great former players for Fitzroy, Kevin Murray, still lives in my electorate. He is truly a living icon.

The Toolangi Potato Research Station was one of a network of research stations that over the years made a magnificent contribution to the wellbeing of the Victorian agricultural industry and through that to all Victorians. The work was done by the staff who worked at the research stations, and they must be recognised.

Times change, of course, and so there is a need to change the approach to doing things. As the member for Seymour so capably highlighted yesterday, the development of the potato industry has seen the introduction of many different varieties of potatoes. Now a lot of the production of potatoes and other seed stock is undertaken by private enterprise. The development of potato and many other plant varieties is being done more and more by private enterprise; therefore the need for the government to maintain a role in that area is not as great as it was. That said, I know the coalition government is playing a very important role in setting up a library of plant varieties so that we have them there forever and day to crosscheck —

Mr Weller — In Horsham.

Dr SYKES — That library is in Horsham, my friend the member for Rodney informs me. No doubt the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who is at the table and is the member for Lowan, would be very pleased at some stage to expand on the importance of a library of plant seed for future generations.

There are some chunks of land in Toolangi that it makes sense to put back as Crown land. The member for Frankston touched on the amount of Crown land in Victoria. Much of my electorate is Crown land — for example, 92 per cent of the Alpine shire is Crown land. We certainly have some challenges in managing that Crown land, but we will give it our best shot.

Another research station where people made many great contributions was the one that was at Kyabram, which has now been sold. The people there made many wonderful contributions to the dairy industry, particularly, from my point of view, to calf rearing. Much of that was done by John Moran, a great researcher. Some important research was carried out and valuable information was provided to the community on the making of silage for feeding cattle and sheep.

Another parcel of land covered by the bill is a section of Sneydes Road, Werribee, very close to what was the State Research Farm. Again that brings back fond memories. I am actually a vet by training, and I did part of my training down at Werribee. I therefore had a close association with the research station there. It would be fair to say that I travelled along Sneydes Road on a number of occasions — not doing snide things, I should say. Again, it has been recognised by this government that there is a need to change the reservation of a parcel of land so that Sneydes Road can be used for the purpose for which it is designed without concerns about the reservation.

In conclusion, this legislation tidies up land ownership for the benefit of the community. I have highlighted the importance of the Fitzroy gasworks site for the Fitzroy community, for example, both in times gone by and now. I commend the Baillieu government for getting on with introducing this common-sense legislation from which everyone will be a winner. I endorse the legislation and wish it a speedy passage.

Mr HERBERT (Eltham) — It is a pleasure to speak on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. In saying that, it is a minor bill, so once again we see a minor administrative bill introduced into this chamber with a long time available for debate. It is a classic example of the lack all year of a legislative agenda from the government. There is simply nothing of any great substance being introduced in this chamber for debate. It is absolutely astounding to not just members on this side of the house but people at the top end of town, those in business and commerce, who are looking at the rising unemployment in this state and the rocketing number of bankruptcies and mortgage defaults.

I note that the electorate of the member for Frankston, who spoke earlier, has rising youth unemployment, with one of the lowest —

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I note that the member for Eltham has been speaking for only a minute, and I do not even know what bill he is trying to speak on because I do not think he has

mentioned any part of this bill. His contribution has been quite irrelevant in relation to the bill. I ask you to draw him back to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! The bill has a wide scope. I suggest all speakers have been given some latitude, although I suggest they need to speak on the bill. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr HERBERT — I did talk about the actual bill. I mentioned the name of the bill at the start of my contribution. I am not sure what the member for Burwood was listening to; perhaps he was listening to the person next to him and not to my contribution.

This bill does nothing for the massive problems in this state, which are starting to escalate. It demonstrates that governments of all persuasions have to look to achieve the best use of land. We always sell or rezone land to put it to the best use. When it comes to the issue of the best use of land, it is important that there be a plan for the land. The best use of land may refer to the best use of it in terms of the community, the environment, the public or for commercial purposes. It should not be just thrown out there; there is a process to follow. We all know that process involves offering it to other government departments, to agencies and to local government councils and then putting it out there. In following that process it is really crucial that governments have a bit of vision as to what they are doing with that land.

For instance, in my early days in politics I worked as an adviser to the then minister for planning and housing. There was inner city railway land at that time — which was not that dissimilar to some other sites mentioned in the bill, including the site of the former Fitzroy gasworks — that was turned into productive land for public housing. It was basically derelict land that was no longer used, no longer wanted and no longer had a function — it was basically full of rubbish. That land was beautified and provided good public housing for people and beautiful parklands.

At the time I had a conversation with the then shadow Minister for Housing, Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Jeffrey Kennett, who was reported by the *Herald Sun* at the time to have vehemently opposed the process. Once it was finished, he had nothing to say. I think most people praised what happened to that land and the process that was gone through to turn it into productive land for community use.

The site of the former Fitzroy gasworks is in the general vicinity of that former inner city railway land. The

member for Benalla quite rightly said the Fitzroy community has a lot of history; the residents love their land. We have only to look at what happened to that inner city community in relation to the construction of the Eastern Freeway many years ago to see this is so. Protesters were concerned about the impact on the inner city suburbs of the freeway ending at Alexander Parade.

I suggest to the government that the site of the Fitzroy gasworks is another issue. It is all very well for us to revoke the reservation on that land; I understand only a part of the reservation of that site will be revoked. It is a highly contaminated site. It is also in a contentious area, because the tunnel proposed in the Eddington plan would abut that site. We may see issues being raised by the Fitzroy community in relation to that. We have a big site that is no longer needed for its purpose, but there is no vision regarding what could happen on that site.

This relates to the point I made earlier — when you have key pieces of land, whether it is this site or the Royal Women's Hospital site which was referred to in debate yesterday, it is important for government to have a vision of how that land adds value to the community and to Melbourne and to identify what its best use is and that there is a process of consultation with the community in relation to developing a plan for the best use of it. To me the site of the former Fitzroy gasworks is an example of that.

We in this chamber should have a vision and a government plan in front of us. We should know what will happen to the whole site, not just bits and pieces of it, and how it is going to link with other projects in the area. The community should know what is going to happen on that site. I think most members would be far more comfortable with that.

How this government handles land sales and land acquisition, which is epitomised in this bill, is of great concern. Members just have to look at what happened in relation to the public transport development authority legislation which was debated not so long ago in this chamber which will mean that people will not necessarily get cash payments for a house on land that is compulsorily acquired — not flogged off — and taken by the government. That may be done for good purposes, but those people may be offered only other land in its place. It is a disgrace.

Mr Weller — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, while I understand that this is a wide-ranging debate, the bill is about land revocation. The member for Eltham is talking about the compulsory acquisition of land rather than land revocation. I ask that you bring

him back to discussing land revocation rather than land acquisition.

Mr Herbert — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, my contribution is directly related to the bill. When we talk about land revocation and land acquisition, there is nothing stopping those two issues being part of the same process. When we consider what happened in relation to the disgrace that was the public transport development authority legislation, we would not dismiss that possibility.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Morris) — Order! I uphold the point of order. The member is to return to speaking on the bill.

Mr HERBERT — Perhaps I should speak about past sleazy habits in Fitzroy. That was deemed to be appropriate, unlike matters about the disposal or acquisition of land.

It is good to be able to speak on this bill. The member for Benalla spoke about how the Toolangi potato research farm site has been useful in the past and how that type of research activity should be done by the private sector. What a shame and disgrace The Nationals in this state are. The Nationals used to love being called agrarian socialists, but now that they are in partnership with the Liberals and the economic rationalist toe cutters, they do not mind flogging off research facilities for the people that they represent —

Mr Weller — On a point of order, the member for Eltham has misled the Parliament. He has suggested that The Nationals closed the Toolangi research farm. It was indeed the Brumby government —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — What is the member's point of order?

Mr Weller — He is misleading the Parliament.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr HERBERT — I was just making the general point, Acting Speaker, that on issues like this and in the contributions we have just heard, there has been a great shift among members of The Nationals. The idea of The Nationals being the party that represents the interests of the country and ensures that the state has a strong role to play in research and development on behalf of farmers to make their farms more efficient seems to be out the window in deference to the economic rationalist partner that it finds itself with. I

will finish my contribution and wish the bill a speedy passage.

Mrs BAUER (Carrum) — It is certainly a pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. This bill amends the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 and removes reservations on certain parcels of land that are no longer relevant. It is definitely a common-sense bill and, as we have heard from previous speakers, a wide-ranging bill.

The bill facilitates a number of changes to reservations and covers seven different changes to the status of land. It also allows the tidying up of different parcels of land in different communities. Whilst the seven different changes do not directly impact my electorate of Carrum, the wide-ranging debate we have had makes it clear that the bill certainly affects people right across Victoria. I very much enjoyed the speech of the member for Benalla, who made a great contribution about reliving his childhood memories in Fitzroy and the culture of the Fitzroy community.

We also heard from the member for Seymour, who gave us a quite intense run-down on potatoes — and I must say that I will never think about a potato in the same way now. I found the agricultural history about all the different potatoes fascinating, and I will think about it when I peel potatoes. We heard from the member for Caulfield about the St Kilda town hall precinct, and the member for South Barwon talked about the Barwon Heads bridge. The bill affects many different communities including St Kilda, Fitzroy, Toolangi, Barwon Heads, Werribee and South Melbourne.

This bill will ensure that the Crown land it covers will be used for appropriate purposes. It ensures that the land will be better utilised and it makes a number of sensible changes to reservations. Victoria, along with other states, began reserving land for public use back in the 19th century. Crown land and reserves have many different purposes and facilitate many activities within our electorates, including libraries, scout halls, tennis courts, gardens, parks and foreshores. Victoria's Crown land reserves are managed by committees and councils, and they have been managed in that way for over 150 years.

An example of a great Crown land reservation in my electorate of Carrum is the wonderful kilometres of foreshore that we are blessed with. The foreshore is maintained by the City of Frankston and also the City of Kingston. In fact the City of Frankston recently won the 2011 Clean Beaches friendly beach award, which is testament to the City of Frankston's management of the

Crown reserve and shows the wonderful pride the community takes in the foreshore.

More than 12 000 areas of land have been set aside for public use through the Crown land reserves act. We have heard from other speakers that this revocation of reservations bill affects the Fitzroy gasworks site, the land adjacent to the St Kilda town hall, the Barwon Heads road realignment, the Toolangi potato research farm and Sneydes Road, Werribee. We have heard quite a lot about all these different areas in this debate, but one area which I have not heard too many people speak about and which I find quite interesting is the site at 5 Hospital Street in Inglewood. Currently on this site a range of services is offered to the South Loddon community. I have family in the South Loddon area, and I know it is a wonderful community. Currently there is a house on this land that was once the home of the general practitioner. A new residence has since been built and the existing building is no longer required. It is proposed that the building be sold, and legislation is required to remove the permanent reservation. That is one example of how this legislation will be implemented.

Another example is the South Melbourne temperance hall. This hall has great historical significance and is believed to have been the site of the first meeting of 12 football enthusiasts who formed the club that would later become the South Melbourne Football Club. The hall, which has been reserved under the Crown lands act, requires immediate maintenance and restoration, as it has not been used for some time. It is run by a local arts and culture group that provides performance spaces, and administration and management support to creative artists in our community. The original members of the committee of trustees that has been responsible for the management of the hall since the 1860s are all deceased, and the government wishes to appoint a land manager to oversee the restoration of the site. This requires the Crown land reservation to be revoked. I am pleased to hear that the site will remain reserved for public purposes.

These two examples indicate that this is sensible legislation. There has been wide-ranging debate, and I have very much enjoyed making a contribution to that debate. We are a government that is committed to improving the state, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr Pallas — Acting Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr HELPER (Ripon) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on the much-debated Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. The area I wish to focus on in particular, because this is such a far-ranging bill, is the parcels of land at the Toolangi Potato Research Station. These are two parcels of land that are intended to be incorporated into the state forest. I know a little bit about the Toolangi research station by virtue of my previous role as Minister for Agriculture, and I must say at the outset that Toolangi is a beautiful part of this state.

I pay tribute of course, as this type of legislation gives us the opportunity to do, to the traditional owners of the land. I understand that the name ‘Toolangi’ is a reference to ‘country with tall trees’ in the indigenous language of the area. It is indeed a land of tall trees. It is a superb example of Victoria’s forest reserves, with fantastic tall mountain ash trees dominating many parts of that forest. It also gives me the opportunity in the context of this legislation to pay tribute to Victoria’s forestry industry, an industry that has played — and still plays — an important part in Toolangi and the forest estate in this state. I hope that the forestry industry in Victoria prospers into the future and that the Toolangi State Forest continues to play an important part in that industry.

Going back to the early days of Toolangi, I understand that electricity was not connected to Toolangi as a village until 1963. This goes to show that it was a beautiful, albeit isolated, area until the Melba Highway was developed to a quite reasonable standard, and it is now merely an hour and a half or two hours drive out of Melbourne. C. J. Dennis, Australia’s famous poet, joined artist Hal Waugh on an expedition to the area in 1908 and stayed there for the rest of his life. I think that is a tribute to what a fantastic part of the state that area is.

It is always a challenge to stick to speaking only about the legislation when these types of bills come before this house, and with the indulgence of the house I want to pay further respect to the beauty of the area by referencing the many platypus that would be very much evident in the streams and creeks of that part of the state.

Mr O’Brien — Is the platypus on the bill?

Mr HELPER — Albeit that it is unseemly behaviour to take up interjections, I pay that one — the platypus bill link. That was really clever. Well done to the minister at the table! If I could just reflect, however — I understand I am not there yet — it is arguable that some of those platypus actually would

have tattooed bills. I think that ticks all the boxes, as we discussed it, for the member for Tarneit.

On a serious note, I pay tribute to the fantastic efforts that have been made by scientists since the formation of the research institute at Toolangi. Some of the debate in this chamber has been about the potato research that has gone on, but I also want to pay tribute to the research and certification work that has gone on for the strawberry industry of the state. It may have been forgotten or overlooked by some members making a presentation here today, but certainly the strawberry certification scheme was run out of Toolangi, as was potato research and potato certification. There are very good reasons for that. The isolation of the site makes it favourable as a biosecurity setting in terms of potato disease as well as strawberry disease, so it was a worthwhile location for the research station. As previous speakers have indicated, these schemes are increasingly operated directly by the affected industries, and both industries have certainly taken up the challenge of self-running their certification and research schemes.

I remember going to Toolangi in 2008 in the run-up to the end of my term as minister and being, firstly, overwhelmed by the beauty of the place and, secondly, very jealous that staff members of my department had such a fantastic work setting. What a gorgeous place to spend one's working day! Thirdly, I was able to recognise the angst and the concern that staff members had about that change — that is, the transferring of the functions of research and certification to the industry, meaning that the facility was no longer required by the government. The two parcels of land, albeit that they were forested and never cleared for the purposes of research and will be incorporated in the state forest, were therefore never really used for the purposes of research. Nevertheless they were attached to the Toolangi research station and as such I make my comments about the research that went on there.

In summing up I pay tribute to the indigenous people of the area, to the pioneers, including C. J. Dennis and his writings and others through the area, and further to the dozens of scientists and their support staff for the fabulous research they undertook over a period of time at the Toolangi research station. I conclude by wishing the bill a speedy passage.

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — I start by thanking you, Acting Speaker, for your forbearance in allowing me to make a contribution to the debate here this morning. I am very pleased to rise to support the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. I was interested in the opening comments from the member

for Albert Park in this debate when he reflected on the government business program and in doing so conveyed far more effectively than the very minimalist contribution of the acting manager of opposition business as to why the opposition was opposed to the government business program. But of course opposition members are happy to oppose and happy to complain but not to explain why they are complaining. Probably the number of calls for a quorum says something about that as well. But the bill is not about that.

The bill is about the revocation of a series of permanent reservations and two associated Crown land grants, which the member for Rodney mentioned is a matter that we seem to deal with a couple of times a year. It revokes the reservation of six or seven parcels of land that no longer require permanent reservation. The reason that we need to do this is that the land management approach during the 19th century was far different from the one that we take in the 21st century. The normal practice of the time was to permanently reserve parcels of land for a particular purpose, and if the status of the reservation was to be changed, it needed to be changed by an act of Parliament, which is clearly what we are doing this morning.

But it is perhaps not surprising, because planning has evolved enormously in the intervening 150 years or so. There was no such thing as a planning scheme when many of these reservations were made. There were no zones, so there was a different device. It might be said that in some circumstances parliamentary approval is still required for zoning changes, and we dealt with one of those during the last sitting week, but as a general rule now — there is one exception, which is relevant to this debate, and that is the Barwon Heads land — the Parliament does not become embroiled in planning decisions. There is now a comprehensive system of zones and a comprehensive system of overlays. Some might say it is too comprehensive. I do not want to get involved in that debate, but we now zone land for public purposes rather than reserving it.

Essentially what we are dealing with here is the result of the different practices between 19th century Victoria and 21st century Victoria. As I indicated earlier, as did the member for Rodney, it is something that we seem to do around this time of the year every year. It is regular business, not of great significance to the state but very significant to the people who are involved and have a stake in the future of these parcels of land. That is very much what this government is about. It is about looking after communities and allowing them to pursue their own destiny, and the St Kilda site is clearly an example of that.

The sites covered by the bill include the site for the St Kilda Family and Children's Centre at 173 Chapel Street, St Kilda; and the former Fitzroy gasworks at 450 Smith Street, Fitzroy. Of course the site of the gasworks is probably a case in point in terms of the planning argument, where clearly the uses surrounding the site have moved on — they are largely residential and retail areas these days — but the classification or the reservation for the site has remained. Clearly it is no longer appropriate on that site, as others have noted.

We have also had a wide-ranging and interesting discussion on the Toolangi potato farm. Having spent most of the debate in the chamber, I have been very interested in the various aspects of that discussion. We have just heard from the member for Ripon, who added again to my store of knowledge on that subject, particularly with regard to strawberries, and the very recent history in terms of the closure of the facility back in 2008, I think he said.

We were also treated last night to an excellent exposition from my colleague the member for Seymour in terms of the variety of potatoes and the factors that impacted on the development of the site, particularly the texture of the soil, being heavy soil, around Toolangi, which is not necessarily appropriate for modern requirements for potatoes that are easily washed. Perhaps it is a commentary on our society in the 21st century — I am not sure about that — but certainly it is clear that potatoes that emanate from far sandier and far more easily detachable soils are far more popular these days in terms of household consumption.

The bill also refers to the land on Sneydes Road, Werribee, between Princes Highway and Hoppers Lane. It refers to the Inglewood hospital at 5 Hospital Street, Inglewood, and once again we had an excellent explanation of the issues surrounding that particular site from the member for Rodney.

The bill also refers to the land at Barwon Heads Road, Barwon Heads. Last night we heard an interesting contribution from the member for Essendon on this matter. The reason that this land is in this bill is a result of a decision taken by the previous government to foist a new bridge on Barwon Heads which, as the member for South Barwon indicated last night, the people of Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove did not want. They did not want a bar of it. We heard the member for Essendon last night seeking to justify the decision and extol the virtues of the creation that now exists at that site. There is no doubt it will be a practical bridge, but the point is that it could have been done in a very much better fashion than the manner in which it was done.

In recent years I think we have had only one successful revocation of a planning scheme amendment, and that was the amendment that was introduced in order to facilitate the development of the new bridge. The upper house rejected that planning scheme amendment — quite rightly, in my view. While I do not generally believe in the Parliament becoming involved in planning decisions, every so often there comes a point when a stand must be taken. Clearly the government of the day was completely and utterly ignoring the wishes of the local people. If anyone doubts that, they need only look at the lack of success of the former member for South Barwon at the last election.

I am not saying that government does not have to provide leadership or that government does not have to take tough decisions; what I am saying is that when a project is comprehensively rejected by the local community, then you need to take a second look and consider what it is that people are saying. You cannot simply push ahead; that is the bureaucratic approach. You cannot do it. The former government got the result it deserved in that regard.

The bill also covers the former South Melbourne temperance hall at 199–201 Napier Street, South Melbourne. As I said, the bill is part of regular, standard business; it is therefore a reasonable bill, and I am very happy to support it.

Mr PALLAS (Tarneit) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on this bill, the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. Bills of this nature come before this place every so often — every few years, generally — and they seek to make a number of amendments to land classifications in law, making sure that the classifications accord with the actual usage. Ensuring that consistency ultimately ensures the lawful use of the land. This bill seeks to revoke permanent reservations of Crown land over several parcels of land.

The particular section I want to address in my comments today is that section of land relating to Sneydes Road in Werribee. The reservation on this land is being revoked. It is a built road that runs through the Werribee State Research Farm. This is a critical piece of land. Its appropriate classification is emblematic of the long-term usage that can be made of what is known as the Werribee employment precinct, which was the subject of very considerable work by the previous government aimed at the development and delivery of investment and ultimately employment-generating activities. Sneydes Road, Werribee, is a key and vital component of that.

Recently we have heard from the Minister for Planning a proposal to remove from the Werribee employment precinct all the land south of the Maltby bypass, commonly known as Point Cook West. Sneydes Road is a key component of that activity. Sneydes Road is identified in the precinct development plan as a place for the future development of an overpass providing access to Werribee for the soon-to-be residents of the 2000 housing lots that will be made available south of the Maltby bypass, so it is apt that Sneydes Road's usage is appropriately clarified.

But perhaps more concerning for me and for my community is this: every year we see something like 12 300 people move to the local government area of Wyndham. At 8 per cent growth in absolute terms, it is the fastest growing local government area in the country bar none. Twelve thousand three hundred people moving to an area would be approximately consistent with the population of Benalla moving into that electorate every year. Appropriately classifying land is one thing, but appropriately applying to public land usages that ultimately provide for good public policy outcomes for those communities is, might I say, paramount — it is even more important than the objectives that are currently being addressed in this bill.

The point I make is this: under the precinct structure plan directly affecting Sneydes Road and its future usage, where \$20 million is required for an overpass, where a full diamond interchange is also required to be built in that area — —

Mr Katos — You were roads minister; why didn't you do it?

Mr PALLAS — A profoundly uninformed contributor asks what the former government did. Well, we developed plans for the Werribee employment precinct. In the local government area of Wyndham we invested \$25 million a year in arterial roads. This year there has been \$3.8 million of new investment in arterial roads for all of metropolitan Melbourne. To put it another way, in the city of Wyndham we invested six and a half times more in arterial roads than the current government has done for the whole of metropolitan Melbourne. That is a pretty good outcome on a per annum basis. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame for what they have done for the growth areas. Now they want me to speak on the bill!

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I know this bill is quite broad ranging and the debate has been broad ranging, but I am not sure that the amount of money that was or was not put into roads by the former government necessarily accords with the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Morris) — Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Watt — It is a point of relevance.

Mr PALLAS — I am prepared to concede that I was straying from the bill. It is critically important that we recognise that if we are going to apply appropriate usages to this land, investment has to be made and employment needs to be generated around these key pieces of infrastructure — and Sneydes Road is exactly one of those pieces of infrastructure.

Recently we heard from the Growth Areas Authority as it was unveiling the precinct structure plan. Might I say that I am pleased to see that the current government is adhering to and indeed pursuing with some vigour, in the words of the Minister for Planning, the development of the Werribee employment precinct. That is a good thing for that community, and I hope the minister does in fact proceed down that path and produce a long-term strategy for employment generation in that area. It is critically important. It takes pressure off freeway arterials and enables Sneydes Road and other roads in the arterial network to be used for the generation of economic opportunity in what is one of the more disadvantaged local government areas when it comes to employment being located there.

The Growth Areas Authority recently said it needed to sell more public land for the purposes of funding future infrastructure. Nothing could be a more disturbing admission. The selling off of public land should not be used for the purposes of generating revenue effectively to deal with the infrastructure that is required at the time of the release of housing blocks into the fastest growing local government area in the nation. I say that because we cannot have 2000 new housing blocks released and using Sneydes Road in circumstances where households will not have the opportunity to access appropriate infrastructure at the time when the houses are built.

For the Growth Areas Authority to say, 'We will build more infrastructure only if we can sell more land' is disturbing in the extreme, because these communities deserve the appropriate and timely release of infrastructure to assist the Werribee employment precinct policy, which was pursued by the previous government — and I recognise that this government is prepared to embrace and pursue this policy. I believe this policy will ultimately serve my community very well.

The final point I would make is that there is now, through the strategic release and clarification of

information on infrastructure usage in and around the Werribee employment precinct, a great opportunity for employment to be generated, and we are seeing it happen. For example, on Hoppers Lane we have seen the Suzanne Corey selective entry high school — an initiative entirely of the previous government's — recently invested in and opened. There is a new technical training school that is funded by federal government contributions but once again will nonetheless open under the watch of this government. We have also seen private medical facilities open around Hoppers Lane. These developments will all generate employment.

What this government needs to do is recognise that the Werribee employment precinct is a marvellous asset. It is something like 900 hectares of state-owned land which is available — and Sneydes Road runs through the middle of it. It is perhaps the largest piece of contiguous state-owned land in metropolitan Melbourne, and it provides an enormous opportunity for the community in general, the people of Werribee and the local government area of Wyndham. I urge the government to proceed with a view that this should not be about land sales.

The arrangements that have released the land south of the Maltby bypass are a disgrace. I think what has happened is that an arrangement has been struck — I hope at some point I can get an answer from the Minister for Planning about this issue — so that the proceeds from the sale of that land have gone into consolidated revenue but will not be applied for the development of infrastructure in and around the community area that will have to bear the consequent weight of a population increase and increased travel. That is the issue of great concern to my community. I believe when you revoke land reservations and when you put in place rational structures for the use of the land you should also have a clear plan about how it will be used for the benefit of the local community. With those words I end my contribution to the debate.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — In contributing to the second-reading debate on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012 I intend to focus my remarks principally on the Inglewood land. Inglewood is a small Victorian country town located some 45 kilometres from Bendigo. The land in question had been the location of a general practitioner's residence, but this is no longer required as a result of another residence having been constructed by the Inglewood and Districts Health Service.

There are a number of ways of viewing a small Victorian country town. I note that one of the

parliamentary attendants, Mark Smith, would have had a good aerial view of the precinct during his career as a skydiver, during which he completed over 850 jumps. He would have had a bird's eye view of the land in question when he skydived near Bridgewater on Loddon. Circa 1993, after a discussion with Mark Smith in the back of the chamber, I ended up in a small, no-door Cessna aircraft flying above the precinct with a parliamentary colleague, Wayne Phillips, the then member for Eltham. During question time we had agreed to embark upon that journey. Wayne Phillips had been a butcher in Eltham, and he lost one eye as a result of a tyre exploding. When he first landed here he came into the parliamentary dining room and introduced himself to one of the Shirleys there by saying, 'My name's "Phillips" — two Ls and one eye'. Shirley soon woke up to Mr Phillips and said, 'Mr Phillips, if you do not behave yourself around here, soon you will be "Phillips" with two Ls and no eyes'.

Wayne was my skydiving partner, and we had a bet as to who would be first out of the plane. I won that particular bet. However, the more onerous position was being the fourth person out of the plane as it went round, overlooking the subject land at Inglewood in broad terms, not far along the Loddon River. We embarked upon the journey, looking at the land from different angles as we made what I would call our spectacular descents. We did a crash course in skydiving. I landed over 1 kilometre from the jump zone, and I was limping around this place not just for weeks later but probably for years later.

In the case of Mr Phillips, he looked up at his parachute with his one eye. He felt that it had not fully opened, so he ditched it — this was his first jump — and pulled the release for his emergency parachute, which meant that he did not have the same canopy space and ended up hitting the ground with quite a thud. Like me, he was limping for some time thereafter. When the Premier of the day saw us in the parliamentary precinct, he commented to Mr Phillips, 'Phillips, I knew you were mad, but Thompson, I did not know about you'. It was from that vantage point, nevertheless, that we had the ability to observe the subject land at Inglewood. The government has marked the land as being excess to requirements for the purposes of the health service and will be selling it.

The question might arise as to how one reviews the life of a township. Inglewood is a small Victorian country town; it was a goldmining town. It had a eucalyptus oil industry. Its architecture stands as a highlight of Victorian life. It was developed during the gold rush. Gold was discovered in minable qualities in Victoria after 1851, and the town was flourishing during the

1860s and thereafter. How do you measure the social history of a town? A health service and health facilities are important, and are one measure of it.

It is interesting to note that the first Australian nurse to die in service overseas, Frances Hines, was born in Inglewood. She lost her life in the Boer War, where she, along with a small contingent of other Victorian nurses, provided great support to the Australian soldiers who served in South Africa. Geelong's first Brownlow medallist, 'Carji' Greeves, was a one-time coach of the Inglewood Football Club, so he features in the history of the town.

There was an Australian First World War soldier by the name of Poynder who enlisted on 17 August 1914, was allotted to the 6th battalion machine-gun section and embarked on 21 October 1914 for Egypt. He served right through the Gallipoli campaign from the landing to the evacuation and took part in the battles at Lone Pine and Cape Helles. On returning to Egypt he was part of the Suez Canal garrison and later served as a sergeant. He went on to France and served there and in Belgium, taking part in the battles of Pozières, Bullecourt, Lagnicourt, the three battles of Passchendaele and the battle of Nieppe Forest until he was gassed in May 1918. He was sent to England and returned to Australia in January 1919 and went to work in the township of Inglewood.

His machine-gun section on one of its trips to Cape Helles lost 6 of the 10 men in the unit, and Poynder saw people have bullets go through their heads alongside him in the trenches in Gallipoli. A number of his colleagues were buried at Helles, at Schrapnel Gully at Gallipoli and in France and Belgium. He was a resident of Inglewood in the 1920s, contributing to the social and community life of the township and to veterans' community activities.

Another person whose name is associated with Inglewood is Maurice Blackburn, a person who at one point was expelled from the Labor Party for his close association with the Soviet Union. He was a member of this place representing Fitzroy at one point and then Essendon, and he later became the federal member for Bourke. He sat where you are right at this very moment, Acting Speaker; he was elected Speaker of this place. Reg Ansett is another notable person born in Inglewood, and there were a number of others who served in the township.

The first Premier of New Zealand was a fellow by the name of Julius Vogel. He contributed to the development of infrastructure in New Zealand but he was a one-time editor of the Inglewood newspaper who

was a practising member of the Jewish faith. At the time he was one of only a few people observant in his religious practice to have served in a senior political role. He wrote a novel, which was in the genre of science fiction but which advanced the role of women in public life, and it is interesting to note the advances made by New Zealand on that front over the succeeding decades, which saw the advancement of the rights of women in terms of suffrage and representation in the offices of Prime Minister, Governor-General and other senior offices.

There was an Australian military figure by the name of Edwin Tivey, who served both in South Africa and in the First World War, who was strongly associated with the Inglewood township. One of the main buildings in that town is still known as the Tivey residence.

In the case of George Poynder, I note that his military history shows that he was court martialled for conduct prejudicial to good order of military discipline, in that at Amiens in 1917 he obtained alcohol from the officers tent for the benefit of a Canadian machine-gun section operator, and the rank of sergeant was stripped from him, reducing him to corporal. It is noteworthy too perhaps that he later embarked upon a program, on leaving Inglewood, to establish a hotel not far out of town, where around the time of the 1929 recession it was proposed a dam would be built. The capital works unfortunately did not proceed at that particular time and the hotel venture of George Poynder failed.

The lives of people associated with Inglewood reflect the social history of the township, where people have been the beneficiaries of the health services provided. I have enumerated a number of those people, and will also mention the Nixon family, who were general storekeepers in the town. I note in concluding, while praising the contribution — —

Ms D'Ambrosio — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Morris) — Order! Former speakers Edmunds and Coghill ruled that if there is a continuous interruption of proceedings by the calling of quorums for no reason other than to interject, the Chair has the capacity to exercise discretion and refuse to ring the bells to summon members. There have already been a number of quorum calls today, and I intend to use my discretion, in accordance with previous rulings, not to ring the bells.

Mr McCURDY (Murray Valley) — I am also delighted to rise to speak on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012 in the absence of the opposition

having a speaker. I am very pleased to make a contribution to the debate because this bill is all about looking forward, and that is important when you are in government. Although our history is important and in many instances we need to be considerate of historical decisions that were made, we are on the whole wanting to look forward.

The purpose of this bill is to facilitate a range of changes to the status of land in the Crown land portfolio. It will revoke a number of permanent reservations and Crown grants of land that can only be removed by legislation. Hence we are in this place, discussing this particular bill; it cannot be done in any other forum.

The bill affects various parcels of Crown land. The City of Port Phillip, in partnership with the state and federal governments, is constructing a new \$12 million integrated family and children's centre on Crown land in Chapel Street, Kilda, adjacent to the St Kilda town hall. The centre will amalgamate the current St Kilda children's centre and the maternal child and health service and will provide 116 service places, which is an addition of 63 new places. In addition to this, the centre will include maternal and child health services, playgroups, new parents groups and family services.

The site on which the centre is being constructed is currently permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for the purposes of a town hall, a courthouse and offices. This reservation does not reflect the proposed use of the site. The land is also subject to a Crown grant to the mayor, councillors and citizens of St Kilda for the purposes of the reserve. By revoking the current permanent reservation and Crown grant over the land, it can be appropriately reserved and the City of Port Phillip can be appointed as the committee of management. This will facilitate the development of the new integrated family and children's centre and provide a centralised point for a range of important services in the wider St Kilda precinct. The second part of the bill will provide for the revocation of the permanent reservation and Crown grant over the site so it can be temporarily reserved for municipal purposes and the City of Port Phillip can be appointed the committee of management of the site.

We heard much about Fitzroy when the member for Benalla spoke with passion earlier today about his experiences in the Fitzroy region. It was a wide-ranging speech that we heard from the member for Benalla. He is a good member, and he spoke with passion about the Fitzroy region. I commend his contribution. The Collingwood, Fitzroy and District Gas and Coke Company, otherwise known as the Fitzroy gasworks,

was established in Smith Street in the mid-1800s — and I am not suggesting for a moment that the member for Benalla was around back in those days to witness that, but he certainly had great input post that — on land that was permanently reserved and granted to the company in 1862. That company became part of the Metropolitan Gas Company in 1878. It also owned adjoining land, and that together comprised the Fitzroy gasworks. This gasworks, which was used for welding, gas storage and other construction, played an integral part in the supply of gas to Melbourne until its closure in 1927.

In 1999 the site was transferred to what was known as the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, and it now houses offices and warehouses used for commercial and industrial purposes. The government has identified the site as appropriate for possible urban redevelopment and intends to make the land available for sale. These changes need to happen in order for us to continue to look at further options for this land. While the original Crown grant has been removed, part of the former gasworks remains permanently reserved for use by the Collingwood, Fitzroy and District Gas and Coke Company, which is no longer in existence. By revoking this outdated permanent reservation, the bill will enable the site to be sold and the land to undergo appropriate urban redevelopment, if that be the best use of the land.

The third part of the bill provides for the revocation of the permanent reservation over the site for the purposes of the redundant gasworks, and it continues any existing leases over the site, despite the revocation, until the land is sold. All such occupancies are expected to expire by the end of 2013.

The Toolangi potato research farm has been a hot topic over the last few days.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr McCURDY — A hot topic, not a hot potato! It has been discussed at great length by the member for Seymour, and I notice that the member for Frankston even chipped in with a contribution, if you pardon the pun. The site of the Toolangi potato research farm adjoins the Yarra State Forest, and the land is permanently reserved for agricultural research purposes under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.

Although parts of the land within the research farm were cleared and used for agricultural research, other parts remain forested and are considered to have high ecological value. The research farm was closed in 2008. It is proposed to incorporate two parcels of the forested land back into the adjoining Yarra State Forest. The

remainder of the land within the research farm will be retained for continued use by farmers and for research by some of the peak agricultural bodies and will not be affected by the changes arising from this bill.

I will move on to part 4 of the bill. I am starting to run out of time, but it is an important bill. We need to get through some of this technical information. Part 4 of the bill revokes the permanent reservations over the two separate parcels of uncleared land within the Toolangi potato research farm site, totalling around 43 hectares, or 100 acres in the old terminology. Being an ex-dairy farmer myself, I still tend to revert back to acres, which seems a little old fashioned but many people in our community still understand acres better than hectares. I am happy to give it in whichever format people are comfortable with. These parcels of land will be taken to be reserved forest and will incorporate the adjoining Yarra State Forest. They will be managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

The Werribee State Research Farm was established to investigate ways of improving agricultural production in Victoria. The farm sits on Crown land that was permanently reserved in 1927 for the state research farm under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. Sneydes Road, which forms the main transport link between Point Cook and Werribee, runs through the middle of the farm. A section of Sneydes Road between the Princes Highway and Hoppers Lane has been incorrectly reserved as part of the research farm. This land is used as a road and is managed as a road by the Wyndham City Council, so the underlying reservation is not consistent with the actual use.

Many of the points I have raised involve practical outcomes. I could go on all day about the different parts of this bill, but they are practical outcomes that we are trying to achieve with this bill. Certainly in my electorate of Murray Valley land use and changes can be very controversial. Recently we have seen the Rural City of Wangaratta trying to convert two former tennis courts to a car park at Merriwa Park. That has certainly created a community reaction. I understand why that happens, and certainly that is why we need to discuss these issues with the community and look for the best use going forward. While we respect the historical reasons for why reservations were put in place, we should always continue to look forward. That is very important.

The Rural City of Wangaratta also had a draft rural land use strategy, and that generated a strong response about changing the location and about how land can be used. Now it has a second draft, which certainly has been well accepted. There are still a few little hiccups there. I

believe this bill will go along the same path, but it is looking forward. I commend it to the house.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) — I rise to speak on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. The bill seeks to do some tidying up, if you like, by seeking to reclassify certain parcels of land to align their classification with their current use. I will go through the parcels of land individually. They include land that lies behind the St Kilda town hall building, the land situated within the confines of the old gasworks site in Fitzroy, a couple of parcels of land at the old potato research farm at Toolangi, land which is now Sneydes Road, land at the Inglewood hospital site, a section of land that runs alongside the Barwon Heads bridge and land on which the South Melbourne temperance hall sits. These parcels of land are now used for other purposes. The bill therefore revokes the permanent reservation of Crown land with respect to those sections of land that I have touched on.

I will describe the current uses of those parcels of land which justify the revocation of their current classification. The land behind the St Kilda town hall is now used for child-care facilities. The reservation of Crown land at that site is no longer needed. The land is currently reserved for use as a town hall, a court and offices.

The land on the site of the old Fitzroy gasworks is contaminated, and that is certainly by virtue of the fact that it had been used as a gas and fuel site, but that closed in 1927, and that is a long time ago. We are nearing its centenary celebration in fact, but it is certainly high time that a small amount of the land that sits there, which is still under Crown land reservation, be revoked so that the land, as I understand, can be sold off by the government. My understanding is that the government does intend to sell the land off, and what we would certainly look forward to is some explanation from the government as to how it will undertake the remediation works and of course the costs associated with that to prepare the land to be sold off. There is a requirement for extensive excavation of soil and the capping of easements, and the costs could potentially be quite prohibitive. That is a fairly large question mark that looms in terms of the remediation of this particular small parcel of land.

I understand that a lot of members have made contributions regarding the Toolangi potato research farm land. I will not go into that. It has been very well canvassed, and I will not attempt to rehash something that has very much been put through the potato masher already.

What is very important in this debate of course is not so much the need for us to deal with the realignment of the classification of lands but how that land is effectively used — that is, publicly owned Crown land. We have seen some backward steps taken by the government in terms of the environment and open spaces when it comes to the appreciation of Crown land, and this bill serves as a reminder of the lack of forward thinking with respect to the value that the public generally places on those open spaces and the environment.

We also understand that there could potentially be significant ill effects on how Crown land is maintained. We know that a number of public servants will be subject to the axing of 3600 jobs in the public service, and we know that the Department of Sustainability and Environment expects to lose about 200 workers. These are some of the bad taste actions on the part of this government when it comes to the management of Crown land.

With those few words, I will conclude my contribution to debate on the bill.

Mr WATT (Burwood) — I rise to speak on the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012, noting that this is a simple bill revoking a number of reservations on a number of parcels of land. I would think that the opposition would like this particular bill. It is quite an interesting bill. It has a lot of pictures for those who do not understand it. It would be a pretty good bill for them to work with — all of those nice little pretty pictures.

What I would say, though, just getting to the content of the bill, is that I found it interesting listening to most of the contributions on this particular bill. I would like to run through a couple of the contributions that I have heard. We heard the member for Benalla talk about his connection to Fitzroy when he spoke about the Fitzroy gasworks. It was a very interesting contribution from the member for Benalla. He spoke about Fitzroy and its culture at the time he had an affiliation with the area, and I appreciated his contribution. He is a good member.

Also in regard to the Fitzroy gasworks the member for Richmond talked quite a lot about it being in his electorate, so it is clearly something he has an affiliation with. He represents a particular area, and the people of his electorate would very much be interested in the Fitzroy gasworks.

I note the member for Caulfield talked at some length about the parcel of land in St Kilda that is going to be developed as a children's centre with funding from the

local council and the federal government as well as an amount from the state government. I note he has an interest in that parcel of land, given his connections to the area, and it was interesting to listen to his speech. This morning — not too long ago — the member for Tarneit talked passionately about Sneydes Road and the fact that it has an impact on his electorate, and I congratulate him on his contribution on that. The member for Sandringham talked at some length about his connections to the Inglewood parcel of land and the bird's eye view he was able to get of it. It was an interesting contribution. The member for Seymour talked at length about the Toolangi potato research centre and its significant variety of potatoes; she also made a very interesting contribution.

Clearly the site at Toolangi is not really a hot potato, but something that probably is a bit of a hot potato is the land in and around Barwon Heads. I want to spend a little bit of time on the Barwon Heads part of this bill. The member for South Barwon spoke at length about Barwon Heads and the relevant parcel of land and the reason why the revocation of reservation on that land is needed. It is tied to matters concerning the Barwon Heads bridge. Of course the member for South Barwon spoke of that, the land being right at the edge of but nonetheless in his electorate. Many of his constituents are concerned about this parcel of land and the reasons for it coming up in this bill.

I note that the member for Mornington also touched on the Barwon Heads bridge, which was interesting. I do not think the electorate of the member for Mornington is all that close to the Barwon Heads bridge, but nonetheless he touched on that topic. The previous speaker, the member for Mill Park, also touched on the Barwon Heads bridge.

Members will soon understand where I am going as I concentrate a little on the Barwon Heads bridge and this parcel of land. The member for Essendon also spoke about the bridge. Let me just find some notes about his contribution. Here we go; he said it was now loved by the people of, and visitors to, Barwon Heads. Given the history of the bridge, I am not so sure that the bridge is now much loved by the people of Barwon Heads. I will explain why I say all this. I listened intently to the member for Bellarine, the shadow minister for the environment — environment with two n's, not three. Apart from forgetting to put the 'n' in 'environment' she also forgot to put the Barwon Heads bridge issue into her contribution. I would have thought that, having a full 30 minutes to speak about the bill, and given that that parcel of land borders her electorate —

Mr Herbert — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this has been a wide-ranging debate, but the member himself earlier raised points of order about relevance. We are really not here to debate the contributions of other members and to bring into the debate extraneous newspaper stories that have nothing to do with the bill. I would ask you to bring the member back to the bill.

Mr WATT — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, all of my contribution in this debate has been about parcels of land dealt with by the bill, contributions other members have made and things that members have missed in their contributions — for example, the member for Bellarine forgetting to mention the Barwon Heads bridge, which is the reason this parcel of land and the revocation of the associated reservation is being discussed. I would say I am being extremely relevant to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. Many speakers have covered a wide range of matters.

Mr WATT — As I was saying, in her contribution the ‘shadow minister for the enviro-ment’, the member for Bellarine, touched on this parcel of land but completely forgot to mention why we had to revoke the reservation on it. It is interesting that she forgot to mention that, because clearly she is embarrassed about why we had to revoke the reservation and the fact that she and the previous government had paid no respect to the people of Barwon Heads. I would have thought the shadow minister for the enviro-ment would have spoken of this parcel of land, given that it abuts her electorate. The reason for revoking this reservation is very clear: it is being revoked because of the Barwon Heads bridge. I would have thought the member for Eltham would have understood exactly what I am talking about here. I do not understand how the member for Eltham could think it is not on the topic.

It is disappointing — and I am sure the people of Bellarine find it extremely disappointing — that the member for Bellarine shows no respect to the people of Bellarine, the people of Geelong and the people of and around Barwon Heads and the Barwon Heads bridge. I would have thought she would have discussed those matters in her contribution.

Mr Herbert — On a point of order, Acting Speaker — and I note it takes a while to be acknowledged by the Chair sometimes — the member is straying a long way from the bill. He is using his contribution simply to make extraneous personal attacks on members of this chamber, and he really ought to be brought back to the bill.

Mr WATT — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, as I said previously, the revocation of the reservation on this land is happening because of the Barwon Heads bridge. All I am pointing out is that other members in their contributions failed to discuss why this revocation needs to go ahead. I would have thought that by way of representing her community she would have talked about that. It is extremely relevant to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The member for Ivanhoe, on the point of order.

Mr Carbines — I thought I would speak on the bill, if that is all right, Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! I do not give the member for Ivanhoe the call. Have we gone the full time? I think we had 1 minute to go. Has the member for Burwood finished his contribution?

Mr WATT — No.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The member for Burwood to continue his contribution on the bill. I think he has made the point in relation to the Barwon Heads bridge.

Mr Herbert — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, having raised a point of order I am not sure whether that was your response to it or whether there is going to be a response.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! In response to the point of order I am asking the member for Burwood to continue his contribution, returning to the bill.

Mr WATT — I would like to commend the bill to the house.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I will make some brief comments in relation to the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. I will keep my comments brief to allow other members to make contributions on the bill. Previous speakers have dealt with some of the specifics of the bill, and I would like to refer to some of those comments and pose some questions.

Every couple of years bills of this nature are brought before the Parliament to ensure that the reservations applying to land that has been made available for specific purposes might be changed under particular acts and to specify which government departments may then have responsibility for that land. As we have seen in respect of another bill we have debated this week that deals with investment in government projects such as

the Royal Women's Hospital and the dental hospital, there have been discussions about land use changes. There are some examples in this bill involving revocations of reservations of Crown land in St Kilda and Fitzroy.

In looking ahead to how this bill might apply to the Ivanhoe electorate, what is of interest to me is the land which has been designated and which is currently appropriated for school and educational purposes. Some of those sites are no longer being used as school sites and may well end up being administered by Places Victoria. What concerns me is how a similar bill might apply to land in my electorate which has previously been used for and dedicated to educational purposes and how that land might be used in the future. How will the government's land use planner, Places Victoria, determine how that land will be used in the future and make recommendations to government about that?

Part of the determinations about Crown land use in local communities is about whether it will be up for public sale, with the profits then perhaps going back into investments in public assets in local communities. That is something we would like to see happen in the Ivanhoe electorate in relation to Haig Street Primary School, Bellfield Primary School and the Banksia Secondary College sites to name but three where the current land use is listed under legislation as being the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to be used for educational purposes. That land is no longer being used for educational purposes, so how might it be used in the future? These are similar examples from my electorate to those government-owned sites that are before the Parliament in this bill.

I will be suggesting that as Places Victoria and the education department make determinations about the current land use of the former school sites in my electorate this bill provides opportunities to ensure that those sites remain public assets or that there is some investment back into local public facilities. I know that my electorate of Ivanhoe is keen to see that profits coming from the sale of those former school sites, whose designated usage might not be for government or public use in the future, go back into public infrastructure projects in the local electorate so that we can pursue further stages of school development there. It is part of the community's expectation that where it has made a decision to forgo community assets, the windfall profits that then come from the sale of those assets should go into the upgrading and improving of other local school facilities in the Ivanhoe electorate. However, I suspect that the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012 is another mechanism that is

being used by the government, as we have seen through other legislation, in seeking to protect and maintain the assets as government assets when in fact they are community assets paid for by taxpayers. How do you make sure that the value of those assets is put into other local services or infrastructure or land banking procedures that might be needed?

I note that in the Ivanhoe electorate we have land that has previously been used for educational purposes. It is listed to continue to be used in that way, but where there is clearly going to be a change in the use of those land parcels owned by the government, whether they continue to be used for government purposes or are sold to be rezoned for other purposes, we want to see any windfall gains by the government reinvested into the upgrading of other school projects such as the Charles Latrobe College.

If we continue to lose public assets or Crown land that is no longer fit for its purpose, it would be a progressive approach to ensure that the resources and assets that are raised from that sale go back into other local facilities. The community would then have confidence that it is getting something back for giving something up. As we all know, with any deal you do in politics, you want your end of the deal delivered on first. Part of the Ivanhoe community's concern is that while it has made a commitment to forgo these parcels of land that were previously used for education purposes, it did so under the belief and understanding that the value of those parcels of land that seem to be falling through the cracks of the education department and Places Victoria would result in providing resources to complete projects such as the Charles Latrobe College so the school would get a new asset on a new parcel of land in Macleod West. I will continue to advocate strongly for that in the Ivanhoe electorate.

The outcomes that will stem from the revocation of reservations applying to some of the parcels of land outlined in this bill are the type of outcomes that we would like to see in my local electorate. I will continue to advocate for that in the coming weeks and months. We are particularly hopeful of achieving some positive outcomes in relation to the budget in a couple of weeks.

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012. The overall purpose of this bill is to facilitate a range of changes to the status of land in the Crown land portfolio. The bill revokes a number of permanent reservations and Crown grants which require legislation to make those changes.

Turning to the purposes of the bill as outlined in part 1, we can see seven pieces of land referred to in detail. First, there is certain land next to the St Kilda town hall. Secondly, there is land at the former Fitzroy gasworks site. Thirdly, there is part of the land that was occupied by the Toolangi potato research farm. I should note in passing that there has been a range of very interesting contributions about that piece of land, not the least of which was your own of course, Acting Speaker.

The fourth area is certain land at Werribee. The fifth is certain land no longer required by the Inglewood hospital. The sixth is certain land at Barwon Heads. The seventh is land occupied by the South Melbourne temperance hall.

A number of contributors have referred in detail to various aspects of those pieces of land. I would like to make my comments today on the basis of the structure of the bill before us. The bill is laid out so that each site I have just mentioned is dealt with in a part of the bill. Part 2 deals with the St Kilda land. It articulates the specific details of the volume of the title. Clause 4 lists the various aspects of the consequences of the revocation. Clause 5 is headed 'Temporary reservation of St Kilda land'. Clause 6 is headed 'City of Port Phillip is committee of management'.

Part 3 is about the former Fitzroy gasworks site. Again the bill addresses the relevant matters in the appropriate detail, as required. Part 4 deals with the Toolangi potato research farm site, again outlining in several clauses the particular relevant aspects of that. Part 5 deals with Sneydes Road in Werribee, again providing some more information about that land and the requirements surrounding the need for the revocation of the reservation. Part 6 deals with the Inglewood hospital reserve. I will come back to that in a moment. Part 7 is about the Barwon Heads land and part 8 is about the South Melbourne temperance hall.

I note also that the bill contains a number of schedules. Schedule 1 contains tables that list in a most comprehensive way all the different parcels of land item by item and outline their particular aspects. It lists the technical details of each, such as the parish and county that they are in and their size. It refers to various instruments, the dates of the reservations and so on. It documents very clearly the full history of all the parcels of land, references to the *Government Gazette* and other matters relating to the Crown grant, including the details of the volume and folio. They are very clearly itemised to ensure that the pieces of land being dealt with by the bill are in fact the right pieces of land. The schedule also lists the purpose of the reservation for each piece of land and each table finishes with a

description of the extent of the revocation. The tables in schedule 1 give an overall snapshot of the objectives of the bill. They provide a handy source of reference for those who are interested in looking at those details.

Going to the other schedules, schedule 2 is a clear diagram that is an extract from the title for the St Kilda land. It shows where the land sits, its various measurements and so on. Schedule 3 is a diagram of the Inglewood hospital reserve land. It is very clearly laid out, showing its location in relation to the surrounding area, including the streets. Anybody who has an interest in this matter can see exactly where it is and can look around at the surrounding properties and be very clear on what is being dealt with in this bill. Schedule 4 shows the irregularly shaped Barwon Heads land. Again, the various streets and other adjoining facilities — the parks and so on — that surround that land are shown.

I want to make just a few comments about the Inglewood and Districts Health Service property in particular. Interestingly, it is located at 3 Hospital Street, Inglewood, which is a very apt name for the street in which to locate such a facility. I wonder what was there first, I am sure its history would identify how that name was chosen.

The Inglewood and Districts Health Service provides a diverse range of services to the communities of the southern part of the shire of Loddon. They include accident and emergency, hospital and residential aged-care services; community and district nursing; counselling; and health education. The service is located on Crown land permanently reserved for hospital services under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. Diverse services are being provided there. It is obviously a very important component of the local community, given that it provides the services I have mentioned, particularly the accident and emergency service. Those are some of the important community services that are needed particularly in rural areas of Victoria but obviously in suburban areas as well.

The property includes a building which was formerly the residence of the general practitioner. A new residence has since been constructed elsewhere by the service, so the site of the former residence is surplus to government requirements. That is the genesis of this particular part of the bill.

Part 7 deals with the land at Barwon Heads, where recent road realignments undertaken by VicRoads have encroached onto a small area of Crown land permanently reserved for a public park on the Barwon Heads side of the Barwon River. As the purpose of the

Crown land reservation is inconsistent with the required use by VicRoads for transport purposes, the permanent reservation must be revoked to the extent of the area required by VicRoads. Again, that is the motivation or reason for this particular parcel of land being included in the Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012 that is before us today. The land lost at Barwon Heads is very minor in comparison with the balance of the Barwon Heads public park and there will be no impact on public access, so that will not be an issue in any way.

The bill facilitates the preservation of the South Melbourne temperance hall. It obviously has significant local heritage values. The hall is currently used by a local not-for-profit arts and cultural group. Its members provide valuable assistance to independent performing artists in the community. I am sure there would be a significant amount of colourful history in a property such as that hall. I imagine that over a very long time many meetings were held there. In this day and age the initial intent of establishing such a hall is probably lost on the community — perhaps sadly, to some extent. Nevertheless, that is the way it is. As I have just mentioned, thankfully other community groups are able to use that particular facility.

The hall is located on Crown land in Napier Street, South Melbourne. The history of that reservation goes back to 1860 and it was granted to the trustees in 1861, so there has been a longstanding commitment to that particular facility. Time is on the wing, so let me conclude by commending this bill to the house.

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — It is a great pleasure to rise to speak on this bill. In summary, the bill facilitates a number of changes to the status of the land in the Crown land portfolio by revoking the permanent reservations over, or Crown grants of, seven separate sites of Crown land in Victoria. Permanent reservations over and grants of Crown land can be removed only by legislation.

One of the things the bill does is revoke a reservation on land in St Kilda. That revocation will facilitate the construction by the City of Port Phillip of a new integrated family and children's centre on Crown land at 171 Chapel Street, next to the St Kilda town hall. I do not think that the house can put too much emphasis on the importance of the family and children. It is certainly the belief of the coalition that the family is the core unit of our community. A number of measures are being taken across our great country, including in our state, that challenge that. During its term in office the previous government brought in legislation that put an enormous amount of pressure on the family unit and

therefore on the unit that cares for children. A range of pieces of legislation made it much more difficult to recognise what constitutes a family unit, to keep the family unit together and to ensure that the benefits which flow from the family unit are maintained.

As we know, over time we have moved from children being raised in a very close-knit, tight family unit to an environment where there have been latchkey kids who come home and no parent is in the house. I make no comment about which parent should be in the house, but it is always a better option to have a parent in the house in the context of raising children.

The most important thing is that the passage of this bill through this house be as fast as possible so the government's agenda can be fulfilled. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION AMENDMENT (EXAMINATIONS) BILL 2012

Statement of compatibility

Mr McINTOSH (Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the charter act), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment (Examinations) Bill 2012 (the bill).

In my opinion, the bill, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights protected by the charter act.

I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview of bill

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 (the IBAC act) to provide the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) with examination powers and referral powers.

Human rights protected by the charter act that are relevant to the bill

Right to privacy and reputation (section 13 of the charter act)

Section 13(a) of the charter act provides that individuals have a right not to have their privacy unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. The right to privacy is concerned with freeing a person's 'private sphere' from government intervention or excessive unsolicited intervention by other individuals. An interference with privacy will not be unlawful provided it is permitted by law, is certain, and is appropriately circumscribed. An interference will not be arbitrary provided that the restrictions on privacy are reasonable in the particular circumstances and are in accordance with the provisions, aims and objectives of the charter act. Section 13(b) provides that individuals have the right not to have their reputation unlawfully attacked.

However, these rights are not absolute and can be subject to reasonable limitations under section 7(2) of the charter act.

The bill engages the right to privacy and freedom from reputational attack in two ways, in its provisions relating to:

- public examinations (new section 82C); and
- the power to issue witness summons (new section 82F).

Public examinations

The bill will insert new section 82C which, in particular circumstances, permits the IBAC to conduct an examination in public for the purposes of an investigation.

A public examination would engage a person's right to privacy and reputation, as personal information may be revealed during the course of the examination. Persons summoned to attend an examination will not, without reasonable excuse, be entitled to refuse to answer questions or produce documents or things required of them.

New section 82C places important limitations on when the IBAC can hold a public examination that minimise the risk of personal information being made publicly available and the risk of having a person's reputation unreasonably damaged. The IBAC can only hold an examination in public if it reasonably considers:

- there are exceptional circumstances; and
- it is in the public interest to hold the examination in public; and
- a public examination can be held without causing unreasonable damage to a person's reputation, safety or wellbeing.

The power to require a person to attend for an examination and answer questions is also circumscribed by:

- new section 82C(3) which requires the IBAC to provide the Victorian Inspectorate with a written report specifying the reasons in relation to the decision to hold a public examination. This report must be provided not less than seven days before a public examination is held; and

- clause 31 of the bill which will insert new section 28G into the Victorian Inspectorate Act, giving the Victorian Inspectorate the ability to require the IBAC to provide a written report specifying details about an examination,

including the relevance of the attendance to the purpose of the investigation in relation to which the attendance occurred. This new section assists the Victorian Inspectorate in overseeing the operations of the IBAC and ensuring that examinations are not conducted arbitrarily.

This engagement of the right to privacy and freedom from reputational attack is not a limitation of the right. The application of the powers will be lawful and certain, applying in clearly articulated circumstances and therefore not arbitrary. Indeed, in some circumstances the ability to give sworn evidence in a public forum may be an opportunity to restore a person's reputation.

A public examination may, where appropriate, be an important means of providing transparency in relation to scrutiny of the activities of IBAC.

The power to issue a witness summons

The right to privacy is engaged where a public authority is conferred a power to compel a person to provide personal information or provide documents or things.

New section 82F provides the IBAC with the power to issue a witness summons to a person requiring that person to attend and give evidence at an examination or produce required documents or other things, or both. The power of the IBAC to issue a summons will engage the right to privacy if a person is compelled, as a result of that summons, to provide personal information or documents or other things.

The ability to compel the giving of evidence and production of documents or other things is a proportionate and appropriate power for the role of the IBAC. Without such power, the IBAC would not be properly equipped to achieve its statutory functions, particularly the identification, exposure and investigation of serious corrupt conduct and police personnel misconduct.

A witness summons must only be issued where the IBAC is satisfied that it is reasonable to do so having regard to the evidentiary or intelligence value of the information, document or thing sought to be obtained from the person, and the age of the person and any mental impairment to which the person is known to be subject. Additionally, if a witness is aged between 16 and 18, the IBAC must not issue a witness summons to the person unless the IBAC considers on reasonable grounds that the information, document or thing that the person could provide may be compelling and probative evidence, and it is not practicable to obtain the information, document or thing by any other means.

The power to issue a witness summons is accompanied by duties designed to ensure the IBAC appropriately informs a witness of his or her rights. The summons must inform a witness of the nature of the matters about which the person is to be questioned (except to the extent the IBAC considers on reasonable grounds that this would be likely to prejudice the conduct of the investigation), that the witness is entitled to seek legal advice, and that privileges may apply.

There are also safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of information, documents or other things obtained during the course of an IBAC investigation, including by way of witness summons:

new section 33A provides that IBAC officers must not disclose any information acquired in the course of their duties except in the course of the performance of their functions or the exercise of their powers in accordance with the law, or for the purposes of proceedings for an offence or disciplinary process or action instituted as a result of an investigation conducted by the IBAC or by the Victorian Inspectorate or as is otherwise authorised or required to be made under the IBAC act.

new section 33C which permits the IBAC to issue a confidentiality notice to a person specifying matters that cannot be disclosed by that person. The matters that may be subject to a confidentiality notice are referred to as 'restricted matters' and are defined in the bill. A restricted matter includes evidence given to the IBAC; and

the bill will insert division 4 into part 2 which limits the extent to which an IBAC officer can be compelled to provide certain sensitive information, such as the identity of a person who has provided the IBAC with information relating to an investigation, in relation to a legal proceeding (other than a criminal proceeding) or a disciplinary proceeding or action.

I consider that any interference with privacy occasioned by the IBAC's power to issue a summons will be lawful, will not be arbitrary, and is appropriately circumscribed with the protections outlined above.

Freedom of expression (section 15 of the charter act)

Section 15 of the charter act holds that every person has the right to freedom of expression. This includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, whether within or outside Victoria, and regardless of the medium of expression. However, section 15 also notes that special duties and responsibilities attach to this right, and that lawful restrictions may be necessary to respect personal rights and reputations, and to protect public safety, order, health or morality.

A number of clauses of the bill engage the right to freedom of expression, by imposing confidentiality obligations on IBAC officers and other persons, and by providing for penalties where those obligations are breached:

the bill will insert new section 33A which limits the extent to which a current or former IBAC officer can disclose information obtained in the performance of their duties and functions;

the bill will insert division 3 into part 2 which limits a person's ability to disclose matters that are the subject of a confidentiality notice issued by the IBAC;

the bill will insert division 4 into part 2 which limits the extent to which an IBAC officer (and other persons, such as those who have taken an oath or made an affirmation under the IBAC act) can be compelled to provide certain sensitive information, such as the identity of a person who has provided the IBAC with information relating to an investigation, in relation to a legal proceeding (other than a criminal proceeding) or a disciplinary process or action.

The limitations placed on IBAC officers are necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of information that these persons

may be privy to in the course of performing their duties and functions and exercising their powers.

The limitations placed on freedom of expression contained in division 3 of part 2 are important mechanisms by which the IBAC can safeguard its investigations and persons connected with that investigation. A confidentiality notice may only be issued by the IBAC where it is satisfied that disclosure of restricted matter is likely to prejudice its investigation, the safety or reputation of a person or the fair trial of a person who has been, or may be, charged with an offence. Moreover where the IBAC considers it is no longer necessary to restrict disclosure of a particular matter it is required to cancel the confidentiality notice. A confidentiality notice cannot last for longer than five years, unless the IBAC has applied to the Supreme Court for an extension and the Supreme Court is satisfied that the extension is necessary. New section 33E sets out circumstances in which a person served with a confidentiality notice may disclose the restricted matter specified in the notice, for instance for the purpose of obtaining legal advice. The IBAC's power to issue a confidentiality notice is also subject to a requirement to provide the Victorian Inspectorate with a copy of each confidentiality notice issued as soon as possible, which assists the Victorian Inspectorate in its function of monitoring the IBAC's exercise of its powers.

The new division 4 in part 2 contains important mechanisms by which the IBAC can protect: the safety of any informers, witnesses or other persons related to the investigation; any investigation conducted by the IBAC, the Victorian Inspectorate, a law enforcement agency or integrity body; the confidentiality of secret investigative methods used by the IBAC, the Victorian Inspectorate, a law enforcement agency or an integrity body; and the public interest. An IBAC officer cannot be compelled to produce a protected document or thing. This limitation is appropriately circumscribed by new section 33I which allows an application to be made to the court to determine whether an objection to produce a document or other thing in response to a subpoena is lawful. These provisions relate to a subpoena issued in relation to criminal proceedings and are a means by which a person can have a court review the basis on which a document or other thing has not been produced.

These limitations on the right to free expression are direct, proportionate and balanced with the need to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of the IBAC investigations and safety of the persons involved. I consider that any interference with freedom of expression occasioned by the confidentiality obligations set out above will be lawful, will not be arbitrary, and is appropriately circumscribed with the protections outlined above.

Rights to liberty and security of person (section 21 of the charter)

Section 21(2) of the charter provides that a person must not be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

This right is engaged by new section 82X which provides that the IBAC may apply to a judge of the Supreme Court for the issue of a warrant to arrest a person if the IBAC believes on reasonable grounds that the person has been served with a witness summons and failed to appear at the IBAC in accordance with a witness summons.

The right is also engaged by new section 82ZK which provides that IBAC may issue a certificate of charge and an arrest warrant if it appears to the IBAC that a person is guilty of contempt of the IBAC.

The ability to apply for a warrant to arrest a person is an important mechanism by which the IBAC can ensure the attendance of persons who may have information, documents or other things that are relevant to its investigations, or alternatively, to effectively bring a person to account for contempt and enforce compliance with a witness summons.

In my opinion the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention is not limited by new sections 82X or 82ZK. The issuing of an arrest warrant under both new sections will not be arbitrary. An application under new section 82X can only be made to the Supreme Court in limited circumstances and the application can only be granted if a judge of the Supreme Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person has been duly served with a witness summons and has failed to appear at the IBAC in accordance with the summons. An arrest warrant can only be issued in relation to a contempt and a person can only be guilty of contempt in the limited circumstances under the act. An additional protection provided by new sections 82Y and 82ZK is that the person arrested must be brought before the Supreme Court without delay. New section 82ZM provides that if it is not practicable for the person to be brought immediately before the Supreme Court the person will have the right to apply to a bail justice to be released from custody. In addition the power to issue a warrant will be overseen by the Victorian Inspectorate; new section 82ZH provides that within three days after the issue of an arrest warrant the IBAC must give a written report to the IBAC that sets out specified matters.

Right to a fair hearing (section 24 of the charter act)

Section 24 of the charter act holds that a person charged with a criminal offence or a party to a civil proceeding has the right to have the charge or proceeding decided by a competent, independent and impartial court or tribunal after a fair and public hearing. It also holds that all judgements or decisions made by a court or tribunal in a criminal or civil proceeding must be made public, unless exceptions apply including that a law other than the charter act otherwise permits.

Section 24 deals with the right to a fair hearing, incorporating principles of procedural fairness. Procedural fairness concerns the extent to which the procedures of a hearing protect the rights of the parties, such as the right of a party to be provided a reasonable opportunity to present his or her case under conditions that do not place that party at a substantial disadvantage vis-a-vis his or her opponent.

The bill will insert new section 82A which provides the IBAC with the ability to conduct an examination for the purpose of an investigation. For the purposes of the charter act, the IBAC is not a 'tribunal', and its examinations functions do not constitute civil or criminal proceedings. That is because some key features that are inherent to those concepts are not present — namely, that the IBAC is not capable of making any binding determination as to the parties' rights or liabilities; and that there are not two 'parties' involved in a contest over rights and liabilities.

Nonetheless I note the aspects of this bill which apply procedural fairness principles to the examination powers, and the resulting reporting functions, of the IBAC:

in an examination and in relation to a witness summons, a person is able to seek advice from and be represented by an Australian legal practitioner (new section 82M);

the IBAC must provide a witness with information about the nature and scope of the investigation to which the examination relates, and also about the privileges and rights that the witness has (for example the right to an interpreter) (new section 82G);

in most circumstances, unless it would prejudice the investigation, a witness must be provided at least seven days from the date of service of a summons before compliance is required, to enable the person to seek advice and consider the summons (new section 82J);

where the IBAC intends to include in a report an adverse finding about a person the IBAC must first provide the person with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the adverse material and fairly set out each element of the response in its report (sections 86 and 89).

New division 4 of part 2 may also engage the right to a fair hearing. New section 33H limits the circumstances in which a protected person, including IBAC officers, can be compelled to produce any document or other thing in a legal proceeding or a disciplinary process or action. New section 33I provides for a protected person to object to the production of documents or information that have come into his or her possession or control in the performance of the duties and functions or the exercise of powers under the IBAC act, and for the court to determine that application. Accordingly, there may be instances where the IBAC does not disclose information, and as a consequence that information is not available for a person charged with a criminal offence or a party to a civil proceeding. The IBAC or the court (whoever is required by the bill to determine the matter) will need to balance factors for disclosure, such as a defendant having access to information that may be relevant to their defence against factors that might count against disclosure, such as needing to ensure the safety of an informant.

The purpose of the right to a fair hearing is to ensure procedural fairness. It includes the principle of equality of arms: everyone who is a party to a proceeding must have a reasonable opportunity to present his or her case under conditions that do not place him or her at a substantial disadvantage vis-a-vis his or her opponent. The right guarantees no more than a reasonable opportunity to present one's case. It does not grant a right to seek information, evidence or documents that may be useful in advancing one's case in every circumstance.

Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25 of the charter)

Section 25 of the charter provides for entitlements for persons charged with a criminal offence; relevantly subsection (2)(g) provides that a person charged with a criminal offence is entitled to examine, or have examined, witnesses against him or her, unless otherwise provided for by law.

New section 33K engages this right by providing that an IBAC officer (and other persons, such as those who have taken an oath or made an affirmation under the IBAC act) cannot be compelled in a court to disclose any matter or thing of which the person has knowledge as a result of the performance of duties and functions or the exercise of powers under the IBAC act or any other act. Moreover, the person

cannot be compelled to produce any document or other thing that has come into his or her possession or control in the performance of the duties and functions or the exercise of powers under the IBAC act or any other act.

New section 33K does not limit the right in subsection 25(2)(g) of the charter. The words 'unless otherwise provided for by law' clearly encompass a provision such as new section 33K. New section 33K is an important protection for the IBAC and its officers. The IBAC will have access to sensitive information and there may be good reasons for not disclosing this information to a court, such as ensuring the safety of an informer to the IBAC. Of course where there are no compelling reasons to withhold particular information and that information is requested by a party to civil or criminal proceedings, the IBAC may choose to provide that information in compliance with a court order or subpoena.

Section 25(2)(k) of the charter provides that a person charged with a criminal offence is entitled without discrimination not to be compelled to testify against himself or herself or to confess guilt.

The bill inserts new section 82ZC(1) which provides that a person is not excused from answering a question, giving information, or producing a document or other thing in accordance with a witness summons on the ground that the answer to the question, the information, or the production of the document or other thing, might tend to incriminate the person or make the person liable to a penalty. The purpose of the provision is to assist the IBAC in its function as a truth-seeking body that is able to undertake full and proper investigations.

Where, in the course of an investigation, the IBAC discovers evidence of criminal conduct and the IBAC is of the opinion that the evidence is of sufficient probative force to permit prosecution, the IBAC may refer a matter to a prosecutorial body. Accordingly, it is not considered that the bill will engage the rights in criminal proceedings. In any event new section 82ZC(1) is limited by subsection (2) which provides that any answer, information, document or thing is not admissible in evidence against the person before any court or person acting judicially, except in limited circumstances:

proceedings for perjury or giving false information;

an offence against the IBAC act or the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011;

contempt of the IBAC under the IBAC act; or

a disciplinary process or action (which is limited to public officers and police personnel).

If it were the case that self-incriminating information obtained from a person was disclosed in accordance with the act, for example to the Chief Commissioner of Police, it would be a matter for the police to determine what use is made of that information. The bill makes it clear that the answer or information itself cannot be used in proceedings other than those listed at new section 82ZC(2). It would be a matter for the court to determine whether other evidence derived from that information is admissible.

Further protection for persons the subject of criminal proceedings is provided by sections 86(5) and 89(5) of the IBAC act. These provisions state that if the IBAC is aware of a criminal investigation or criminal proceedings in relation to

a matter or person to be included in a special report or annual report the IBAC must not include in that report any information which would prejudice the criminal investigation or criminal proceedings.

Conclusion

For the reasons given in this statement, I consider that the bill is compatible with the charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Andrew McIntosh, MP
Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission

Second reading

Mr McINTOSH (Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill further enhances the legislative structure for Victoria's first-ever anticorruption body with oversight of the entire public sector. The bill forms part of a suite of historic legislation that gives effect to the coalition government's election commitment to create a new integrity framework for Victoria, including:

the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 which creates the framework for Victoria's first Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC);

the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment (Investigative Functions) Act 2011 which provides IBAC with important investigative functions and powers;

the Public Interest Monitor Act 2011 which establishes public interest monitors (PIMs) to provide important checks and balances on the use of covert and coercive warrants in Victoria; and

the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011 and the Victorian Inspectorate Amendment Bill 2012 which create an oversight body to provide effective oversight of the IBAC and PIMs.

This bill gives the IBAC additional functions, duties and powers it needs to undertake examinations.

Overview

This bill amends the IBAC act, which was passed by the Victorian Parliament on 23 November 2011. That act sets the foundations for the IBAC, establishing its structure and providing it with crucial education and prevention functions. The IBAC (Investigative Functions) Act amends the IBAC act to establish the

IBAC's two main jurisdictional areas of responsibility. These are:

to investigate serious corrupt conduct as it relates to the whole public sector; and

to provide broad oversight of police conduct.

This bill provides the IBAC with further tools in order to achieve these objectives. The key aspects of the IBAC Amendment (Examinations) Bill 2012 include:

witness summons provisions, providing IBAC with the power to issue a witness summons to attend an examination to provide evidence, produce documents or other things or both;

confidentiality provisions, protecting the confidentiality of IBAC investigations and the safety of persons involved in those investigations;

jurisdiction provisions, providing IBAC with the power to investigate serious corrupt conduct or police personnel conduct occurring prior to the commencement of the act;

referral provisions, providing IBAC with the power to refer matters to other bodies and coordinate investigations;

provisions outlining the application of privileges and statutory secrecy requirements;

the power to charge a person with contempt where appropriate; and

provisions clarifying the appointment of acting commissioners and acting deputy commissioners.

This bill represents the next step in the process of delivering the coalition government's ongoing integrity reforms, completing IBAC's full suite of investigation, examination and referral powers, with transitional and consequential provisions to follow.

These new powers will be subject to robust oversight by the Victorian Inspectorate as provided for in the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011 and the Victorian Inspectorate Amendment Bill 2012, which provide the Victorian Inspectorate with the powers, duties and functions necessary to provide effective oversight of the IBAC.

The power to issue a witness summons

The IBAC will have the power to issue a witness summons compelling a person to give evidence at an examination or produce documents or other things. This

power is a critical means of ensuring the IBAC is able to access the information it needs to conduct a thorough investigation.

It will be an offence to fail to attend an examination in accordance with the witness summons, refuse or fail to answer a question, or refuse or fail to produce a document or other thing without reasonable excuse. Those summoned to attend an examination must attend an examination until excused.

The bill provides for examinations to be conducted in public or in private. Generally, examinations will be conducted in private unless the IBAC considers on reasonable grounds that there are:

exceptional circumstances; and

it is in the public interest to conduct a public examination; and

a public examination can be held without causing unreasonable damage to a person's reputation, safety or well being.

In order to ensure that a decision to have a public examination is exercised appropriately, the IBAC must provide the Victorian Inspectorate with a written report specifying the reasons for making a decision to hold a public examination. This report must be provided not less than seven days before a public examination is held.

A person, other than an IBAC officer or a Victorian Inspectorate officer, must not be present at a private examination unless he or she is:

attending in accordance with a witness summons;

an Australian legal practitioner representing a person who is attending in accordance with a witness summons;

entitled to be present by reason of a direction issued by the IBAC; or

authorised to be present by the IBAC or otherwise authorised to be present under any law.

An Australian legal practitioner engaged by the IBAC to assist in the inquiry may also be present.

The power to issue a witness summons will be subject to a range of appropriate safeguards. The bill provides that:

witnesses must be informed of their rights and obligations in advance of being examined or providing documents or things;

witnesses will be entitled to legal representation;

protections apply to witnesses who are aged 16 to 18 (with a prohibition on examining persons under 16) or have language difficulties or a mental impairment; and

evidence obtained during an examination will be inadmissible as evidence against any person before a court or tribunal unless the attendance was video recorded and the videorecording is available to be tendered in evidence or the court is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that justify the admission of the evidence.

Confidentiality provisions

The bill includes provisions to safeguard the confidentiality of IBAC investigations, and provides for offences for breach of the confidentiality obligations imposed.

IBAC officers, former IBAC officers and a person who is or was a Victorian Inspectorate officer, will only be able to divulge information for the purposes of:

the performance of duties or functions or exercise of powers under the IBAC act;

a prosecution or disciplinary process or action following an IBAC investigation; or

as otherwise authorised under the IBAC act (for instance the appropriate sharing of information to specified law enforcement agencies, integrity bodies, prosecutorial bodies or the relevant principal officer).

Current and former IBAC officers will be exempt from any legal requirement to produce information, documents or things in a court, tribunal or another authority having power to require the production of documents or answers to questions. The exception to this is that an IBAC officer may produce information, documents or things for the purposes of a prosecution or disciplinary process or action or other proceeding instituted as a result of an IBAC investigation.

The bill provides for a process by which the IBAC can issue a confidentiality notice to prevent a person (such as a witness) from disclosing specified restricted matters that would likely prejudice an investigation, the safety or reputation of a person, or the fair trial of a

person. However, the bill includes provisions allowing disclosure for specified purposes (such as for the purpose of seeking legal advice). Where the IBAC considers it is no longer necessary to restrict disclosure of a particular restricted matter, the confidentiality notice must be cancelled.

Persons who receive draft IBAC reports prior to publication will also be subject to confidentiality obligations and permissible disclosure will be limited to particular circumstances (such as where disclosures are made in order to seek legal advice).

Investigating conduct occurring prior to the commencement of this act

The IBAC may conduct an investigation in relation to serious corrupt conduct or police personnel conduct of a person or body who or which would have been a public officer or public body within the meaning of the IBAC act prior to the relevant section of the act being in force.

Before initiating an investigation into corrupt conduct occurring entirely before the commencement of section 5B of the act, IBAC must consider whether:

it is in the public interest for the IBAC to investigate that conduct;

in all the circumstances it is appropriate for the IBAC to investigate, having regard to the IBAC's functions of identifying and exposing serious corrupt conduct; and

in the case of corrupt conduct that another investigatory body has already investigated or decided not to investigate, there is reliable, substantial and highly probative evidence that was not considered in the original investigation or that there is reliable, substantial and highly probative evidence that the original investigation or decision not to investigate was materially affected by error.

Referrals and coordinated investigations

If the IBAC considers the subject matter of a complaint of notification is relevant to the performance of the duties and functions or the exercise of powers of a specified list of persons and bodies and the IBAC considers that it would be more appropriate for the complaint or notification to be investigated by that person or body the IBAC must refer a complaint or notification to that person or body.

The IBAC will have the power to conduct an investigation in coordination with specified integrity

bodies or law enforcement agencies. The provisions enable IBAC to engage with other bodies and agencies, in appropriate circumstances, where it would be beneficial to the investigations being conducted. However, any such investigation must be conducted by the IBAC in accordance with the IBAC's duties, functions and powers under its legislation as the power to coordinate an investigation does not enlarge the IBAC's jurisdiction.

Privileges

The privilege against self-incrimination is specifically abrogated for all those summonsed or examined by the IBAC. This reflects the IBAC's primary role as an investigatory body rather than a prosecutorial body. A 'use immunity' will apply, preventing self-incriminating evidence acquired through coercive IBAC questioning being used against a person in civil or criminal proceedings (except for an offence under the IBAC act, VI act, perjury or a disciplinary process or action if the person is a public sector employee or a member of police personnel).

Other privileges and statutory obligations to maintain secrecy are overridden for police personnel, except where claimed in their personal, not official, capacity. For other persons privileges may be asserted and requirements to maintain secrecy are preserved.

Contempt

The bill provides that a person who has been served with a witness summons by the IBAC is guilty of contempt of the IBAC if the person, without reasonable excuse, fails to attend for examination or produce required documents or other things. It will also be a contempt if a person called as a witness refuses or fails to answer any questions relevant to the subject matter of the examination or engages in threatening or obstructive behaviour.

The IBAC may charge a person with contempt and issue a warrant to arrest the person. If an arrest warrant is issued, the IBAC must give a written report to the Victorian Inspectorate within three days after the issue of an arrest warrant, identifying the reasons why the arrest warrant was issued and the relevance of the arrest warrant to the purpose of the investigation. A contempt of the IBAC is to be dealt with by the Supreme Court.

Acting Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners

The bill includes amendments clarifying the circumstances in which acting appointments can be made and the terms of those appointments. The bill also includes an amendment providing that if more than one

deputy commissioner is appointed to the IBAC, at least one must be an Australian legal practitioner, allowing greater flexibility.

Conclusion

With this bill, the government has delivered the examinations framework for the IBAC, building on the foundations set out in the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 and complementing the investigative functions being delivered by the IBAC (Investigative Functions) Act 2011. With this bill, IBAC will be properly equipped to perform its functions and provide the Victorian community with the confidence that corruption and police personnel misconduct will be properly investigated.

I commend this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms HENNESSY (Altona).

Mr McINTOSH (Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission) —

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, 2 May 2012.

Very briefly, the reason for the adjournment is that next sitting week is budget week and there will be a significant amount of debate devoted to the budget. Most importantly and in accordance with longstanding tradition the budget will be delivered on the Tuesday. While there will be opportunity for debate on the Tuesday and Wednesday, normally the Leader of the Opposition — that is a matter for the Leader of the Opposition or the shadow Treasurer — delivers the budget response on the Thursday. That is when we start the process of the budget debate, which will continue for the entire Thursday and for the vast majority of the following week.

This is a bill that has been introduced and in normal circumstances would be adjourned for two weeks. The adjournment proposed reduces that period by one day, until the Wednesday. The reason for that is that there is some urgency about the passage of this bill. We want to ensure that it passes both houses in an appropriate time. It is the government's intention to have this bill completed by the following sitting week, which happens to be budget week.

Regrettably, due to my personal circumstances, I was unable to be in the house. It was an oversight, and perhaps we should have had this debate yesterday, but importantly the circumstances are that I did not introduce the bill until yesterday and in accordance with

normal procedures it was adjourned until the following day for the second reading.

What is happening here is that the normal adjournment of two weeks has just been changed by one day to the Wednesday to enable the chamber to properly consider this bill and debate it during the normal course of the sitting week, except that that sitting week is also budget week. While there will be a lot of diversion on the Tuesday and potentially on the Thursday, there will be ample time to debate this bill on the Wednesday. That is the reason the government is seeking to have the bill adjourned until Wednesday, 2 May. All this means is that rather than being adjourned for two weeks the bill is being adjourned for one day short of two weeks.

Ms HENNESSY (Altona) — I move:

That the words 'until Wednesday, 2 May 2012' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place the words 'for two weeks'.

In speaking to that amendment I point out that there is nothing normal about this bill whatsoever. In fact this is the sixth piece of legislation that this government has, in a very ham-fisted attempt to establish its fundamentally flawed IBAC (Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission), attempted to move. The minister by his own admission concedes that the normal practice is to adjourn the bill for two weeks. We ask that the normal practice be adopted for the following reasons. This is a reasonably complex bill, and it is incredibly important that not just the opposition but the Victorian public are afforded ample opportunity to scrutinise the bill for the full two weeks. We do not want this bill being introduced and debated under the cover of budget debate and discussion.

The government has had a year and a half to get its act together on this legislation. We understand that the minister was ill, and we make no point about that. We provided a pair and sent the minister our best wishes for his recovery. There was a government stuff-up as to when this bill was introduced. It could have been second read yesterday; we would have accommodated the government to that extent to give us the full two weeks. However, what the government members did instead was to drop it to the media yesterday. They had their act together enough to go out and try to leak it to the media, but they were not good enough to walk into this Parliament and provide the opposition and members of the public with equality of access to important information.

Yesterday a most disturbing report about activities at Barwon prison was tabled in this house. The shadow that hangs over that report goes to important issues of

police corruption. This bill relates to the intersection between the OPI (Office of Police Integrity) and the IBAC. There are incredibly important jurisdictional and intersectional issues that will need to be scrutinised and debated. If this government continues with its standard form — and it has stuffed it up — then there will be significant consequences for matters currently under investigation by the OPI.

The opposition wants the full standard practice of two weeks to be afforded to it in order to debate, scrutinise, be briefed and have the opportunity to reflect upon how this bill intersects with all the other bills. Is it any wonder that the government cannot find an eminent person to put their hand up, a person who actually wishes to say they are prepared to be the inaugural IBAC Commissioner? It is because this is a dog's breakfast. It is consistently and — —

Mr Morris — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, filling the position of IBAC Commissioner is totally irrelevant to the discussion on adjourning the debate on this bill. The question before the Chair is whether the debate on this bill should be deferred for 13 or 14 days; it is not about the substance of the legislation.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! I ask the member to continue. I believe she is outlining the importance of her argument.

Ms HENNESSY — This is a government that is avoiding scrutiny of its IBAC at all costs. We understand why. Every significant stakeholder that has been involved in the establishment of the IBAC process has come out and publicly bagged it. In fact Douglas Meagher, QC, a person who gave advice to the government — —

Dr Napthine — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I have been a member of this house for a long time, and debates on the matter of time are very narrow debates. There have been consistent rulings by the Chair to the effect that they are not opportunities to canvass the broad issues of a bill or a debate; they are debates about the length of time before the matter comes back before the house, and here we are talking about whether it should be 13 or 14 days. The member should be confined to the very narrow debate on the matter of time.

Mr Andrews — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, it is perfectly within the forms, conventions and customs of this house, despite the interpretation of the member for South-West Coast, the Minister for Ports, that in order to properly debate the question of time — —

Dr Naphthine interjected.

Mr Andrews — The Minister for Ports, the member for South-West Coast, thinks he has been here for a long time — some would say far too long. It is perfectly legitimate for the member for Altona or any member, in making the case for a longer adjournment of a debate, to go to the reasons why a longer adjournment is necessary. The views of stakeholders and adequate and appropriate scrutiny of the bill between its second reading and its debate are absolutely material to the question of time. If members were precluded from explaining why they would like a longer adjournment in a debate on the question of time, what a farcical position we would have got to under this government! The minister, the member for South-West Coast, is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Ports and the Leader of the Opposition will come to order. I was not in the chamber for the whole of the discussion that was occurring, but I remind all members to stick to debating the issue of time. I think that is the thing members have to do. The member for Altona has 13 seconds to go.

Ms HENNESSY — When it comes to scrutinising and exposing how incompetent this government has been in the establishment of its IBAC, every day counts. Two weeks is the standard practice. This is a government that has denied any transparency in respect of its flawed IBAC.

Dr NAPHTHINE (Minister for Ports) — I will make some comments on this issue of time. The motion moved by the Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission was for an adjournment of the debate until 2 May — 13 days from now — to which I understand the opposition has moved an amendment to make it two weeks, to 3 May. There is an option for the government to accept the opposition's proposition. However, let me put it to opposition members that if we accept the opposition's proposal, the Thursday on which this bill will be before the house and eligible for debate, as they would see fit, would be the same day on which under the normal procedure the opposition would make its budget response as part of the start of the budget debate.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Dr NAPHTHINE — I am happy to accommodate; we are trying to help.

Ms Hennessy — Accept the amendment.

Dr NAPHTHINE — That is what I am putting to you, if you will just listen for a minute — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! That is enough from the member for Altona.

Dr NAPHTHINE — If the government accepts the amendment, opposition members will need to understand that they will have significantly reduced time to debate this bill. The minister has made it clear that this bill will be passing through this house in that sitting week. If opposition members do not want to debate it on Wednesday and they only want to debate it on Thursday, as their amendment proposes, then they will have to compete with their own budget response within the time allocated for the budget response. If that is what the opposition wants, we are happy to accommodate it.

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, I am not quite sure whether the minister is speaking for or against the amendment. If it is his intention to indicate that the government in the last 5 minutes has backflipped on its position on the procedural motion, then he should accept the amendment and we should move on.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Dr NAPHTHINE — I am trying to make sure that in the interests — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Williamstown went out yesterday; the way he is going, he will go out today. I ask the members for Geelong and Narre Warren South to cut it out.

Dr NAPHTHINE — In the interests of fairness, openness and proper democratic and parliamentary process, I am trying to outline to opposition members the alternatives they are putting forward. If opposition members say they fully understand them, then the government will accept the member for Altona's amendment and they as opposition members will accept that they will have significantly less time to debate this legislation. If that is what they are accepting, then we will accept the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Amended motion agreed to and debate adjourned until Thursday, 3 May.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Standing and sessional orders**

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — By leave, I move:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow:

- (1) that the sitting of the house be suspended immediately after completion of the government business program today; and
- (2) the Speaker to take the chair at 4.15 p.m., interrupt business, and the house proceed in accordance with sessional order 8(4).

As I understand it, His Excellency the President of Lebanon will be visiting this chamber at 4.45 p.m. I have moved this motion so that there will be some business being transacted to enable the President of Lebanon to see what great work we do here as members of the Parliament of Victoria.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended 1.01 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Qantas: maintenance jobs**

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the decision by Qantas to review its heavy maintenance operations at Tullamarine and Avalon and to the fact that present in the gallery today are three Qantas workers, Anthony Surace, Ian Johnston and John Jauchius, and I ask the Premier: what is he doing to make sure that these jobs — their jobs — do not go interstate or overseas?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question.

Honourable members interjecting.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER**Member for Yuroke**

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yuroke is out of the chamber for 1½ hours.

Honourable member for Yuroke withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Qantas: maintenance jobs**

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. This is a very significant issue for all Victorians. I note that the government has a Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry, unlike previous governments, and it is committed to the aviation — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is on a warning. Once more, and he will be out.

Mr BAILLIEU — The government is committed to aviation. Since Qantas made its announcement we have been working with Qantas and indeed with other stakeholders, including at Avalon and at Tullamarine. It is very much the government's commitment to do whatever it can to secure those jobs here in Victoria.

As members would know, Qantas has three facilities, and those facilities provide — —

Mr Andrews — For how much longer?

Mr BAILLIEU — Does the Leader of the Opposition want an answer or does he want to be negative? Does he want to talk this down or does he want to talk it up? Down he goes — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier is answering the question in the face of a barrage of interjections from the leaders at the table and also from other members. I am not going to tolerate it today. The next one will be out.

Mr BAILLIEU — As members will know, Qantas has three facilities around Australia — in Brisbane, Tullamarine and Avalon — and they provide different maintenance schedules for different aircraft. Members will also know that Qantas is changing the profile of its aircraft fleet, and over time the maintenance schedule will change. That means the total maintenance schedule will be reduced from what it currently is in terms of overall — —

Mr Brooks interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Bundoora

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Bundoora is out for half an hour.

Honourable member for Bundoora withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — With that changing schedule there is obviously an opportunity for Victoria to demonstrate a case, and I believe we do have a case. We have curfew-free airports here, we have good facilities, we have good workers and we have been working with Qantas and other stakeholders to do whatever we can to assist. Those discussions have been going on. I have been party to those discussions; so has the minister and so have other members of the government team. We will continue those discussions, and it is certainly our hope that Qantas will look favourably on Victoria, the facilities we offer and the distinctive qualities Victoria offers.

Members will also be aware that Qantas had a program for this decision which overlapped with the Queensland election, and it therefore extended that program. We will continue to work with Qantas, and we are hopeful — —

An honourable member interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Ivanhoe

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ivanhoe can leave the chamber for half an hour as well.

Honourable member for Ivanhoe withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — We are working with those stakeholders to present a strong case to Qantas, and we look forward to its decision.

Anzac Day: commemoration

Mrs VICTORIA (Bayswater) — My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the house about the importance of all Victorians commemorating the legacy and sacrifice of our veterans on Anzac Day and about how this government is working to ensure that the legacy of the sacrifice of our veterans is preserved and passed on to future generations?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I was pleased this morning to be able to join, with the Leader of the Opposition, the 81st Legacy Anzac commemoration at the Shrine of Remembrance. Some 2000 to 3000 schoolchildren attended. It is an annual event, which is an opportunity to send a very strong message to future generations about the importance of not only the Anzac legacy but also the legacy of veterans in our community across the generations. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would agree with me that it was a powerful ceremony again this morning. Many students made that clear to me afterwards.

As we approach Anzac Day next week, it is timely to remember the important events that surround Anzac Day and the other commemorations. I was pleased also this week to host the Premier's annual Anzac Day luncheon at the National Gallery of Victoria in the presence of both the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, and importantly, in the presence of so many veterans, many of them of advanced years.

Also it was wonderful to have present on that day the finalists in the Premier's Spirit of Anzac prize. I pay tribute to former Premier Steve Bracks, who introduced the Spirit of Anzac prize. It has been an outstanding success, and it has been embraced by everybody on both sides of the house. I trust those young people were moved by that function, and indeed moved by the opportunity they had to participate in the program.

I was also, as I said, pleased to attend again the commemoration this morning. Communities and RSL clubs will share significant funds this year through the Victorian government's Restoring Community War Memorials Grants program, which has been announced by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. More than

40 projects will receive grants to help local communities repair, protect, restore and enhance war memorials. I do not think there would be too many members here who would not be conscious of local memorials in their communities. Many of the RSLs produced those memorials and have looked after them for years, but over time, as the RSL communities have themselves changed, some of those memorials have needed a little bit of additional work. We are pleased to be able to support those communities with funds.

There will be funds provided for Alpine Shire Council to refurbish the Mafeking Square memorial at Bright, funds for Darebin RSL sub-branch to restore the damaged Preston cenotaph, funds for the Dunkeld RSL sub-branch to clean and seal the Carrara marble statue and freestone on the Dunkeld soldiers memorial, funds for the Macedon Ranges Shire Council to add two plaques to the Woodend memorial clock tower, funds for the Meredith RSL sub-branch to clean the existing war memorial and provide safer access for ceremonial services, funds for Oakleigh Carnegie RSL, funds for Ripon Beaufort RSL to restore the Beaufort war memorial, and many others.

It is an important time of year. I think Anzac Day itself is a day which has been embraced broadly now by the Australian community — and it is embraced with passion. I have spoken before about the origins of Anzac and my view that this quiet legend is now an outstanding component of our annual calendar and an opportunity for members of this house and members of the broader public to reflect on the commitment and sacrifice of former generations and to honour them. There are many members of this chamber whose families would have made such a contribution. It is difficult to reflect on, but we do so annually, and so be it.

**Minister for Police and Emergency Services:
conduct**

Mr MERLINO (Monbulk) — My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer the minister to yesterday's comments from Chief Commissioner of Police, Ken Lay, that the war waged from the minister's office against Simon Overland made it 'almost impossible to be concentrating fully on what was important, and that was keeping the state safe', and I ask: when will the minister take responsibility for the fact that public safety was a secondary priority whilst getting rid of Simon Overland was the minister's first?

Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I thank the member for his question. I do

not accept in any way, shape or form the premise of the question, and I refer the member and members of the opposition to the *Crossing the Line* report, which was tabled last year and in which there were findings made by the Office of Police Integrity in relation to the source of the difficulties to which the member now refers. These matters have been litigated at length, and I do not intend to relitigate them.

Budget: GST revenue

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the house on current economic and financial challenges facing Victoria, which are made worse by inequities in the state's share of GST revenue?

Mr WELLS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for South Barwon for his interest in the state economy and the unfairness of the GST distribution, as Victoria experiences it. The next time we sit, the Baillieu government will be bringing down the 2012–13 state budget. This budget will be a tough budget with the backdrop of the significant challenges that we are facing as a state. In Europe we have the uncertainty and lack of confidence that has spread worldwide, and when we look at the US we see the sluggish economy there. In addition to that, this state is facing the high Australian dollar, which is impacting on traditional industries such as manufacturing, on education and on tourism events in our state. In addition to that, we have had to deal with low productivity, which we inherited from the previous government.

In addition to that we have the Gillard government not helping the situation here in Victoria. We have the carbon tax, which comes into effect on 1 July and which will be devastating for the Victorian economy. We have the situation with the national occupational health and safety laws, which will impact on the Victorian economy greatly. In fact a PricewaterhouseCoopers report that came out recently showed that the national occupational health and safety laws will cost the Victorian community \$3.44 billion, and a lot of that will impact on small businesses across the state. In addition to that again, we have had the Minister for Water commenting on the Murray-Darling Basin decisions and the impact they will have on rural communities.

The issue we are dealing with is the unfair distribution of GST. Last year we were hit with a \$2.5 billion cut to the redistribution of GST. The current system lacks transparency and is unfair, especially when it comes to recasting numbers. For every dollar a Victorian pays in GST, we are getting back only 92 cents in that dollar.

We argued for change, and the Gillard government agreed with Victoria that something had to be done. Victoria wants a per capita distribution that is fair, efficient and equitable.

Since that decision was made, two developments have taken place. Firstly, the Gillard government has changed the terms of reference without consultation with any of the states or territories. We were dealing in good faith with the Gillard government on the understanding that the terms of reference that we were given were going to be accepted and worked on.

Secondly, the committee that Mr Bruce Carter, managing partner of Ferrier Hodgson in Adelaide, Mr John Brumby, a former Victorian Premier, and Mr Nick Greiner, a former New South Wales Premier, were on has brought down an interim report, but it has also brought down a supplementary interim report. What we want to know is: when will the Gillard government release those reports? It has made lots of promises, but it has not delivered on those promises.

We believe the GST system needs to be fixed. We need to deal with the commonwealth in good faith. What we also want is for the Victorian Labor Party to break its silence, lift the gag and support the Baillieu government's campaign for a fair deal on GST.

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister's answer is now clearly in breach of standing order 58. If the Treasurer wants to talk about silence, perhaps he would like to talk about his failure to — —

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Treasurer to return to answering the question.

Mr WELLS — As I was saying, the GST system is unfair, and we want to work in good faith with the Gillard government to make sure it is fixed. Victorians can be assured that the Baillieu government will be in there fighting for a fair deal to make sure we receive our fair share of GST.

Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services: appointment

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the dumping of the member for Benambra as Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services, and I ask: when will the Premier announce his replacement for the member for Benambra, or can he not find a Liberal MP who will work with the Deputy Premier?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — Again I do not accept the premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question.

We make appointments when we believe it is appropriate to make appointments. When we make appointments we make them — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is on very thin ice.

Mr BAILLIEU — Appointments that are made are announced. The Leader of the Opposition asks about who might fill a particular job. I am sure his mind is very much focused on who might fill a particular job. Indeed I think some his colleagues are focused on who might fill a particular job. Some in the upper house are very focused on it!

Mr Merlino — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is not being relevant to the question. The question was about the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services, why we have not had one for many months and why no Liberal MP will work with the Deputy Premier anymore.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence. I do not know how many times I have to tell the house that points of order will be heard in silence.

Mr Hodgett — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier was being relevant to the question asked, and the member for Broadmeadows was listening intently to the answer.

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise the member for Kilsyth that that was a frivolous point of order.

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, I know that you work long and hard to ensure that there is equality in the application of precedent when it comes to those who get to stay in the chamber and those who are thrown out for unparliamentary behaviour, and whilst that was a reasonably pathetic job application for the ongoing vacancy in the Liberal Party's parliamentary secretary ranks, I would ask that you apply the same precedent you apply to those on this side of the chamber when they engage in such frivolity.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr BAILLIEU — I made the point before that if we have an announcement to make, we will make an announcement. But I say again, speaking frankly, that I

am sure many members of the opposition are very focused on issues of who might fill a particular job.

Building industry: code of practice guidelines

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Finance. Can the minister inform the house of steps the government is taking to ensure Victorian taxpayers get value for money on state building projects?

Mr CLARK (Minister for Finance) — I thank the honourable member for Gembrook for raising this very important issue. Ensuring productive and cost-competitive building sites is vital for Victoria's economic prosperity. All honourable members in their heart of hearts — —

Ms Green interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean!

Mr CLARK — In their heart of hearts even honourable members opposite would agree that in the past Victoria has been dogged by very serious problems on building and construction sites. Under the previous commonwealth government Victoria enjoyed an era when these building problems were in abeyance and builders and their managers could get on with building rather than being tied up in interminable disputes and disruptions. Unfortunately Victoria has been placed under grave threat of heading back to the bad old days because of the actions of the current commonwealth government. As I have remarked to this house on previous occasions, the Gillard Labor government is abolishing the role of the Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner and has weakened the guidelines that have been given to the new building inspectorate it has established.

Both of these actions threaten to give the green light to return to the bad old days on building and construction sites here in Victoria, with the spread of inefficient conduct, unlawful practices and cost blow-outs. Ms Gillard promised to retain a strong cop on the beat, but this has proved to be yet another broken promise. The Victorian government is determined to step into the breach and do whatever it can by leveraging the state government's purchasing powers as one of the largest investors in building and construction projects to try to fill the gap that has been left by the Gillard Labor government. We have therefore developed and introduced enhanced implementation guidelines to the Victorian code of practice for the building and

construction industry, which we released earlier this month.

These new guidelines will help make infrastructure projects in Victoria more affordable, leading to greater investment and employment opportunities for Victorians. I am pleased to be able to provide some details of these guidelines to the honourable member and the house. They will apply to all parties tendering for on-site work on construction projects funded by the Victorian public sector. They will be binding on contractors in relation to their future privately funded work. They will prohibit parties from entering into sham contracting arrangements or arrangements designed to avoid strike pay, right of entry or freedom of association obligations. They will prohibit coercion or pressure to make over-award payments. They will require — —

Ms Green interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Yan Yean

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Honourable member for Yan Yean withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Building industry: code of practice guidelines

Questions resumed.

Mr CLARK (Minister for Finance) — They will require contractors to take all reasonable steps to bring any unlawful industrial action to an end, including by pursuing legal action where possible. They will outlaw practices that are inconsistent with freedom of association, and they will require contractors to adopt policies to promote the right to join or not to join a union. They will require parties to adhere to the terms of right-to-entry laws. This will reinforce criteria for the establishment — —

Mr Trezise interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Geelong

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Geelong can leave the chamber for an hour and a half. Members are not to hold up signs or interrupt the proceedings of the house.

Honourable member for Geelong withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Building industry: code of practice guidelines

Questions resumed.

Mr CLARK (Minister for Finance) — These guidelines will also impose criteria for the establishment of project agreements on site that will be in line with the national guidelines.

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, standing order 58 requires the minister's answers to be factual. If the minister wishes to talk to which building projects in Victoria the government wants to regulate, it needs to have a building project it is investing in.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Altona keeps mentioning standing order 58. If the member looks at standing order 58(2), she will find that subject to a number of provisions in 58(1), 'a minister will have discretion to determine the content of any answer'.

Ms Hennessy — On a further point of order, Speaker, standing order 58(2) is subject to standing order 58(1), which requires all answers to be factual.

The SPEAKER — Order! And they have to be relevant. The minister's answer was relevant. I do not uphold the member's point of order.

Mr Pallas — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, I ask for guidance from the Chair on whether or not in fact the Minister for Finance is being relevant. How can one be relevant talking about hypothetical sanctions about non-existent projects?

The SPEAKER — Order! I believe that the minister was being relevant, so I do not uphold the member's point of order.

Mr CLARK — As I was informing the house, these guidelines will be backed up by a compliance unit within the Department of Treasury and Finance. We are very pleased that Mr Nigel Hadgkiss, who was

previously the deputy commissioner to the Australian building and construction commissioner, will head up the construction code compliance unit in the department. He will do an excellent job in ensuring that these guidelines are complied with and properly administered on future Victorian building and construction projects.

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. Noting his earlier answer, where he indicated that there had been discussions with Qantas, I ask him: given that he is prepared to talk to or meet with Alan Joyce, will he also meet this afternoon with the Qantas workers who are in the Parliament and tell them face to face exactly what he is doing to save their jobs?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank — —

Ms Hutchins interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Keilor

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Keilor can leave the chamber for an hour and a half. If anybody else wants to hold signs up, they will also get an hour and a half. Members should make up their minds. If they want to stay in here, they should keep their signs down.

Honourable member for Keilor withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I said before, this is a serious issue. I am disappointed that — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Mulgrave

The SPEAKER — Order! I have warned the Leader of the Opposition twice today. He has got half an hour out of the chamber.

Honourable member for Mulgrave withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — The government does not wish to see Qantas maintenance facilities thrown out of this state. I do not want to see anybody thrown out anywhere on this issue. I would like to think that we could work with both sides of the house and all stakeholders to present a strong case to Qantas to preserve maintenance facilities and in fact — —

Mr Merlino — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is not being relevant to the question. There have been plenty of Liberal Party fundraisers in the Parliament this week — —

The SPEAKER — Order! Members should not refer to anybody who may be in the gallery. That is against standing orders.

Mr BAILLIEU — Qantas is serious about making changes to its maintenance arrangements. It is not a stunt. I do not wish anyone to treat it as such. We will work with all stakeholders. I am more than happy to meet with Qantas employees or their representatives at an appropriate time, just as we did — —

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order that goes to relevance, Speaker, the Premier was asked whether or not he would meet with the Qantas workers this afternoon.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order are not a time to ask a question again. The Premier was being very relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr BAILLIEU — We will continue to apply ourselves to this issue. It is the intention of the government to pursue this with vigour and also with some dignity. We are not going to turn this into a stunt. We are not going to turn this into a political issue. We are going to pursue the aviation maintenance industry

in this state, and to the best of this state's abilities we are going to put a good case to Qantas. Representations are being made in that regard. As I said before, I am happy to meet representatives of Qantas employees at an appropriate time.

I am not going to treat this as a stunt. I am not going to imagine that holding up a sign will make a difference. We are going to work with the people who matter — all the stakeholders in this — and we will present a strong case to Qantas. It is our commitment to do whatever we can, to the best of Victoria's abilities, to get this resolved. Some seem to hope this will not be successful, and I suspect they are on the other side of the house and are demonstrating that today.

Employment: Latrobe Valley

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — My question is to the Deputy Premier, who is also the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. Can the Deputy Premier inform the house of the action the government is taking to secure and generate jobs in the Latrobe Valley?

Mr RYAN (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — I thank the member for his question. In 72 days communities across Victoria will be burdened with the federal Labor Party's Gillard carbon tax — this of course being an initiative that is strongly supported by the state Labor opposition. Labor's carbon tax will be a massive burden on industry and business and a real threat to jobs across regional and rural Victoria — and nowhere more so than in the Latrobe Valley. As a government we recognise this threat, and we have been working proactively to invest in and to promote opportunities for innovation, skills and industry expansion to secure local jobs in the Latrobe Valley region.

Tomorrow, in company with the federal Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, Simon Crean, I will be meeting with Latrobe Valley business and industry leaders in a round table forum. This will be a forum at Traralgon at which we will have the opportunity to discuss development opportunities in the Latrobe Valley. This business round table will be an important forum for engaging with local businesses and making sure that we hear the perspective of the Latrobe Valley Transition Committee as put forward in its draft strategic directions paper, which was released earlier this month.

In December last year Mr Crean, on behalf of the federal government, and I signed an agreement to support the transition of the Latrobe Valley economy, and it was through that process that the Latrobe Valley

Transition Committee was actually established. This was done for the purposes of guiding this cooperative effort. The committee's discussion paper includes a set of six draft strategic directions that are intended to initiate local discussions on potential action to support the region's economic diversification and growth. With the carbon tax fast approaching, it is very important that this ongoing work be backed by real funding. We as a government have the money on the table. We have \$30 million dedicated specifically to the Latrobe Valley to support job creation, skills development and the development of new industries.

Those investments relate to three key areas. There is the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund, and it is from that fund that we recently allocated \$1.5 million to the Latrobe Regional Airport for the creation of 120 jobs at GippsAero. The second area is a skills and training element within the Latrobe Valley Advantage Fund, and a number of initiatives have been pursued under that element of the package. The third area is funding that is dedicated to sustainable energy research. Late last year we made available some funding for a pilot-scale geothermal energy plant in the region. These are instances — practical examples — of where we as a government are investing in the future of the Latrobe Valley region.

We want the commonwealth to join the fray. In circumstances where we are facing the almost certain prospect of one or more electricity generators in the valley being closed, we need the commonwealth to join in the heavy lifting that is being done here to make sure we can get the proper funding support to have this transition occur. There are many opportunities, and they are in the aerospace manufacturing sector, the Gippsland Gateway project, the Advance TAFE facility at Sale and the defence pilot training program. There are many instances where the Latrobe Valley region is in a very strong strategic position to be able to develop its future.

We believe there is plenty of opportunity for the commonwealth to be able to participate in this program. Although of course the state opposition does not care about these matters, we as a government are very concerned to see the success of tomorrow's initiative.

Public sector: job losses

Mr HOLDING (Lyndhurst) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the sustainable government initiative. Is it not a fact that the government has determined that ministerial chauffeurs are front-line services while reading recovery tutors and speech therapists in our schools are not?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I do not accept the premise of the question whatsoever. The Minister for Education addressed the issue of reading recovery yesterday — —

Ms Hennessy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Altona!

Mr BAILLIEU — I think the Minister for Education made it very clear.

Resources: international conference

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — My question is to the Minister for Energy and Resources. Can the minister advise the house of Victorian government action to drive economic development and jobs growth in the resources sector?

Mr O'BRIEN (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I thank the member for Narracan for his question and for his interest in the economic development of this state, particularly the Gippsland region. This week I welcomed to Victoria 300 industry delegates from 23 countries, including China, India, Japan, South Korea and the United States. These delegates came to Melbourne to participate in the second International Symposium on the Sustainable Use of Low Rank Coal sponsored by the Victorian government. Two years ago at the first symposium we had 150 delegates from 16 countries. Two years later we have doubled the number of delegates. We have more countries because there is tremendous interest internationally in what Victoria has to offer in terms of the sensible and sustainable use of our natural resources.

We had international agencies, including the International Energy Agency, the USA's Electric Power Research Institute, the CSIRO, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and China's National Energy Administration, all participating at this conference here in Melbourne. It was so popular that we had a few uninvited guests who sought to gain entry. I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of Victoria Police, who did a terrific job to ensure that only those who were actually invited were able to attend.

This is a very important conference for this state, because it sends a very clear message from the Victorian government, and that is that we have tremendous, world-class brown coal resources in this state, that we want to attract investment to this state, that we want to develop those resources, that we want to generate an export industry, that we want to see jobs

in Victoria, that we want to see export industries in Victoria and that we want to make sure that Victoria can capitalise on what it has to offer.

I was very pleased during the conference to host my federal counterpart, the Honourable Martin Ferguson, the federal Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism. It was such a pleasure to speak to one Labor MP who actually cares about jobs, one Labor MP who cares about promoting economic development in this state and one Labor MP who actually believes that making our coal resources cleaner and more economically efficient and creating new export industries are good things for this state. It is a very rare occurrence for me to have a conversation with a Labor MP where they actually talk about positive things for this state.

Ms D'Ambrosio — On a point of order, Speaker, on the matter of debating the question, the minister should get on with answering the question and actually explain to Victorians how many jobs are going to come about through his plan.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the member's point of order, but I do ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Mr O'BRIEN — The views of my federal counterpart, Minister Ferguson, were reflected in the *Age* today, where he is reported as saying in reference to clean coal technologies:

These technologies have the potential to allow Victoria to export brown coal and allow the Latrobe Valley to join the ranks of Australia's other great mining regions.

The potential of this state in terms of our resources, our commitment to research and development, our universities and our support from the Victorian state government is unlimited. We have great potential for new export products, new jobs and economic growth, and this government is committed to making that happen.

During the week I was very pleased to be able to formally announce that I have instructed my department to commence a market assessment test for interest in new coal allocations in this state. We have the second-largest deposit of brown coal in the world. It is high quality, low in sulphur and low in ash, and we need to make sure that that is developed efficiently and sensitively and for the economic benefit of this great state of Victoria and particularly our regional communities. We are investing in the technology. We are taking action through coal allocations. We are going to bring this about and make it a reality, and we will do

that notwithstanding members opposite who are more interested in cuddling up to inner city Greens than in regional jobs.

The SPEAKER — Order! The time for questions on a Thursday has concluded.

Ms Campbell — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 104, 'Members right to speak', and I raise particularly 104(3), 'Raise a point of order or speak to a point of order that has arisen'. I also draw your attention to the fact that twice during question time today, three times on Wednesday and at least twice on Tuesday members of the opposition attempted to raise a point of order and their microphone was switched off before they had the opportunity to present their point of order.

Speaker, I ask that you reflect upon the fact that a point of order has to be articulated before a person is cut off from their ability to present that point of order. I would hope that due respect is given to standing order 104 during question time in the next sitting week.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, I think you have adjudicated fairly and appropriately this week, because we have seen — —

Mr Wynne interjected.

Business interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Richmond

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Richmond can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Honourable member for Richmond withdrew from chamber.

Business resumed.

Dr Napthine — We have seen a clear strategy of political stunts, frivolous points of order and members using points of order as opportunities to re-ask questions and debate the issues rather than raise genuine points of order. This has been a deliberate strategy from the opposition. Speaker, you have handled it in an appropriate and proper manner, and it is quite right and proper when members are on their feet making frivolous, politically motivated points of order that they have their microphones switched off and no longer be heard. I ask you to rule this point of order out of order.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Speaker, I rise to support the member for Pascoe Vale. Points of order should be articulated in full. They should be concluded, as was the frivolous point of order raised by the member for Kilsyth. What we have seen today is a silencing of the Labor opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition, when we have members of the Qantas workforce in here and the Premier refuses to speak to them. We are seeing a silencing of debate in this chamber, which is disgraceful.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS REGISTRATION (REPEAL) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 17 April; motion of Dr NAPHTHINE (Minister for Ports).

Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) — It is a bit of an anticlimax to resume debate on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012, but it is an important debate. As members would be aware, from July 2010 the regulation of most health professions was transferred to a national registration and accreditation scheme and in Victoria that was done through the passing of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009. When that happened almost 140 000 Victorian health practitioners transferred to national registration. That was an important move made by the former state government. The national law was introduced to protect the public. That was the original intent of the legislation. It provides a framework for the regulation of health practitioners in relation to matters as important as registration, accreditation, complaints and conduct, health and performance, and privacy and information sharing.

As members would also be aware, the national law followed, as is typical under Labor governments, a very extensive consultation process that saw high-level engagement with regulatory bodies, practitioners and the public for a long time. At the time in the order of 550 submissions were received from professionals, regulatory bodies and the general public. The national law also better supports our valued health practitioners. Our doctors, nurses and other health professionals are at the heart of our health system, and they make a profound difference to the lives of many Victorians. I know only too well what a good job they do on behalf of the people of the western suburbs, particularly those

in Derrimut whom I represent. All members would know the same of those in their electorates.

The 10 professions which are currently regulated through the national scheme are chiropractors, dentists, medical doctors, nurses and midwives, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and psychologists. I am very proud that, as a first in the world, Labor recognised Chinese medicine practitioners. I have been on my feet to speak on this matter a number of times. Members of the government have interjected and indicated — as in the past would other members such as Robert Doyle, a former member for Malvern and now the Lord Mayor of Melbourne — that other members have made a contribution to that recognition. I said that in the original contribution on the matter that I made when we were in government.

Chinese medicine practitioners and medical radiation practitioners are still regulated under Victoria's Health Professions Registration Act 2005, but from 1 July 2012 they will be registered under the national scheme, as will occupational therapists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. Currently they are not required to be registered in Victoria. The bill repeals the Health Professions Registration Act 2005. It abolishes the boards operating under the act, although it allows the boards to continue operating to meet the requirements for the 2011–12 annual reports, as required by the Financial Management Act 1994. It replaces references to the repealed act in other Victorian acts with references to the national law and boards formed under it.

I wish to conclude by referring to what I said when I was on my feet when the bill was before the house previously. I talked about how much things have changed. I got it wrong previously when I referred to the member for Doncaster because I meant to refer to the member for Bayswater, so I wish to correct the record. At the risk of embarrassing you, Speaker, I know that you, as an honorary citizen of China, understand China very well — and I say that respectfully — and that things in China have changed.

I recall that not long ago, in fact only last year, when the member for Bayswater and I were in China we saw a monk listening to music — on an iPhone, incidentally. We assumed of course that he had been listening to spiritual music. I say that in the most respectful way. Later we learnt that Lady Gaga has now become popular in China. I conclude with this remark: we were told by young people that young Chinese have picked up from English films the expression 'Oh my God' and have changed that to 'Oh my Lady Gaga'. With those few remarks, which the member for

Bayswater and I had challenged each other to say, I conclude my contribution and wish the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012 a speedy passage.

Mr BULL (Gippsland East) — I rise to speak in support of the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. As previous speakers have stated, health care is of paramount importance in all Victorian communities and of equal importance is community confidence in the health-care system. This bill provides for Victoria's involvement in a national scheme. It achieves that by repealing the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 and making minor amendments to various other acts.

The national scheme which we are entering into is certainly a modernised system. It covers the registration and regulation of health professionals and the accreditation of their education and training. It is a system with a core focus on patient and public safety as well as workforce sustainability. Workforce sustainability within our health sector is critically important, particularly in rural and regional areas of not only Victoria but also Australia where there are rural doctor shortages. While it is pleasing to know that more doctors are coming through the system, it is a problem that is presently being faced by a lot of communities.

This move to a national system will, importantly, provide a more stable and constant environment for medical specialists to practice in. There are many initiatives at all levels to have doctors go to rural areas once they are trained. Local, state and federal governments have initiatives in place to support doctors transitioning into rural areas. In my electorate a number of townships outside Bairnsdale — including Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Omeo and Maffra, just to name a few — which is the main centre for our retail businesses and commerce, are very appreciative of having strong rural representation of doctors.

Historically the regulation of health professionals was undertaken by the states and territories, and this led to various inconsistencies in approaches across Australia because there were different rules and regulations for different jurisdictions. This bill repeals the Health Professions Registration Act 2005. From 1 July 2012 the functions of that act will be taken on by regulatory bodies established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009.

July 2010 was a significant time; it was when the new national scheme commenced operation. The scheme was implemented in Victoria following the Council of Australian Governments signing an intergovernmental

agreement in March 2008 and the subsequent passage of two acts — that is, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009 and the Statute Law Amendment (National Health Practitioner Regulation) Act 2010. These acts removed the regulation of 10 health professions from the Health Professions Registration Act 2005. In line with that, 10 national boards and a national agency, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, which now provides the administrative support required by those boards to undertake and complete their functions, were established.

Over 136 Victorian health practitioners are now registered and regulated under this national scheme — which speaks for itself. The national scheme has many benefits in relation to a whole number of things, including communities — as has been outlined — individual practitioners and health professions across the board. One of the most important benefits is that it provides flexibility so that practitioners with a general registration now have to register only once to be able to practise anywhere in Australia. That was a situation that did not apply in the past, when we had different rules and regulations across different jurisdictions. In my view that is certainly the most positive upside of having this new national scheme in place. There is also uniformity across the board because there is now a consistent approach to national standards, which leads to efficiencies in relation to red tape as well as additional registrations and processes not being required in different jurisdictions.

The national law made provision for four additional professions to enter the national scheme from 1 July 2012: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, medical radiation practice and occupational therapy. Only two of these professions, Chinese medicine and medical radiation, are currently registered professions in Victoria. From 1 July 2012 the implementation of the national law will be completed, with the transfer of responsibility for registration and regulation of these remaining two professions to the newly established national boards, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia and the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia. As of 1 July, there will be no further role for the registration scheme set out in the Health Professions Registration Act 2005; it will be superseded by this new national approach. Because that will happen, this bill repeals that act.

The bill makes minor consequential amendments to other Victorian legislation that refers to the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 or the old registration boards. Some of the acts amended by this

bill are the Health Services (Conciliation and Review) Act 1987, the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981, the Transport Accident Act 1986 and the Wrongs Act 1958.

This is a straightforward bill that allows for this state's involvement in a more efficient national scheme. It provides flexibility for our practitioners across the board, it creates a more stable and solid working environment for them to operate in across various jurisdictions, including state jurisdictions, it provides a uniformity of national standards, which is extremely important, and it provides greater efficiency and far less red tape in relation to registrations and various processes. The bill is supported by both sides of the house. It will provide great improvements for our health practitioners and all health agencies across the nation. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr SCOTT (Preston) — I rise to make a brief contribution on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. As has been stated by other members, this is, in a sense, a tidying up of legislation relating to the national process of registration that was developed through a cooperative process involving state and federal governments to expand the coverage that had previously existed for chiropractors, dentists, medical doctors, nurses and midwives, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and psychologists to medical radiation practice and Chinese medicine.

It is important to note that Victoria has been a leading jurisdiction in the regulation of Chinese traditional medicine. Victoria was the first state within the commonwealth to address this issue. It was beneficial and as I recall at the time it was supported by both sides of Parliament, though it occurred under the previous government. In effect the national regulatory framework is following work that was, as I recall, done within Victoria initially.

Whatever one thinks about the efficacy of Chinese traditional medicine, it clearly comes from a longstanding intellectual tradition that has developed over thousands of years, although there did exist a small number of individuals practising Chinese traditional medicine who, perhaps — to be kind — got their qualifications somewhere out the back of Nimbin rather than having any particular theoretical or practical experience in that area. I would hope that people who are practising as Chinese traditional medical practitioners have some basis related to the body of knowledge that has developed, literally, over thousands of years in that area and have not just dreamt up their

practice, as I said, out the back of Nimbin and then proceeded to practise in that area.

There is an issue related to the practice of Chinese traditional medicine where general practitioners who received qualifications, particularly in areas like acupuncture, and were practising as acupuncturists or providing that service as general practitioners, were not covered by the registration through the Chinese Medicine Registration Board, in my understanding, and were still practising as medical practitioners under separate regulatory regimes. I would be interested to know whether that particular issue is continuing. I think that was a sensible arrangement which the Victorian jurisdiction had developed.

It would be good if the Minister for Health could respond to that particular issue to ensure that general practitioners who are qualified and providing those services will be regulated under the provisions and regulations that apply to general practitioners rather than those that apply to Chinese traditional medical practitioners. As I said, that was a sensible arrangement which had been entered into in Victoria and I presume that it will continue, but it is a matter which would be useful to have clarified.

It was stated in the second-reading speech that there are currently 136 000 Victorian health practitioners registered and regulated under the national scheme. This legislation will expand the number to presumably over 140 000. It will allow persons to work in other states and other jurisdictions and will seamlessly create a national labour market for medical professionals. That will obviously have significant benefits, not just for the individuals involved but for various state jurisdictions, in the recruitment of medical practitioners.

This is not a controversial bill. It stems from work that was done under the previous government and is really a matter of tidying up. But as I said previously, I would be grateful if that matter regarding how general practitioners who are providing services such as acupuncture will be regulated under this framework could be clarified.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I rise to speak on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. This bill, as we have heard, is in a sense a tidying up bill, but there are a number of issues that I wish to raise, which have not been raised thus far, to do with some concerns that I have in terms of rolling some of these boards into the national system. As many have correctly pointed out, we are obliged under the national health system to roll all of the state boards into one national health system. On the surface one would think that

would make the system efficient and ensure that it is more productive and that the processes are simplified, but as I say, there is complexity when you deal with a national system, particularly when a number of the health practitioners work in jurisdictions and do not leave those jurisdictions. Many of those practitioners may operate solely in Victoria, but now they are obliged to be under a national health system with further complications. I want to draw the house's attention to some of that later in my contribution today.

The bill will repeal the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 and make minor amendments, as its functions have been assumed by the state bodies established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009. We have heard already that a number of the state bodies have been rolled into the federal system, and this bill will take care of those remaining, one being the Chinese Medicine Registration Board of Victoria and another being the Medical Radiation Practitioners Board of Victoria. I will talk later in particular about the Chinese medicine board and some of the great work it has done.

One of the things I wanted to point out was that in 2009 when the first 10 boards were rolled into the federal system there were a number of very well performing state boards that had significant assets of cash and property. I would like to particularly draw attention to the nursing board, the medical board and the midwifery board, which had significant cash and land assets when they were rolled into the national system. Many of the other states benefited from the Victorian system, and that is something that we need to be very concerned about. We have the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency at the moment which is a \$35 million-a-year bureaucracy. I am not saying that it is not important, but we need to ensure that we have a streamlined and effective process when we are talking about regulation. We talk often in this house about regulation and how we need to streamline it, and here is a perfect example of doing that.

I want to give the house a perfect example of what happened in 2009 and why I share a word of caution here today. When the nurses board was rolled into the federal system in 2009 there were significant issues. There were blunders and errors that had an impact on members of the profession. When they were trying to register there were problems with people not answering phones and there were long delays in processing registrations — in many cases registration took up to a year.

In fact the British Medical Association warned that nursing in Australia was not an ideal profession and

advised nurses in Britain not to travel to Australia because of the difficulties with registration procedures. It is not that we should not be progressing and trying to come up with a simplified national system, rather that we need to ensure that we do it right. Many members who now sit on the opposite side of the house — for example, the member for Melbourne and the current opposition leader — have claimed credit for the work that is being done in rolling this system out. We are talking significant dollars and in many cases well-run boards, and we have seen instances where money has effectively gone into subsidising the other states. We need to make sure that does not happen again.

That brings me particularly to the Chinese Medicine Board, again a board that has significant assets. In fact out of all of them, it is the only one that operates with such significant assets. Once again, although it is great for the Chinese medical association to have national recognition, those assets are now going to subsidise other states. We need to make sure that we get a fair go and are properly represented. Members of the opposition were very quick to rush off after being at the table with ministers from the other states and did not advocate for Victoria in the way they should have. I know that our current minister will not be doing that. He is one of the nine ministers who will be advocating for this initiative and ensuring that Victoria gets a fair go. I know that our current Minister for Health shares some of the concerns I have raised here today and wants to ensure that we do not get the sorts of blunders and errors that could be made. He wants to ensure that we do not get added bureaucracy and that we make it as simple as possible to get practitioners out doing what they should be doing — and that is assisting their patients.

Lastly I wanted to talk again about the Chinese Medicine Board and Chinese medicine in general. This is a profession that has been around for 5000-odd years, and many of its practices are now encouraged in mainstream medicine. Again I would like to acknowledge the foresight of the Liberal government back in 1996. The then health minister in the Kennett government headed an advisory committee looking at traditional Chinese medicine. This was the beginning of what we have seen transpire into recognition for Chinese medicine in Victoria and the workings of a board that has continued to do great things and advocate for its profession while continuing to operate in a smooth manner. It is worth noting that Victoria was the first jurisdiction to register practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine.

It is great as a Victorian to stand up here and say that we have led the way when it comes to new medical

efforts. We need to ensure not only that we are not left behind but also that we do not jump the gun, as the Labor Party was very quick to do in many instances. We have heard many times in this chamber stories of good policy, good programs and longevity being sacrificed for the sake of a quick buck. Ultimately as Victorians we suffer when quick action is taken without a well-thought-out process. This is not to say that we are not for a national system and do not support the importance of streamlining processes. We speak about this as a coalition government in terms of reducing red tape and streamlining processes in every possible way, but as I said, we need to get these things right. We need to ensure that we operate the system properly and, most importantly, we need to make sure that we get the best deal possible for Victoria. On that note, I commend the bill to the house.

Mr MADDEN (Essendon) — I rise to speak on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. It is not my intention to speak at great length or in great detail about the bill, primarily because it is pretty much an administrative bill based around national reforms in professional recognition and registration of various health professionals and bringing them into line with national agreements and standards. I am very supportive of that initiative; I think it operates very well. That applies not just to people who live close to state borders — it allows them to practise on both sides of the borders — but also to people who live further afield.

In this day and age we have people whose lives are far more mobile, and with an increasing degree of affluence there is the opportunity to travel further afield to obtain work and also to travel and stay in other places for short or medium periods because of economic opportunities in other jurisdictions. I think it is therefore appropriate that right across Australia we have national standards for these sorts of professions.

People's lifestyles are becoming more and more mobile, and the health professionals we look to are very much portable professionals. In a sense they can now practice, on the basis of national standards, in jurisdictions right across Australia and internationally. If we are to try to retain people or attract them to these professions, it is very important that we make it easy for them to deal with their professional registration in Australia rather than have them leave the country to practice somewhere else, maybe in England, which has often been the case for health professionals. They try their hand in England for a little while and travel around Europe, come back and appreciate that the health system here is probably better operated than in many other parts of the world.

This leads me briefly to say that I have not spent a lot of time in hospitals throughout my life — I am very fortunate — but I have visited many people in hospital over a long period of time.

Dr Sykes interjected.

Mr MADDEN — Yes, I did have the difficulty once of not fitting into an ambulance when I was playing football, but that is another story.

I make the point, having visited some of those hospitals more recently — I know that under this bill national training standards will also be incorporated into the way in which these professions are registered and regulated — that it is important that each and every institution that employs people from other jurisdictions based on the national registration systems does not forget that there is an obligation to provide a degree of training on the job.

It has been some years since I have been in hospital, but more recently I have spent a bit of time in and around different Victorian hospitals. The differences I have noticed between private and public hospitals and also between different public hospitals is their use of protocols for different nursing staff — that is, what is a threshold standard in terms of services and what is not. That is not necessarily a criticism of the practitioners, but obviously different institutions have a different sense of what their staff should do in the way they operate within the hospital. In some instances and for some patients it is better in some places than it is in others; it varies in the different places. However, I was reminded last weekend that it is important for these health professionals to be mindful of the protocols of each institution that they work in and to have those expectations reinforced to them.

What you do not want over time is a mix of different health professionals from different institutions bringing different protocols in, because that would bring, I suppose, a degree of confusion or a lack of consistency in relation to those everyday simple protocols for how you attend to the needs of patients and people within clinics that have different health professionals from time to time. You certainly do not want a lowering of the standards, but you can sometimes have confusion among the client base about what the anticipated or expected standard is. In that case, if patients go from one extreme to another, because they have tried different practitioners they might end up making a comment to the profession's registration board — having found one level of treatment or care or one protocol to be less than they might have expected — for no other reason than that there is an inconsistency or

imbalance between different institutions or among the different people with different bedside manners in various locations or institutions.

Again, we hold health professionals in highest regard. They work under very difficult circumstances and in challenging environments. Not only do they need to have a great bedside manner and a great head for understanding their own profession, but more importantly they have to be great communicators and listeners. I look forward to this bill making the lives of health professionals, their registration and the way they work less complex so that they can deal with the greater complexities they need to do deal with in their own profession.

Dr SYKES (Benalla) — I rise to contribute to the debate on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. I want to highlight the importance of the health professions to regional Victorians. Professionals in many areas are extremely important to regional Victoria being able to grow by providing a lifestyle and a sense of security not only for those who already call regional Victoria home but also for those we would like to attract to regional Victoria, whether they be Melbourne-based people or people coming from overseas.

In the electorate of Benalla, in north-eastern Victoria, we have particular challenges in recruiting health professionals in some areas. For example, in King Valley, Whitfield and Moyhu there is a need for GP services. One of the key challenges we face is getting people in — and sometimes these are overseas-trained people — and also getting their qualifications recognised to a standard. If we can come up with something that enables the transferability of people's qualifications between states for starters, that will make it easier to recruit and retain people in country Victoria.

This legislation complements other initiatives that are also in place to recruit and retain health professionals in Victoria. For example, quite a bit of effort now goes into training health professionals in country Victoria, in places like Mount Beauty, Shepparton, Mansfield and Benalla. The idea there is that if you can get your health professionals in, whether they be Australian undergraduates or whether they be overseas graduates who need to do some top-up training, and if you get them to live and work in country Victoria and they appreciate how great it is, then hopefully they will call country Victoria home.

I should just also mention that in addition to having the health professionals, it is also absolutely critical that we have the bricks and mortar and the equipment to

support them, and that is an ongoing challenge. For example, we are currently dealing with the need for an adequate facility in Bright, which has been a long time coming. The reality is that in tight economic times it will take a while to deliver, but we must make sure country Victorians are as well serviced as other people are throughout the state.

I come from a background that includes training in traditional medicine through my veterinary study, as does the Minister for Ports, who is at the table. That said, I have to say I have growing awareness of and appreciation for other cultures in the development of medicine, including Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

Dr Napthine — And Ian Gawler.

Dr SYKES — A veterinary colleague of ours, Ian Gawler, to whom the minister referred, was trained in conventional veterinary medicine and then had the awful experience of contracting cancer — osteosarcoma — with a very depressing prognosis. However, Ian explored not only all conventional medicine options but also alternative medicine, and he lives to tell the tale 40 years on. He is missing a leg and he is missing a lung, but his brain ticks along very well and his heart is very strong. He is absolutely inspirational in encouraging people to think about the benefits of harnessing other ways of aiding healing. Chinese medicine is one of those, so it is good that that is being recognised and has been incorporated into health registration protocols.

I should also put a word of warning there, and it highlights the need for registration — that is, many natural remedies and natural plants can have both positive and negative implications. For example, in nature there is a plant called Paterson's curse, or Salvation Jane as it is also commonly known, that contains a toxin called pyrrolizidine alkaloid which if consumed in excessive amounts can cause liver damage and death. Cattle graze on that plant, so that is fine and that is an animal problem, but honey can be made by the bees that pollinate Paterson's curse, and you have to be careful to ensure that you keep the pyrrolizidine alkaloids that come through the Paterson's curse at a level below any thresholds that might cause concern. What I am saying is that in looking at natural medicines such as Chinese medicine we need to be mindful that there can be positives with these natural medicines but in some cases there is also a low tolerance, a low risk or a low safety margin; therefore it is important that they be used wisely and that there be appropriate regulation.

The other consideration underpinning all this is the logic of moving to a national scheme. I think from first

principles it makes sense that we have one scheme, which will ensure less humbug in moving from one state to another. Again, the veterinary profession is an example of where we have gone to a national registration scheme. Previously, when working as a vet, I moved from Victoria to the Northern Territory and I found I had to go through the exercise of getting registered there. When I went overseas and worked in England I had to go through that country's registration process too. It is all time consuming, there is a bureaucracy involved and it does not facilitate the delivery of efficient health services. This move to have a national approach makes sense from a first principles perspective.

The other thing that makes sense is the use of technology so that more and more people in remote areas can be provided with services from health professionals who may be in the same state, but equally you could have them in another state providing specialist backup through videoconferencing et cetera. The national approach to registration presumably facilitates that. This is all common sense, and we should commend it.

However, as the member for Caulfield indicated, it is one thing to have something that makes sense in principle, but it is always important — essential — that you make sure it works in practice. The member for Caulfield highlighted some of his concerns with this nationalisation of health professions registration. For example, he mentioned the issue of assets previously held by some groups. I think he made reference to the nursing board, the medical board and the midwifery board. All were quite asset rich, and their assets went into the federal system. Again, we just need to be mindful, having done that for the greater good, that those assets are not squandered and that we get value for money. That warning bell needs to be rung.

Related to that is the underlying principle that going to a national approach is going to be more efficient and more effective. That is the principle, but again it does not always play out like that in reality. You can end up with people running the show who have bureaucratic, conservative attitudes to taking risks and making decisions, so that rather than achieving the objective of a more efficient and streamlined process, you end up with a more bureaucratic process. I gather that warning bells are ringing there, and reference was made by the member for Caulfield to concerns in relation to the nursing profession.

What it boils down to is that when we enter into these sorts of arrangements — and we are doing this in many areas now, with our ministers going up to Canberra and

participating in federal negotiations — we want to make sure that the people who go to bat up there on our behalf know their stuff and are prepared to stand their ground when it comes to ensuring the best outcome for everyone in a big picture sense and also the best outcome for the residents of Victoria, whom our members of Parliament are elected to represent. Like the member for Caulfield, I have a lot of confidence in the current Minister for Health. He is a health professional himself — he is a chiropractor by training, if I remember correctly. He therefore comes to his ministry with a hands-on approach, if you will pardon the pun. Given that he has come up through the system, given that he has had the broader experience of working in both opposition and government and given his inherent capabilities, we look forward to his arguing our case well and ensuring that we get an outcome that is to the benefit of all Victorians.

This legislation does make sense, and I believe it has the support of both sides of the house. It needs to be enacted to enable the move towards the national registration of health professionals. However, I sound the cautionary note that it is fine in principle but we just want to make sure that it is delivered in practice. That is why we need to make sure that those who are negotiating for us — our minister and senior bureaucrats — go into negotiations well informed and with the intention of delivering the best possible outcome. I wish the bill a speedy passage.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — I am pleased to rise to be the Labor opposition's final speaker on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. I state, along with previous speakers from this side of the house, that we will not be opposing this bill because it is finalising the implementation of a national reform that was commenced in Victoria by Labor. It is yet another bill on the legislative program that shows the government's lack of an identifiable policy of its own. It is continuing to implement Labor policies. That is not to say this is not an important piece of legislation; the national regulation of health professionals was a key achievement of the Brumby government.

From 1 July 2010 the regulation of most health professionals was transferred from the states to a national registration and accreditation scheme through the passing of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009. Almost 140 000 hardworking Victorian health practitioners transferred to the national registration scheme. I want to put on the record my commitment to the health practitioners of this state, who do a fantastic job whatever arena they work in, whether that be in our fantastic public hospitals, in public practice or in the

many alternative therapies that a number of previous speakers have referred to.

A number of other speakers referred to Ian Gawler. Sadly, I have too many friends who have been treated for cancer, particularly breast cancer and reproductive cancers, over the last 18 months to 2 years, including two members who previously served in this place. It has been a very difficult time for them, and I know they really value the support they have had from great health practitioners at places like the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, from those in private practice and from fantastic alternative therapists like Ian Gawler and many others. Representing, as I do — and as I know you do, Deputy Speaker — part of the fantastic Yarra Valley, I know there are many in that area who are very committed to and supportive of the work of alternative practitioners. In the recovery period after the dreadful bushfires of three years ago these alternate practitioners worked really hard and provided a great deal of support to people in getting over that trauma.

The bill before us today adds to the number of professions covered under the national registration scheme. The 10 professions that were previously moved to the national scheme are chiropractics, dentistry, general practice, nursing and midwifery, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry and psychology. National boards are now responsible for ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise are registered. The law provides a right of appeal for a practitioner who is subject to either refusal of registration or the attachment of conditions to their registration. The national law better supports our valued health practitioners because they really are at the heart of our health system.

The new professions to be regulated under the national law are Chinese medicine practice and medical radiation practice. They are still regulated by Victoria's Health Professions Registration Act 2005, but from 1 July 2012 they will be registered through the national scheme, along with occupational therapy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practices, which are not currently required to be registered here in Victoria.

These changes were foreshadowed by Labor in government, and they reflect Victoria's strong commitment to national registration and accreditation. I have said many times in this place how proud I am of the achievements that we were able to make real in Victoria, with investments increasing over the 11 years of Labor government. We boosted recurrent funding for health services by 153 per cent; we employed more

than 10 000 additional nurses and more than 3500 extra doctors. Victorian public hospitals provided over 1.4 million people with elective surgery in the 11 years following 1999, with around 375 people being operated on each day. In Labor's last budget \$2.3 billion was allocated to new hospital building projects, generating almost 3500 jobs. That brought total health capital investment by the Bracks and Brumby governments to \$7.5 billion — the largest health capital program in the state's history. We were proud to see the conclusion of projects such as the Royal Women's Hospital, the Royal Children's Hospital, Casey Hospital — —

Dr Napthine — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, while the nature of the bill provides for some degree of wide-ranging debate, the member for Yan Yean has strayed far and wide and for too long. I ask you to bring her back to the bill, which is a narrow bill about national registration systems particularly relating to Chinese medicine and medical radiation practitioners.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The debate has been wide ranging, but in speaking about the previous governments' accomplishments the member for Yan Yean had diverted too far. I ask her to return to the bill.

Ms GREEN — Thank you for your ruling, Deputy Speaker. I note that it has been a wide-ranging debate. I am pleased to see that the government has sought to continue supporting Labor's reform program of national registration in this area, but that is no excuse for not having its own commitment, record and future policy direction for health. All we have seen is cuts — cuts to health services — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The member for Yan Yean, on the bill!

Ms GREEN — I commend the bill to the house, and the government should start doing its own work instead of taking credit for the work of others.

Ms McLEISH (Seymour) — I rise this afternoon to speak in support of the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. As we know and have heard, this bill is fairly narrow and straightforward. It will repeal the Health Professions Registration Act 2005 and make some minor consequential amendments to other acts. In terms of what is being repealed here, the bill abolishes the Chinese Medicine Registration Board of Victoria and the Medical Radiation Practitioners Board of Victoria, which have been operating under the Health Professions Registration Act 2005.

This piece of legislation is the result of a federal initiative, but it spans the former and current Victorian governments. When the federal government set up its national registration program it meant that each state had to draft the legislation that is consequential to that to bring all the state bodies into the one national body. At the time there were some 85 different boards across eight states, so there was quite a lot of work to be done. The larger and more well-known state practitioner boards have been moved to the national system, but some have not got that far. We as a government need to do this rather than leave practitioners in the lurch. It was disappointing to hear the comments of the member for Yan Yean suggesting that we do not have anything of our own and need to rely on some of Labor's stuff. It would be remiss of us not to be doing this. I am staggered by the lack of understanding shown by the member's comments.

Looking at the professions that have already moved to the national registration program, we have chiropractic and osteopathy, dentistry, nursing and midwifery, general practice, optometry, physiotherapy, pharmacy, podiatry and psychology. I was a registered psychologist in a former life. I was registered with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria and had to undergo the process of the transfer to the national scheme — and what a messy process that was. I have mentioned in this house once before that it was not simple or smooth. A number of practitioners had a lot of difficulty with the alteration to the payment scheme and the provision of either too much or not enough information. Some people who were looking at changing the type of registration never heard back about it. It has been at least 18 months, and they still have not heard.

As a psychologist I was working and had worked exclusively in Victoria, but the consulting firm I worked for had a number of psychologists who would consult around the country. We were involved with tenders that required us to list our qualifications and registrations, and organisations wanted consultants who were registered so that they were able, for instance, to do in each state some of the psychological assessment processes that we used to undertake. In theory this reform was going to make it a lot simpler for us as consultants not only in putting tenders together but also in the way we were able to know that we could then go and work in another state.

I remember that it was difficult to work out some of the insurance issues associated with this, because there had been different schemes in different states. That was messy and time consuming for our organisation as it tried to come to grips with the change. The member for

Caulfield also mentioned that the nursing and midwifery practitioners experienced quite a degree of difficulty, so although it looked as though under the national system the fact that we were obliged to be part of it would be more efficient and productive, there was that additional level of complexity.

The two areas where regulation is to be moved to the national boards, as I have mentioned, are Chinese medicine and medical radiation. Another couple of areas are also being added to the national scheme: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, which we do not have in our state, and occupational therapy, which is a little bit complex in itself.

I want to spend a moment talking about Chinese medicine. Quite a number of years ago, I think it was about 13 years ago, I worked at WorkCover and was actually responsible for the registration processes. I managed the medical and allied health practitioners. We did a lot of peer review programs and registration and looked at service delivery and what was a reasonable thing to deliver and what was not. At the time Chinese medicine was not new, but it was. It was not new in that it has been around for decades — not decades, I mean centuries; I was going to say 'donkeys'! — but in terms of Western mainstream health services it was new. It was TCM, traditional Chinese medicine, and a lot of people at the Transport Accident Commission and WorkCover were using these sorts of things. The question of whether or not that should be covered as a reasonable medical expense caused quite a debate. I know that at the same time a number of the health insurance companies had the same debate.

I think the member for Benalla mentioned some natural remedies and medicines earlier. There were a lot of issues at the time with St John's wort, for instance, which some people were saying was the be-all and end-all in curing certain ailments but which also has a number of contraindications that we need to be aware of. These are some of the issues that needed to be thrashed out with some of the TCM, but we have got to the stage where it has a board with significant assets and that is now to be rolled over into part of the national accreditation program.

All in all this is relatively simple because it brings the two areas that are still registered in Victoria into the national health scheme. We know that the national health scheme, whilst it sounds great up-front, has a few complexities and difficulties, because it involves such a large organisation. Going from having 85 small state boards to having only 10 or 12 — including the two areas that Victoria is not involved in — leads to

that level of complexity, and we need to be mindful of that. I am pleased that we have been able to introduce this legislation so that this transfer can happen.

What I want to bring to the attention of the house is that even though this system is going to be in place as of 1 July 2012, the Victorian boards, like any boards, will still have an annual reporting requirement and will need to convene and present an annual report. The due date of the annual reports is going to fall outside that period, so there are provisions in the bill to enable the boards to be kept in place so that registration continues and their annual reports can be presented and adopted prior to the Victorian system being wound up. With those comments, I am pleased to support the bill.

Mr SHAW (Frankston) — The Minister for Ports was correct in the point of order he raised earlier: this is a very narrow bill. I must say that on the surface it looks a very uninspiring bill as well — as did a lot of them, I must admit, this week — until you really get into it and see exactly what it is about. We are talking about the health professions here. Health accounts for 30 per cent of the budget, and with the budget coming up that is very important.

The government has had a number of challenges it has had to deal with. We have had a GST cut at the federal level and recurrent or other expenditure that was either not seen or not known, so there are no doubt going to be a lot of constraints on health expenditure coming up in the budget. Needless to say, though, the biggest spend is also the most important. Frankston, for example, has quite a large health precinct, with Frankston Hospital there as well as a multitude of other rehabilitation centres and peninsula services. The Royal District Nursing Service is there as well.

The main purpose of the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012 is to bring the regulation of Chinese medicine practitioners and medical radiation practitioners under the health practitioner regulation national law. Both sides of the house agree with this but are seeing what is happening at the federal level. I must say that although I am not someone who likes centralisation for the most part, I think for regulation it is pretty important. As a tax agent, I can say that that area is regulated federally, and that allows us as tax practitioners to go all around the country. I think in that sense, centralising or nationalising those regulations is a fine example of cutting bureaucracy so that we will not have to bear the cost. I was reading that 136 000 health practitioners are already registered and regulated under the new national scheme.

When I was researching the bills for this week — we had the Royal Women's Hospital Land Bill 2012 and the Land (Revocation of Reservations Bill) 2012 — one of the issues that came up in relation to the Royal Women's Hospital is that the hospital talks about births, but, as one of the members on the other side noted, it also deals with abortion. It was not while I was researching this bill but when I was looking into the Royal Women's Hospital earlier today that I was amazed to learn that as well as about 6500 births taking place each year at the hospital, which is fantastic, on the flip side, about 2500 to 3000 abortions take place in the same building. That was disappointing and really quite astonishing to me.

The Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 is one of the acts to which consequential amendments will be made. The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981, which we talked about last year, is another act that is being amended, along with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and the Radiation Act 2005. As there are other members who would like to speak on this bill, I will finish my contribution there and commend the bill to the house.

Ms MILLER (Bentleigh) — It is a privilege to make a contribution to the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. Essentially this bill is about the repeal of the Health Professions Registration Act 2005, involving the regulation of Chinese medicine practitioners and medical radiation practitioners under Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. I have a health-care background of some 25 years, as some people in the house know. I was a registered nurse. I think that this act, by formulating a national scheme and incorporating registered health practitioners around the country, makes sense. It certainly provides flexibility, which most people desire. Many Victorians work interstate, if not overseas, and if they do not, they might travel on a daily or weekly basis, so this bill does make sense.

If I were a cricket person and a betting person, I would say that we have had a failed health-care hat-trick by Labor. We have had three health-care ministers who have failed the people of Victoria in the health-care system. The current Minister for Health also has a health-care background and is working very hard for the people of Victoria, and I know that he and his colleagues will do a great job. This bill takes one further step towards ensuring that.

The other thing that is important to acknowledge is that these two boards, the Chinese Medicine Registration Board of Victoria and the Medical Radiation Practitioners Board of Victoria, no doubt have assets of

some value. It is important, moving into a national system, that these valuable assets actually deliver a good return in terms of a health-care outcome for Victorians who are not moving elsewhere. Whilst this is a very good idea and initiative, it also warrants a degree of caution to ensure that Victorians get their fair share. Moving to a national scheme does make sense, and it creates more consistency for people wanting to work in a different state.

The other important thing is that doctors and nurses are highly trained professionals. They do an outstanding job. They are very passionate, committed and dedicated in what they do, and they do an amazing job. The people in my electorate of Bentleigh have Moorabbin hospital and numerous general practitioner clinics, maternity services and other allied health services. They do a terrific job, as do health professionals in all metropolitan and regional hospitals throughout Victoria. It is important to acknowledge all the good work that they do. This national scheme will produce a significant advantage for those who choose to work in other beautiful parts of regional Victoria or in other states within this country.

I have colleagues who also want to contribute to the debate on the bill. It is important to acknowledge the good contributions that people on this side of the house have made. I want to talk about the people of Bentleigh. As I said, I have a health-care background and I have worked closely with a lot of medical doctors, surgeons, nurses and allied health practitioners and also those from a disability perspective, such as those in mental health. What they do is commendable, and it needs our support. From my work with these professionals I can see the good outcomes that the people of Bentleigh are benefiting from. This national registration scheme makes good sense. It is good to have some degree of consistency. However, we do need to err on the side of caution because, as I said, when we are making a contribution to a national scheme we want to make sure that Victorians are advantaged. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr WATT (Burwood) — I rise to speak on the Health Professions Registration (Repeal) Bill 2012. I will keep my remarks to my concerns, I suppose, as a member of Parliament here in Victoria. It is vitally important that I, as a member of this house, stand up for Victoria and make sure that anything we do in this house is to the benefit of Victorians. In principle a national health regulation scheme appears to be a good idea, but I am reluctant to just hand over power to the federal government or to some national body at the expense of Victorians. We need to be careful when we do these types of things.

I realise that this bill is a consequence of decisions made by failed former Labor ministers. I very much have confidence in the abilities of the current Minister for Health, David Davis. However, I want to make the point about this particular bill, as with all bills that come through this house, that as members of the Victorian government and the Victorian Parliament we need to make sure that we stand up for Victorians in all ways.

There are a number of things that happen federally. Even with the powers that it has, the federal government often tries to take power and control from the states and it infringes on state rights quite a lot. We in Victoria need to be careful that we do not allow the federal government to increase costs for Victorians through schemes such as the carbon tax and a number of other pieces of regulation. We need to be careful here in Victoria when we give power to the federal government and to national bodies. On this particular bill I note that there are concerns that the national health registration process has possibly not gone as fluidly as it should have. As I say, that is probably the result of the former failed Labor ministers in this place but also current failed Labor ministers federally. We need to be very careful — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has now arrived. I am required to interrupt business.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL LAND BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 18 April; motion of Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Environment and Climate Change).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

LAND (REVOCAION OF RESERVATIONS) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Environment and Climate Change).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Sitting suspended 4.01 p.m. until 4.17 p.m.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Belvoir Special School: funding

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. The specific action I seek is for him to contact the Belvoir Special School in Wodonga as a matter of urgency to clarify the scope of building works and the funding that will be provided to the school to build its new facilities. The Baillieu government committed at the last election to building the new school facilities, but just as with its bungled costings for the Casey-Cardinia special school it promised, it seems there has been a blow-out in this project from \$6 million to somewhere around \$12 million. There is a state of confusion in the school community about this matter because the government will not release the costings on how much the new school facilities will cost.

The Belvoir special developmental school is expecting an enrolment of over 140 children next year, and the nearest specialist setting in Victoria is in Wangaratta,

which is some way down the road. In a thorough front-page expose on this issue, the *Border Mail* reported on 23 March that the Minister for Education did not dispute the proposition that the real cost of the building would be closer to \$12 million. The minister also avoided giving any commitment to providing in the upcoming budget the full amount required to build the school.

It is now vital that the minister give the school community a straight answer about the cost of the new school building and a straight indication that the government will fund it. The question the minister needs to answer is: what is the confirmed cost of this building for an enrolment of between 144 and 200 students, which are the numbers the school project has been based on? Does the minister commit to funding the full amount in the budget as promised?

If the Baillieu government does not commit to funding the full amount required to build this new school, it will be clear the project will not be completed in this term in office, which will be another clear breach of the coalition's election promises. The people of Wodonga and indeed of north-eastern Victoria are in danger of being short-changed because of the dodgy costings process of the Liberal Party at the state election. In the words of the school's principal, which were reported on the front page of the *Border Mail*, 'building half a school would be a poor option'.

Towong Turf Club: funding

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — I have to thank the member for Bundoora for doing some of my work as a subcontractor! I appreciate his concern.

I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Racing. The minister is a frequent flyer to the north-east of Victoria, particularly Towong, and the action I seek is for him to return again to Towong and visit the Towong Turf Club. The turf club has indicated it needs support totalling \$25 000 from the Victorian Racing Industry Fund for track renovation works. The club is proposing to undertake renovation works to its track which would include excavating and replacing two sections of the course proper at the 600-metre and 1750-metre marks. The club has advised that these two sections have been identified as posing a long-term risk to the integrity of the track surface, and it would like to ensure that the risk is addressed before a problem arises. Subject to approval, the club proposes to commence works as soon as possible to ensure that the turf is given sufficient time to take root before its December meeting.

Under Labor one of Towong's two race days was scrapped, which was detrimental not only to the race club but to the community as a whole. Prior to the election the coalition promised the Towong Turf Club and the wider Upper Murray community that it would give Towong back its second race meeting, and it has delivered on its promise, with the Racing Victoria Ltd board granting the club an additional race meeting on New Year's Eve 2011. The New Year's Eve race meeting was well attended, with plans for an even bigger and better event in 2012. In the 2012–13 year the additional Towong race meeting will be held on 29 December 2012, with the Towong Cup programmed for 9 March 2013.

I ask the minister to support the funding that would allow the track upgrades required to ensure the success of those two Towong race meetings. I extend an invitation to everybody here to come to Towong for a great race day.

City of Casey: emergency services contact number

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and the action I seek is that the minister rigorously publicise the emergency phone number 000 within the city of Casey, especially within the Berwick township. It has come to my attention that the emergency telephone number 000 is not well known to residents within the city of Casey.

Publicising 000 so that in emergencies, whether one needs services or to report criminal activity to our police force, people can remember the three numbers off by heart is extremely important. Criminal activity could involve the procuring, selling or financing of illegal drugs, shots being fired at houses or car back windows being shattered after being shot at. People in Berwick might be under the misapprehension that 9651 5000 is an emergency number one may call before 000 because one may be more familiar with the direct number to the Premier's office than the difficult-to-remember 000.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services may work with the honourable member for Gembrook to publicise an emergency number fridge magnet available to families in Berwick. I have my own emergency number fridge magnet which I post out to my constituents. I have one on my fridge. I want to commend honourable members who create and distribute emergency fridge magnets with 000 being the first police emergency contact. A great example — and I commend the honourable member for this — is the

one created by the honourable member for Mordialloc. My honourable friend has provided a clear and concise emergency fridge magnet that right at the top has the police, ambulance and fire number, 000, prominently and clearly visible. I am so impressed with the fridge magnet created by my honourable friend that I am happy to have it made available to other honourable members to use as a template!

I do not want to have any further situations arise in the city of Casey, especially around the Berwick area, where, in the words of Homer Simpson, someone says, 'D'oh! Quick! What's the number for 911?'. We all know that 911 is not the number in Victoria; it is 000. In conclusion, I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to vigorously publicise the emergency phone number 000 within the city of Casey, especially in the Berwick township.

War memorials: restoration

Mr WELLER (Rodney) — I have a request this evening for the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, who is also the Minister for Sport and Recreation, in regard to the maintenance and restoration of war memorials within the Rodney electorate. The RSL in my electorate has applied for grants under the 2011–12 Restoring Community War Memorial Grants program. I ask the minister to support those applications.

Our community war memorials are important places in our community. They are esteemed places of worship and remembrance where services are held and members of the community can go and pay their respects to the Australians who fought for our country. These monuments and memorial centres need to be maintained and cared for so that they remain in good condition. They are, after all, places where we can remember our war dead and honour those servicemen and servicewomen who have served our country so valiantly, and their condition reflects the esteem in which we hold those who served.

On Anzac Day I will be travelling widely across my electorate. I will be starting with the dawn service at Torrumbarry. Then, after a sumptuous breakfast, I will be moving on to Echuca, where the Echuca RSL will be holding a 10 o'clock service. In Nathalia they have a dawn service, which unfortunately I will not be able to make. They have a service at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and they march to the cenotaph and then to the hall. That is how I will be spending Anzac Day.

If the minister cooperates, it will be good to know that in future some maintenance work will be done to improve the condition of the war memorials in the area.

Once again I ask the minister to support the applications by the RSL in my electorate under the 2011–12 Restoring Community War Memorial Grants program and the cause for these very worthwhile memorials in my electorate.

Doreen: secondary college

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — It is with great pleasure that I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that he ensure that funding is allocated in the forthcoming state budget for the urgently needed Doreen secondary college. The Doreen and Mernda postcode has one of the fastest growing populations in the whole of Australia. In 2006 some 3500 people were residing in that postcode area. My family, along with many others, has moved into that area. The population in 2010 was up to 16 000 and in 2011 it was 20 500, and it is still growing.

That is why in Labor's last budget we allocated funds to purchase land for a secondary college. That would have been completed right at the time when the secondary college would have been needed. The funding was allocated, and negotiations were under way for land in Cookes Road to be purchased. However, in December 2010, after the change of government, negotiations stalled. The developer could not get an answer from the government about when the funds for the purchase of the land would be allocated. I understand that the government has provided advice — I have not seen it — that that land has now been purchased. If that land, the purchase of which had been funded by the Labor government, has been purchased, we now need funding for the secondary college.

Labor recognised that growth was occurring in that area, so we allocated funds for the Laurimar children's centre, and that has been built in Doreen-Mernda. Two of Victoria's newest state-of-the-art primary schools have also been built at Laurimar and Mernda. We have great children's services, early childhood services and primary schools. The remaining thing we need in that area, which has more than 20 000 people and is growing, is a local secondary college. Laurimar Primary School now has an enrolment of almost 800 students and is expecting more than 200 new students next year, so within about two years it could be the largest primary school in the state. Mernda Primary School has an enrolment in excess of 400 students, Yarrambat Primary School has an enrolment of more than 400 students and Doreen Primary School has an enrolment of 125 students, which is the ceiling for that site.

Secondary students are travelling to Whittlesea, Mill Park, Epping and Diamond Valley. It is breaking down the community there. We need a secondary college. If the government funds the secondary college, it will be the first thing the government has funded in the Yan Yean electorate — and it must do it in this budget.

Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre: driver training

Mr HODGETT (Kilsyth) — I rise today to call on the Minister for Youth Affairs to visit the Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre in Bayswater North to take part in a youth driver forum. In recent years I have had many dealings with METEC, and I am fully supportive of the work they do on driver education, in particular with young people. METEC is a not-for-profit organisation, and the people there work closely with VicRoads, community road safety councils, Victoria Police and other government departments to provide training and education to young drivers.

The METEC facility is based in Bayswater North, and its 10 hectares of land includes intersections, traffic lights, roundabouts and other traffic obstacles spread out over 4 kilometres of private roads. This environment provides an ideal setting for driver education. The courses combine a classroom setting with the practical experience of on-road training with an experienced instructor. METEC's courses cater for all ages and all levels of driver experience. They range from pre-learner driving courses to three levels of a defensive driving course and a seniors course. They also run a four-wheel drive course and a caravan and trailer towing program. All those programs are extremely successful, and I consistently hear positive feedback from constituents who have completed the various courses.

As is so often publicised, the road toll in Victoria is of grave concern. This year we have already had 95 deaths on Victorian roads, an increase on the number at this time last year. Despite concerted efforts by police and governments, this number is still far too high. Any road fatality is one too many, and that is why measures need to be taken to best ensure the safety of road users of all ages and experience. Helping to give road users an education based on real experience is an excellent tool for making them safer and more responsible drivers. METEC was founded in 1971, and over its 30 years of experience in educating road users it has developed highly successful and effective programs targeting drivers of different levels of experience, especially programs aimed at young drivers, who contribute far too high a proportion of our road toll.

I call on the Minister for Youth Affairs to visit METEC and take part in a youth forum to help promote driver education amongst young people as well as assist with promoting the fantastic work that METEC does with drivers of all ages and experience.

Portarlington Primary School: funding

Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) — The matter I raise is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that the minister provide guaranteed funding in this state budget for the urgently needed rebuilding of Portarlington Primary School. I have raised this matter with the minister on a number of occasions, and with the budget about to be announced, this is crunch time. The minister now needs to stand up and indicate to members of the local Portarlington community whether he intends to support the proposal they have made.

Following auditing and assessment, the school was recommended by the regional office of the Department of Education as being a priority for upgrading. In fact the minister has confirmed this in a response to a question on notice from me in which he stated:

Portarlington Primary School has been listed by Barwon south-west region as a high priority for upgrading since 2010.

In 2010 the Brumby government, as a result of that assessment, made a \$6 million fully costed election commitment to rebuild the school.

The minister has visited the school, and he knows there is asbestos that must be removed, the timber is rotting away, paintwork is peeling, the ventilation is inadequate, the roof leaks and the overall design is outdated. During the visit he acknowledged the need for a major upgrade. Similarly, when the Leader of the Opposition visited the school recently he saw the very stark evidence that the school needs rebuilding.

Expensive maintenance and patch-up work are not cost effective. Last year during the rainy period we saw major leaking and classrooms having to be closed. The initial plans for the new school have been drawn up. The school community has been waiting patiently for over a year to have funding approved so it can go ahead and organise the more detailed design work that needs to be done. The minister has seen and acknowledged the urgent need for the school to be upgraded and rebuilt.

Portarlington Primary School has a very proud record; it has good academic results. We have seen an enormous increase in the number of students attending the school. Over the past five years the average number of enrolled preps at the school has been 17 or 18; this

year it jumped to 30. This is a project that has broad community support not just from parents, teachers and students but from right across the community. The Build Our School Action Committee has a wide membership. It indicated recently in its newsletter that it saw this as a major priority for the community. The newsletter stated:

As a school we feel our children deserve complementary learning facilities that match the excellence in the education that is being provided —

by the school.

Now is the time for the government to provide a 21st-century school to the Portarlington community. I again call on the minister to urgently approve this funding in this year's budget.

National Celtic Festival: funding

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise to draw the attention of Minister for Tourism and Major Events to the National Celtic Festival, which will be held in Portarlington, and to request that state funding be made available for this iconic event for the Geelong and Bellarine regions. The National Celtic Festival is held over the Queen's Birthday long weekend and is Australia's largest and most diverse celebration of Celtic music and culture. This year the festival celebrates its 10th anniversary. The event showcases and promotes the broader Bellarine Peninsula region. The festival is unique to Geelong and the Bellarine region and is marketed internationally, nationally and regionally to a growing number of people, many of whom are first-time visitors to the region. The event continues to grow and draw on the strengths of products of the region, combining heritage experiences with quality arts and cultural activities.

The National Celtic Festival is a community-based, not-for-profit association. Managed by an elected committee, the festival employs a festival director and an administrator. The festival is an arts and cultural event celebrating and promoting Celtic culture. It offers a comprehensive and diverse program of music, dance and drama and presents international, national and local artists. It includes the expression of Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Breton, Galician and Manx traditions throughout the program. The program is structured around a series of concerts, small performances, workshops, roving performances and a Celtic market in venues scattered around the township.

Recent festivals have attracted approximately 15 000 people, and approximately 80 per cent of these people are from outside the immediate region. Most

visitors stay three nights. Ticket revenue has increased by more than 30 per cent from what was achieved in 2009. From a tourism perspective the event continues to grow. In 2009 event organisers secured the national Golden Fiddle Awards, and for the first time the awards were hosted away from Tamworth.

Various national and state awards, an increased number of workshops and a record number of performances highlight the growing success of this event as one of national significance. The economic and cultural value this festival will bring to the Geelong and wider Bellarine Peninsula regions is significant. This festival on the Bellarine Peninsula creates an environment — I would be happy to spell the word ‘environment’ for the member for Bellarine if she so desires — that fosters community pride and attracts visitors to the Geelong region at a time of year that is traditionally quiet.

Roads: funding

Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North) — My matter is for the attention of the Minister for Roads. The action I seek is for the minister to provide more than a measly \$4.8 million for suburban roads in Melbourne. This was all that was offered in the last budget, apart from the funds already set aside by the Brumby government in prior budgets. This joke perpetrated on the Victorian community does nothing for members of communities who are suffering as a result of greater congestion and increased travel times from home to work. We can see that the minister has done nothing in relation to roads in his region, including Colac, nor for the region of the member for South-West Coast, who is the Minister for Ports. A visit last week to that region highlighted the fact that the minister and the local member have not even visited crumbling roads like Woolsthorpe-Heywood Road.

What has the government done with this measly \$4.8 million? All this adds up to is planning money. A plan is not a road; it is simply a plan. It is a fraud on the community. Construction will not have been started on any of these roads by the end of this term in government. This minister will be known as the Minister for Road Planning. When you look at the road grade separations in Mitcham, you can tell the government is simply stalling. Questions in public surveys ask whether the community wants roads to have grade separations. I can now answer those questions for everybody. The answer is yes, the community wants grade separations because that is what it was promised. Grade separations are being looked at for Blackburn Road in Blackburn, Mitcham Road in Mitcham and Rooks Road in Nunawading.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I ask members of the house to be quiet so I can hear the adjournment matter.

Mr DONNELLAN — Let us quickly look at the history. Let us look at the northern region, for argument’s sake. Over 10 years the Whittlesea City Council received \$138.93 million. Under this government it received absolutely zip. The needs of the north are substantial. There is congestion on the ring-road in the north. Yan Yean Road has substantial problems. There is a call for traffic lights on Lipton Drive and Mahoneys Road in Thomastown. In the east, Whitehorse City Council received \$108 million over 10 years, but the spending of those funds excludes the grade separation at Springvale Road in Springvale. How many promises have been made? Promises have been made to those in Mitcham. There is only planning money and nothing has been started; there is only the plan to do nothing. Nothing has happened in relation to the duplication of High Street Road in Scoresby, nothing is happening in relation to the grade separation at Bayswater Road and nothing is happening in relation to the widening of Stud Road.

What about in my backyard? In Casey \$418 million was invested. What did Casey get in the last budget? It got absolutely nothing. The community looks at this and says, ‘What on earth are you doing, Minister?’. There are so many needs in Casey. There are substantial issues regarding the duplication of Cranbourne Road in Narre Warren. By the time the next budget is announced, people affected will know that this government is doing nothing for suburban roads for the community across the whole state. We know it is doing nothing in the regions, nothing in — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I could not hear that adjournment matter. I have no idea whether it was correct or not.

Rail: Glen Waverley services

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — This afternoon I raise a matter for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek from the minister is that he provide additional services to passengers on the Glen Waverley line. Having access to regular, reliable and safe public transport services is a high priority for residents in Waverley. Whether you are a student travelling to university or a part-time job, whether you are a

commuter or whether you are using the service to attend a sporting event, public transport is a high priority. It is why the coalition is delivering so much for Waverley and Monash.

The focus of the coalition's public transport priority program has been reliability, frequency and safety. The focus on reliability has involved a massive increase in rail maintenance programs being implemented by the coalition government, including a \$900 million public transport program, and, interestingly enough, making sure there is sufficient electricity capacity at railway stations, including new ones, for trains to actually be able to leave the station. The focus on safety has involved re-manning every single railway station. The focus on frequency has seen significant increases in frequency on the Glen Waverley line.

However, I am seeking further improvements from the minister in line with representations I have made to the minister, his department and Metro Trains Melbourne on a consistent basis. In fact I have met with Metro, the minister and his department on no less than four occasions in the last seven months to advocate on behalf of my constituency for improved public transport services for the Waverley and Monash areas.

The results are very clear: we are delivering a \$1.25 million trial of the 601 bus service, we are committing \$600 000 to undertake planning and design work for a Syndal railway station — that is actually happening; it is not spin doctoring — and we are implementing and delivering traffic flow upgrades to the Stephenson-High Street roads intersection. This is what we have delivered in the first year of the coalition budget after more than a decade of neglect by Labor, a term of government that included two state cabinet ministers who refused to assist. When you put this in the context of our cutting the cost of full-fare myki cards from \$10 to \$6, our abolition of the \$9.80 administration fee for passengers wanting a refund for unused travel on their myki card, the replacement of defective or damaged registered myki cards and the replacement of lost or stolen myki cards free of charge, it represents significant fare reductions for people using the system.

I am particularly pleased that the benefits of the improved reliability levels as a result of the coalition's rail maintenance program are starting to flow through in line with the service frequencies and lower fares introduced on 1 January. However, I acknowledge that there is plenty more work to be done to turn around over a decade of shocking public transport mismanagement by the former Brumby Labor government. Increased frequency of services on the

Glen Waverley line is part of that improvement, and that is what I call on the minister to deliver for the Waverley and Monash areas.

Responses

Mr MULDER (Minister for Public Transport) — Two issues were raised with me this afternoon; one was the rantings and ravings of the member for Narre Warren North. I agree with you, Deputy Speaker, that it was very hard to understand exactly whether he was calling for action or calling a greyhound race or what he was doing, but nevertheless at one stage I did hear him mention the south-west coast and my own electorate and make reference to the conditions of roads in that part of the state.

It is very interesting that we have with us here today the former Minister for Planning and the former Minister for Roads and Ports, as they would both be well aware of the approvals for a number of the wind farms in south-western Victoria. If members go to the green triangle freight action plan, which was put together by the former Minister for Roads and Ports, they will see that it quite clearly stipulates that, yes, there will be construction jobs in relation to some of these proposals, but there will not be an impact on the road network. How wrong the former Minister for Roads and Ports was! There is no doubt that there has been considerable damage done to the broader arterial road network in south-western Victoria because of these wind farms. The permits have been approved without appropriate contributions by the developers of these particular proposals, and they are not just causing damage to the broader arterial road network but also depleting local quarries.

One of the great concerns we have is the number of permits that were issued by the former government, with the full knowledge of the former Minister for Roads and Ports, without taking into consideration the impact on the road network. I think the Shire of Moyne had about 19 permits sitting there for alternative energy proposals. We are dealing with that as well as we possibly can. We have been left with an absolute basket case by the former Labor government.

We are investing in road projects across the state — two projects in particular. I am sure the former Minister for Roads and Ports and the member for Narre Warren North would be aware that the former Labor government ripped the two Anderson Road grade separation projects out of the regional rail project because they were in Labor Party heartland and it believed it could get away with treading all over its own constituents. We reinstated that project and will

continue to work right across the state to make sure we deliver those projects.

Adjournment interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! I would like to offer a very special and warm welcome to His Excellency General Michel Sleiman, President of the Republic of Lebanon. We welcome you, Sir, to the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Victoria. It is a very great honour that you have done us to come to our chamber here, and we thank you very much for that honour.

ADJOURNMENT

Responses

Adjournment resumed.

Mr MULDER (Minister for Public Transport) — We will continue to roll out these very important projects across the state. We will make the tough decisions that the former Labor government was not prepared to make. We have already given a very strong commitment to the extension of the Eastern Freeway. We are already in the advanced planning stages for upgrades to Mitcham Road, Rooks Road and Springvale Road and a whole host of other road projects across the state. Added to that, the member, having been in the south-west of the state, would be aware of the \$160 million commitment by the Baillieu government to the smaller councils to help local government repair the potholes that were left behind by the former Labor government. We will continue to support local councils, we will continue to support regional communities and we will continue to drive the economy with well-thought-through infrastructure projects for both road and rail in both the metropolitan area of Melbourne and our major regional cities.

The member for Mount Waverley raised an issue with me in relation to proposed improvements to services on the Glen Waverley line and sought information about other projects that may be taking place to improve the services on that line. I inform the member for Mount Waverley, who shows a great interest in his community and in public transport, that Metro Trains Melbourne's annual works planned for July 2011 to June 2012 include funding for platform coping and facing and platform resurfacing at Tooronga station, painting at Glen Iris and Tooronga stations, and \$228 000 for insulator replacement on the Glen Waverley, Werribee

and Sandringham lines. This, of course, is coming out of our \$100 million Maintaining Our Rail Network Fund.

That is not all. There is more good news for the member for Mount Waverley. From 22 April this year on Sunday evenings until the last train, service frequency on the Glen Waverley line will improve from the current 40 minutes to half-hourly. This is a great result. There will be more trains coming into Glen Waverley and more trains going out of Glen Waverley, as well as a whole host of infrastructure improvements.

Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — The member for Melton has, I understand, raised an issue related to the 000 telephone number. This issue is very important and should be treated with the importance it deserves. As we know, the 000 number often means the difference between life and death for people in Victoria and for those who may be visiting our fair state from other jurisdictions. It is vitally important, therefore, that the public at large recognise the significance of that number and that the public at large when they are in need of emergency services have the confidence to be able to call that number as they deem appropriate.

I can assure the member for Melton that the 000 number has been the focus of a lot of the advertising we have done across the emergency service providers. From a whole-of-government perspective we have advertised extensively, and not only in the fire season which has just passed. I can tell the member that over the course of the coming few weeks more advertisements will be placed to deal with the equally important threat to people's lives of fires that occur in winter as a result of the misuse of mechanisms or the failure of heating devices in homes. That is equally a very real danger for Victorians.

Accordingly I highlight the fundamental point the member was looking to make, and that is that 000 is a vitally important asset for all Victorians who need to have confidence in being able to use it. It can save lives; it is designed to do so. I was speaking only a couple of nights ago at Crime Stoppers, and although it has its own dedicated number — 1800 333 000 — nevertheless it is another example of where it is so important to have these sorts of initiatives available. To the extent that the member for Melton was looking to highlight the importance of that being the case, I support him in the point he was making — at least in that regard.

Ms ASHER (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — The member for South Barwon raised with

me the issue of funding for the National Celtic Festival. The member has a very strong understanding of the need to have a strong tourism environment so that tourism can grow and prosper in his local region. This event, as the member for South Barwon said, is going to be held over the Queen's Birthday weekend in June. This provides an excellent opportunity for local tourism, because visitors can attend the festival and travel throughout Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula over the course of the long weekend. It is a big bonus when these events are held on long weekends.

The member for South Barwon raised the same issue with me last year, and funding was provided for this festival then. I am delighted to advise him again today that the coalition government through Tourism Victoria's events program has allocated \$27 500 to assist with intrastate and interstate promotion of the 2012 festival to increase visitation and event-related economic yield. Again a whole range of promotion and advertising will be conducted across a range of media to enable significant visitation to be forthcoming. Last year's festival attracted approximately 16 000 attendees, with about 80 per cent of visitors coming from outside the immediate region — a very good result. Ticket revenue has also increased over the past few years.

I am also pleased to announce on behalf of the Minister for Regional and Rural Development that, in addition to the funding from Tourism Victoria, a further \$25 000 will be allocated to the festival as part of the coalition government's Putting Locals First program, which is part of the Regional Growth Fund that we are so pleased to be able to deliver. Funding for these sorts of events is part of the coalition government's commitment to tourism opportunities. It is very important to maximise tourism opportunities in regional Victoria as they in turn provide an economic boost to the local communities.

I thank the member for South Barwon for his interest in this matter and for his advocacy for tourism in his electorate.

Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Youth Affairs) — In responding to the member for Kilsyth's adjournment contribution I would like to acknowledge his strong advocacy for the Metropolitan Traffic Education Centre (METEC) over the time he has been in this place. I have been down to METEC myself with students from Warrandyte High School, and I sat in the back of one of the vehicles while the instructor took them around the course. It is a great facility, a great course and a great place in the eastern suburbs to help kids learn how to drive and observe road safety.

As we know, the incidence of road fatality and injury is far too high amongst young people, and I acknowledge the work done by METEC in educating young people about road safety. In response to the member for Kilsyth, I would be very happy to join him at a youth forum at METEC so we can discuss this very important issue with those young Victorians.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Education) — The member for Bundoora raised with me the issue of Belvoir Special School. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the great work done by the member for Benambra in raising this issue with me on a number of occasions. I have had two positive visits, rather than negative visits, to that great school. It does a great job, and the member for Benambra has been a great advocate not only for the work that is done there but for the building works that need to be done there.

The member for Bundoora was intimating something was amiss. Because all our election commitments are over a term of government, which in Victoria is four years, you do not fund all your commitments in one year, because it just does not work that way. It may have under Labor, but we have to space these things out. We have other commitments to fulfil, and we will spread this out over our four years. We have committed to delivering funding for Belvoir, and we will do that during this first term of government. In fact the money that was allocated last year was part of the single biggest commitment in more than 10 years for capital works and planning in special and autistic schools, and I was very proud to hand that down last year. Belvoir is a very great case. It has been well prosecuted by the member for Benambra. Obviously I cannot pre-empt anything that will be in the 1 May budget.

The member for Yan Yean raised with me the issue of the Doreen secondary college. I recognise that it is this government that has purchased the land for that college, and it was the former government that closed Yan Yean Primary School in the same area. The member said the money for the college was allocated, but I have not been able to find it — I have looked in a number of drawers in my office and the money for the construction of that school is not there, and no money was left for its construction. In fact last year we quadrupled the amount of money allocated to purchase land in our growing suburbs, so we are well aware of those sorts of pressures, and we acted on that last year. Obviously details regarding our capital commitments will be announced in the budget on 1 May.

The member for Bellarine raised with me the issue of Portarlington Primary School. As she said, I have been there and I have seen the school, and it is a priority of

the region. In fact when I look across all the regions in Victoria, there are actually 200 priority projects. We have been left with 200 projects that are shovel ready, where the planning work has been done or where at least there are master plans. There is a whole range of schools — 200 of them — that are ready to go and are waiting for funding. They were dragged through this long process, the farce that was the Victorian schools plan. They went through that, they were promised a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and it just was not there. That is what we inherited.

The issues at that Portarlinton school were not addressed. The mould, the damp and the leaks did not start in 2011; they had been there for 11 years. But it is a worthy cause, and any announcement regarding the future of that school will be made on 1 May. I just did some quick figures, and the rough cost of the project at Portarlinton would be covered by just three days payments for the desal plant, one-twentieth of the overrun on the fruit and vegetable market, and 1.4 per cent of the myki overrun.

Mr DELAHUNTY (Minister for Veterans' Affairs) — I am pleased to respond to a matter raised with me by the member for Rodney, who I know is a very strong supporter of veterans in his electorate. I think it was in 2010 that I visited the Rodney area and together we visited many sites, so it is great for him to be able to raise this matter with me tonight.

As we all know, next Wednesday Australia will pause to reflect on the sacrifices made by our veterans, past and present, who have given so much to our country to make it the place it is today. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin and the fall of Singapore, and it is also the 70th anniversary of the battle of Kokoda. I know the member for Mornington spoke about that this morning. We both walked the trail, along with the member for Polwarth, in 2008, as well as the member for Narracan, who was a great leader on that tour. Thank God he was, because I do not think — —

An honourable member — What about the member for Scoresby?

Mr DELAHUNTY — The member for Scoresby has walked the Kokoda Trail, but he went on the tourist route. We went on the hard route over 120 kilometres.

Mr Wells — Take that back.

Mr DELAHUNTY — But I will take it back — I want some money. As the Premier reminded us today, whether they were conscripted or were regular volunteers serving on the front lines or in support roles,

our past servicemen and servicewomen carried out, as today's service personnel continue to carry out, their duties courageously in extremely difficult conditions and under tremendous strain. It is vital that we honour past and present servicemen and servicewomen in all their duties.

That is why the Victorian government is pleased to invest in the Restoring Community War Memorial Grants program. Today I was pleased to announce that communities across Victoria and their RSL clubs will share in more than \$240 000 to fund 43 projects to help local communities to repair, protect, restore and enhance their war memorials.

As part of these grants three projects are being funded in the electorate of Rodney. The first one is \$10 000 for the Kyabram RSL sub-branch to restore the memorial gate, brick wall, fencing and the pathway which provides access to the memorial gardens. Also, \$8820 will go towards renovating the bronze plaques and repairing damaged and inappropriate brickwork at the Echuca Cenotaph. The third grant in the Rodney electorate is \$1012 to install a black granite marker next to the Aleppo pine in front of the Cohuna-Leitchville RSL building to tell a brief story of the battle and the journey of the pine cone taken from Gallipoli. Just last Saturday another 10 students returned from a visit to Turkey, Malaysia and Singapore as part of the Premier's Spirit of Anzac prize. Seventeen other students will be travelling up to Canberra on 4, 5 and 6 May to visit the war memorial and also Parliament House as part of their tour.

I know there are some other members in the house. I have a list of all the grants that have been approved today, and I will mention just a couple of them. There is a grant of \$9180 for the restoration of the Gembrook memorial wall. I am pleased to see — I have met with these people — that Ballarat will get \$7700 to restore and replace 55 damaged and missing plaques along the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. The member for Oakleigh has spoken to me about the next matter; I believe she even wrote the application on behalf of her club. The Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL sub-branch will get \$6200 to restore the Oakleigh Cenotaph in honour of its returned servicemen and servicewomen.

In conclusion, Victorians are rightly proud of the bravery and sacrifice of our veterans, and these grants will help keep their memories and stories going through memorials around the state. I have a theme in that I want to pass the baton on to our younger generation. These memorials and avenues of honour provide an important gathering place for friends — particularly for events like Anzac Day commemorations — and also

other community members, including RSL members, to remember these veterans for their sacrifice and to reflect on the impact of war on these families.

Again, the coalition government will continue to work with local governments, ex-service organisations and community groups to ensure that the sacrifice of our veterans is never forgotten, especially in the lead-up to the centenary of Anzac commemorations.

Dr NAPHTHINE (Minister for Racing) — In concluding this adjournment debate I just point out that we had 10 matters raised on the adjournment today and each one of those matters has been responded to directly by the minister responsible. It is my recollection that that never, ever happened in 11 years of Labor government.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the minister well knows that it is not an opportunity to bag out the opposition while he is on his feet. He should be responding on behalf of the government to any matters that have not yet been responded to. That is his task during the adjournment debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The minister, to respond to the adjournment debate.

Dr NAPHTHINE — There are no matters to respond to other than my own because there were ministers to respond to each and every one of the 10 matters. That is an unusual occurrence after 11 years of neglect of adjournment debates by Labor governments.

The member for Benambra raised with me issues regarding the Towong racing club. He understands that the racing industry is an important industry for the economy and jobs in regional and rural Victoria. Indeed there are 27 000 people employed in racing, training, breeding and services to the racing industry across regional and rural Victoria. It is a huge and important industry, and every race club is an important part of that. Last week I visited Wodonga at the request of the member for Benambra, and among the activities that I undertook during that time was a meeting with officials from the Wodonga racing club and the Towong Turf Club.

Members may be aware that the turf club at Towong traditionally had two race meetings a year, but under the previous Labor government one of those meetings was cruelly taken away from the Towong community and the Towong Turf Club. When you look at the history of Towong, you see that in the 1920s the turf club was robbed by that notorious villain Squizzy Taylor. Then of course it was robbed in the last decade, with a race meeting stolen away by the former Minister

for Racing, Rob Hulls, and the Labor government. That was an absolute disgrace and a real insult to the Towong community and the Towong Turf Club. But due to the excellent work of the member for Benambra, who lobbied me very hard and invited me up to the Towong Cup some years ago, between the two of us a promise was secured from the coalition prior to the 2010 state election that if it was returned to government, it would reinstate the second race meeting for the Towong community. We have delivered on that promise with a great meeting held on 31 December.

Indeed the *Corryong Courier* of 10 March 2011 says the following:

Towong Turf Club secretary Peter Miller said that the extra meeting would be a great boost to the local community.

The article directly quotes Mr Miller as follows:

‘We are over the moon that we have got this meeting back’, he said.

‘It will have a great flow-on effect for accommodation houses and other businesses as well as community groups and service clubs involved with the race meetings.

‘It has been great to see a couple of politicians follow through on their promises, and we thank Bill Tilley and Denis Naphthine for their efforts in regaining the meeting’.

That is what the community members said — they were pleased that they had politicians of the calibre of the member for Benambra, who made promises and delivered on them. We saw that with the great meeting on 31 December.

When I was in Wodonga last week meeting with representatives of the Towong Turf Club they raised in their discussions with the member for Benambra and me the need for improvements to be made to upgrade their track. Those improvements were outlined by the member for Benambra in his contribution. The member for Benambra talked to me immediately after that meeting and has talked to me since to see what we could do.

As I said, we met last week, and already the member for Benambra has delivered, because I am pleased to announce tonight that the coalition government will provide \$25 000, to be matched by \$25 000 in cash and in kind from the club, to undertake these important works to improve the surface of the track and to help drought-proof the track through a stormwater collection system. Water will flow into the club’s dam and be reused on the track to keep it in top condition. This will ensure that the track can attract quality fields for its two race meetings, it will help to deliver exciting racing and

better entertainment, and it will make the club more attractive to visitors and locals.

This club attracts an enormous number of visitors from the region and from those holidaying in the area. It has two great race meetings, and it deserves those race meetings. I want to congratulate the member for Benambra on his hard work for that club, and I want to congratulate the volunteers involved in the club. This is a great club. It is a great example of country racing and what country racing can do to boost the spirits of the community and deliver jobs and economic benefits to that community. We as a coalition government are pleased to work with the club on these track improvements. That is why I announce this \$25 000 grant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is adjourned until the next day of sitting.

House adjourned 5.10 p.m. until Tuesday, 1 May.

