

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Thursday, 24 May 2012

(Extract from book 7)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Premier and Minister for the Arts | The Hon. E. N. Baillieu, MP |
| Deputy Premier, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Bushfire Response, and Minister for Regional and Rural Development. | The Hon. P. J. Ryan, MP |
| Treasurer | The Hon. K. A. Wells, MP |
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| Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs | The Hon. H. F. Delahunty, MP |
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| Minister for Planning | The Hon. M. J. Guy, MLC |
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| Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship | The Hon. N. Kotsiras, MP |
| Minister for Housing, and Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development. | The Hon. W. A. Lovell, MLC |
| Minister for Corrections, Minister for Crime Prevention and Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission | The Hon. A. J. McIntosh, MP |
| Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Roads | The Hon. T. W. Mulder, MP |
| Minister for Ports, Minister for Major Projects, Minister for Regional Cities and Minister for Racing | The Hon. D. V. Napthine, MP |
| Minister for Gaming, Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Minister for Energy and Resources | The Hon. M. A. O'Brien, MP |
| Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. | The Hon. E. J. Powell, MP |
| Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Technology and Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry | The Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips, MLC |
| Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Youth Affairs | The Hon. R. Smith, MP |
| Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, and Minister for Water. | The Hon. P. L. Walsh, MP |
| Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women's Affairs and Minister for Community Services | The Hon. M. L. N. Wooldridge, MP |
| Cabinet Secretary | Mr D. J. Hodgett, MP |

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Barker, Mr Clark, Ms Green, Mr McIntosh, Mr Morris, Dr Napthine, Mr Nardella, Mr Pandazopoulos and Mr Walsh.

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

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Holding, Mr McIntosh, Mr Merlino, Dr Napthine and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik.

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.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella and Mr Watt. (*Council*): Mr O'Brien and Mr O'Donohue.

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Speaker: The Hon. K. M. SMITH

Deputy Speaker: Mrs C. A. FYFFE

Acting Speakers: Ms Beattie, Mr Blackwood, Mr Burgess, Ms Campbell, Mr Eren, Mr Languiller, Mr Morris, Mr Nardella, Mr Northe, Mr Pandazopoulos, Dr Sykes, Mr Thompson, Mr Tilley, Mrs Victoria and Mr Weller.

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The Hon. E. N. BAILLIEU

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party:

The Hon. LOUISE ASHER

Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. P. J. RYAN

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

| Member | District | Party | Member | District | Party |
|--|--------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie | Bendigo East | ALP | Lim, Mr Muy Hong | Clayton | ALP |
| Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael | Mulgrave | ALP | McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan | Murray Valley | Nats |
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| Beattie, Ms Elizabeth Jean | Yuroke | ALP | Morris, Mr David Charles | Mornington | LP |
| Blackwood, Mr Gary John | Narracan | LP | Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn | Polwarth | LP |
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| Brumby, Mr John Mansfield ¹ | Broadmeadows | ALP | Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio | Melton | ALP |
| Bull, Mr Timothy Owen | Gippsland East | Nats | Neville, Ms Lisa Mary | Bellarine | ALP |
| Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald | Hastings | LP | Newton-Brown, Mr Clement Arundel | Prahran | LP |
| 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 |
| Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan ² | Niddrie | ALP | O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony | Malvern | LP |
| Clark, Mr Robert William | Box Hill | LP | Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh | Tarneit | ALP |
| Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence | Mildura | Nats | Pandazopoulos, Mr John | Dandenong | ALP |
| D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana | Mill Park | ALP | Perera, Mr Jude | Cranbourne | ALP |
| Delahunty, Mr Hugh Francis | Lowan | Nats | Pike, Ms Bronwyn Jane ⁵ | Melbourne | ALP |
| Dixon, Mr Martin Francis | Nepean | LP | Powell, Mrs Elizabeth Jeanette | Shepparton | Nats |
| Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony | Narre Warren North | ALP | Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison | Northcote | ALP |
| Duncan, Ms Joanne Therese | Macedon | ALP | Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon | Mitcham | LP |
| Edwards, Ms Janice Maree | Bendigo West | ALP | Ryan, Mr Peter Julian | Gippsland South | Nats |
| Eren, Mr John Hamdi | Lara | ALP | Scott, Mr Robin David | Preston | ALP |
| Foley, Mr Martin Peter | Albert Park | ALP | Shaw, Mr Geoffrey Page | Frankston | LP |
| Fyffe, Mrs Christine Ann | Evelyn | LP | Smith, Mr Kenneth Maurice | Bass | LP |
| Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux | Brunswick | ALP | Smith, Mr Ryan | Warrandyte | LP |
| Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles | Mount Waverley | LP | Southwick, Mr David James | Caulfield | LP |
| Graley, Ms Judith Ann | Narre Warren South | ALP | Sykes, Dr William Everett | Benalla | Nats |
| Green, Ms Danielle Louise | Yan Yean | ALP | Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross | Sandringham | LP |
| Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn | Thomastown | ALP | Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose | Footscray | ALP |
| Helper, Mr Jochen | Ripon | ALP | Tilley, Mr William John | Benambra | LP |
| Hennessy, Ms Jill | Altona | ALP | Trezise, Mr Ian Douglas | Geelong | ALP |
| Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph | Eltham | ALP | Victoria, Mrs Heidi | Bayswater | LP |
| Hodgett, Mr David John | Kilsyth | LP | Wakeling, Mr Nicholas | Ferntree Gully | LP |
| Holding, Mr Timothy James | Lyndhurst | ALP | Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay | Swan Hill | Nats |
| Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp | Ballarat East | ALP | Watt, Mr Graham Travis | Burwood | LP |
| Hulls, Mr Rob Justin ³ | Niddrie | ALP | Weller, Mr Paul | Rodney | Nats |
| Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes | Keilor | ALP | Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur | Scoresby | LP |
| Kairouz, Ms Marlene | Kororoit | ALP | Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling | Doncaster | LP |
| 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

⁵ Resigned 7 May 2012

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Thursday, 24 May 2012

The SPEAKER (Hon. Ken Smith) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion: removal

The SPEAKER — Order! Notices of motion 13 to 22 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Buses: Mill Park electorate

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 Baillieu government's cancellation of, and changes to, bus services in the north. In particular, we note:

1. reductions in these bus services have occurred without community consultation;
2. the changes have brought about significant inconvenience and additional travelling time for families who rely on buses for school, work, shops and medical appointments.

The petitioners therefore request that the Baillieu government immediately restores services where these inconveniences have been caused, and provides new investment for services to meet the needs of our growing community.

By Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) (2164 signatures).

Galvin Park Secondary College: 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 need for the state government to fully fund and modernise Galvin Park Secondary College (GPSC) as a matter of urgency.

In particular, we note:

1. due to poor design and high levels of rainfall inundating the school structure and in particular its roofing, many of GPSC's classrooms and facilities are uninhabitable;
2. student and teacher welfare is being compromised by a facility that is structurally unsound, poorly designed, has substantial amounts of asbestos in its floor, ceiling and walls that has been disturbed because of water

inundation and has high mould counts in many classrooms and common areas;

3. student education is being severely and adversely affected due to the need for off-site student relocation and the cancellation of classes for significant periods and the postponement of many school events/functions;
4. the school has had provisional improvement notices placed on 16 classrooms, including the library, music and science wings, making the school environment an occupational health and safety hazard.

The petitioners therefore request that the state government immediately commit to funding a complete rebuild and modernisation of GPSC at its existing location and further that in the interim the state government provide sufficient portable classrooms to offset any space lost from the school structures both as a consequence of the recent damage and during the complete rebuild and modernisation process.

By Mr PALLAS (Tarneit) (299 signatures).

Duncans Road, Werribee: traffic management

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 need for the state government to fund the construction of a full diamond interchange at Duncans Road, Werribee.

In particular, we note:

1. there are currently no on and off ramps on the Princes Freeway at Duncans Road for travellers to and from Geelong, which impacts on travel times and also the level of congestion within Werribee;
2. with developments like Riverwalk, Wyndham Harbour and the Werribee employment precinct, the area of Wyndham is growing at a rate of 8.8 per cent or 12 500 people per year;
3. with such growth, investment in infrastructure, such as a full diamond interchange at Duncans Road, is necessary to ensure amenity for commuters both local and those coming into the area for employment and tourism purposes;
4. the state government has not committed any funding to the Duncans Road interchange in its first budget and has given no indication that they intend to do so in 2012–13.

The petitioners therefore request that the state government immediately commit to funding for the planning and construction of a full diamond interchange at Duncans Road, Werribee.

By Mr PALLAS (Tarneit) (137 signatures).

Planning: Brunswick terminal station

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of the people of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the deep concern the recent action of the Minister

for Planning, Matthew Guy, and the Baillieu government in approving amendment C140 to the Moreland planning scheme, rezoning the site of the Brunswick terminal station and approving the building of an additional 66-kilovolt facility alongside the existing 22-kilovolt terminal.

The petitioners note:

the proposal was twice rejected by Moreland City Council as a part of the local planning process and the actions of the minister in rezoning the site have ridden roughshod over that process;

answers have been sought of the state government about significant unresolved questions about the health and safety of the redeveloped facility and the appropriate safety standard for such an industrial facility in a purely residential and environmentally sensitive area;

calls had been made of the state government to work with the power companies to fully explore other appropriate sites, specifically in an industrial setting, for the facility;

these significant questions and calls of the state government remain unanswered and unacted upon.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria urge the Baillieu government to reverse this decision, acknowledge the significant concerns of the local community and work with the energy companies involved to fully explore another appropriate site.

**By Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown)
(257 signatures).**

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Mill Park be considered next day of motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park).

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Thomastown be considered next day of motion of Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown).

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Conduct of 2010 Victorian state election

Mrs VICTORIA (Bayswater) presented report, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence.

Tabled.

Ordered that report and appendices be printed.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Auditor-General — Annual Plan 2012–13.

VICTORIAN AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Financial audit

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

That under section 17 of the Audit Act 1994 Mr Steven Bradby of Lawler Draper Dillon, chartered accountants, in Melbourne be appointed for three years:

- (1) to conduct the financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for the financial years ending 30 June 2012, 30 June 2013 and 30 June 2014;
- (2) in accordance with the terms and conditions and remuneration of a person appointed by the Parliament of Victoria pursuant to section 17 of the Audit Act 1994, as appended to the relevant tender brief in appendix 1 of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's *Report on the Appointment of a Person to Conduct the Financial Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office* under section 17 of the Audit Act 1994 (parliamentary paper no. 137, session 2010–12);
- (3) at the following maximum fixed fee levels of remuneration:
 - (a) \$32 600 (plus GST) for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2012;
 - (b) \$34 000 (plus GST) for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2013; and
 - (c) \$35 000 (plus GST) for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2014.

Motion agreed to.

Ordered that message be sent to Council seeking agreement to resolution.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

Membership

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

That Ms Allan be discharged from attendance on the Dispute Resolution Committee and that Mr Merlino be appointed in her place.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 5 June 2012.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Disability services: national insurance scheme

Ms KNIGHT (Ballarat West) — When I am asked what the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) means to me, it is the assurance that it will be there to provide the services that will be required by my son long after I am dead and buried and that the provision of these services will not be determined by where he lives, how he incurred his disability, how strongly the people around him advocate on his behalf or any other combination of events or experiences but determined by his need.

When I think over what I have missed the most in being the mother of a child, now an adult, with a disability, it has to be the loss of being his mum. I feel I have spent most of his life being his carer, his advocate, his case manager and his worker. I will never forget the overwhelming sense of relief that was felt by me and other carers at the announcement by federal Labor that the NDIS would be funded. It was such an amazing experience being at Federation Square with thousands of other people all united in the same cause: to give those with disabilities dignity, justice, adequate services and a fair go.

However, we need absolute assurance. The mixed messages of the federal opposition, which provide no definitive answer on a financial commitment to this scheme, are cruel and unfair. I urge the Baillieu government to appeal to its federal counterparts to absolutely and unequivocally support the NDIS. We have waited long enough, and now it is time, but we require all governments at every level and of all persuasions to be absolutely committed to valuing and reforming the lives of people with disabilities and those who love and care for them.

Budget: Nepean electorate

Mr DIXON (Minister for Education) — This year's state budget was positive news for the people of the

Nepean electorate. They understand the mess that Labor left, and they understand the current international and national economic issues. They also understand there are no easy fixes and improvement will take time. Specifically Rosebud Primary School was very happy to know it can complete the planning up to the tender documentation stage of its modernisation project. The remaining funding will be delivered as promised in this term of government. The \$40 million upgrade of Frankston Hospital's emergency department has also been welcomed. A number of local emergency cases end up at Frankston, and a larger, more efficient emergency department will see more ambulances freed up and therefore better response times.

We also welcome further funding for the expansion of the A-class Boneo treatment plant and the completion of the upgrade of the eastern treatment plant to produce A-class effluent. The upgrade will free up millions of litres of water for reuse and go a long way to improving conditions at the Boags Rocks outfall.

Education: excellence awards

Mr DIXON — On another matter, it was an honour to be part of the Victorian Education Excellence Awards last Friday night. We celebrate the achievements of many teachers, principals, teams and community members who have excelled in their field and made significant contributions to the high standard of government school education in Victoria. The department, my team and I have much to learn from them, and we look forward to supporting them over the coming years in their important work.

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) — It is a sad and worrying time for workers and their families in Bellarine and Geelong with the announcement this week that Qantas has cut 113 jobs from its maintenance services at Avalon, with more jobs to go. The news is a terrible blow to all those women and men who have been loyal members of the Qantas workforce and a blow to Geelong. The future for them and their families is now uncertain; for many of them finding a new job is going to be extremely difficult.

This week the Premier told the house that he should be congratulated for saving the jobs at Avalon. I am pretty sure the 113 workers will not be congratulating the Premier, nor will the remaining workers, as the only commitment to ongoing jobs at Avalon is for the short to medium term whilst Qantas maintains its 747 fleet. This is not a win but a short reprieve. The government has also failed to outline any strategies to respond to

this announcement — no strategy to assist these workers and no strategy to assist with retraining. In fact the recent massive funding cuts to TAFE, and particularly the Gordon TAFE, of around \$14 million will make the job even harder to provide retraining opportunities for these workers. The Premier must now meet with those Qantas workers and outline to them and the community of Geelong what this government is now going to do to support them and other jobs in Geelong. My thoughts are with the workers and their families who are currently facing an uncertain future.

Alan Campbell

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Community Services) — I speak today about Alan Frazer Campbell, a distinguished Australian, a kind gentleman and an East Doncaster resident, who passed away on 28 April 2012, aged 87. Alan was born in 1925 in Murwillumbah in New South Wales and at 19 enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force, training as a radio operator and air gunner. Awarded the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal, he achieved the rank of leading aircraftman. After the war ended, Mr Campbell married Myra Parker, and they went on to have four children: Bruce, John, Lloyd and Carol.

Alan worked in a number of roles, including at International Harvester, Gillette and General Motors Holden before he obtained a formal qualification in accounting and went on to work at the Royal Women's Hospital and for 12 years at the then Camberwell City Council. Mr Campbell actively served in many voluntary roles during his life, as president of the south-east Gippsland district football league, on the Dandenong Technical School council and as a district leader for the scout association. He joined the Box Hill RSL in 1997, transferring to his local branch of Doncaster in 2004, where he was elected president, a role he served in for three years from 2007.

I first met Alan when I was a candidate for the seat of Doncaster in 2006 and got to know and respect him over the past five years. He had a great idea that a learning experience for young people and a helping hand for the ageing membership would be to develop a partnership with the Doncaster Secondary College so that students could run the Remembrance Day service, a thing that continues today and will always be his legacy. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife and family.

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

Higher education: TAFE funding

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Dandenong) — I rise today to highlight the serious concerns about the massive cutback of some one-third of its funding that Chisholm TAFE is facing on top of the \$4 million funding cuts by the state government last year. Chisholm TAFE is the biggest TAFE in Victoria with six campuses, including, as you would know, Speaker, those at Wonthaggi and Dromana, and a dedicated teaching workforce. Many of those teachers have deliberately chosen to work in the TAFE sector to support people who are not going to go to university, those wanting to make their lives better and women coming back to the workforce. They help them to build up their skills and confidence and get them job ready.

These massive cutbacks are going to hurt the low-income communities of the south-eastern suburbs quite severely. Of course we will see a whole lot of courses disappear, and it is shocking that some comments from government members imply that these are Mickey Mouse courses, because there are many important courses being run that help bring people back into the workforce and make people's lives so much better. So many teachers will lose their jobs and so many courses will disappear. There will be massive increases in student fees for the courses that are left.

We have had a huge investment in public infrastructure in campuses like Dandenong, Cranbourne, Berwick and Frankston, as well as others. This infrastructure will be underutilised; it will be lying dormant because of this government — —

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

Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service LanguageLink: board

Mr KOTSIRAS (Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) — I wish to place on the record my appreciation for the work done by the members of the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service LanguageLink board whose terms have expired. As members would be aware, VITS LanguageLink is a state-owned interpreting and translation service provider. It specialises in communicating with Victorian multicultural communities in over 100 languages. It is renowned for its expertise in all facets of interpreting and translating, including onsite, telephone and conference interpreting and multilingual desktop publishing. It also provides specialist services such as training in cross-cultural communication, multilingual information services and multicultural

consultancies. It has been active in providing a valuable service to all Victorians over the years.

I therefore place on record my gratitude for and appreciation of Mr Alex Andrianopoulos, the former chair, who has served on the board since 2006. Alex showed passion, understanding and commitment, ensuring that the organisation remained professional while meeting the needs of all Victorians, especially newly arrived migrants and refugees. The other board members who were appointed by the former government are Ms Voula Messimeri-Kianidis, Ms Marina Williams-Wynn, Ms Miriam Suss, Mr Grahame Leonard, Mr Ozan Ibrism and Mr Trevor Tappenden.

E. J. Whitten Bridge: safety barriers

Ms HUTCHINS (Keilor) — I rise to highlight the urgent need for public safety barriers to be erected on the E. J. Whitten Bridge, located on the Western Ring Road on the edge of my electorate. Unfortunately on 17 March one of my constituents committed suicide by jumping off this bridge. This is a devastating tragedy not only for this young man but also for his family and the wider community. His sister Marijano Brekalo has been campaigning for barriers on this bridge since her brother's death. She has written to me, VicRoads, the Minister for Roads and the local newspapers. In a recent letter to me she wrote:

It is too late for my family. We will endure this pain forever but further deaths on this bridge are preventable. Let's not let more families feel this pain.

The E. J. Whitten Bridge will be upgraded as part of the M80 ring-road upgrade. I urge VicRoads and the Minister for Roads to take the request for public safety barriers seriously and include them in the final design. I also call for those barriers to be installed before the upgrade in 2014.

The issue of suicide is not limited to this one case; unfortunately it is a real issue across the state and particularly in the western suburbs. I recently spoke to some Metro Trains Melbourne workers on the Sydenham line who indicated to me that every other day there is a suicide or attempted suicide along that train line. I urge the government to ensure that proper services are provided.

Beaconhills College, Berwick campus: technology building

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — I rise to congratulate Beaconhills College, and in particular its Berwick campus, which recently opened its new technology

building. The new building will assist young people at that school to work on a range of hands-on skills, including in technologies like laser cutting and in working with their hands in the tool shop. It is a great piece of work, and you see the fantastic foyer when you walk in. Credit should go to Tony Sheumack, the headmaster of Beaconhills College, and Jenny Williams, head of that campus.

The facility cost \$3.8 million. It is an example of what a school can achieve if it is allowed to manage money, if we understand that a principal can deal with money and build a facility for students and for the future. I suggest that the federal government have a look at this building to gain an understanding that you can get facilities that will be there for the long term built within a good budget, unlike the federal government's Building the Education Revolution projects which cost many thousands of dollars per square metre, and a lot of which were sheds or buildings that the schools did not want.

The buildings put in place by Beaconhills College, involving work with its management, its builders and within its community, have provided a facility that is not good just for now but is something that will be there well and truly into the future. From attending the school and speaking to some of its students it is evident to me that what has been achieved already through this building has been fantastic.

Greensborough College: funding

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — I raise again in this house the complete failure of the Baillieu government to support the Greensborough College community in my electorate. I have had cause to speak about Greensborough College many times in this house, and I am very disappointed that the Baillieu government has snubbed the school community yet again. Because of the college's growing student population, the previous government included this school in its Victorian schools plan so that it would be completely rebuilt. The announcement was made back in 2010. However, everyone was shell-shocked when the new Liberal-Nationals Baillieu government scrapped the Victorian schools plan which had seen over 550 schools rebuilt, renovated or upgraded over the previous four years.

Greensborough College was one of the Baillieu government's first victims when the Minister for Education cancelled any plans to rebuild the school shortly after taking office. In the lead-up to the last budget, the school asked the government to provide funding only for planning work, but the government

has again turned its back on Greensborough College. To rub salt into the wound this school, along with other local secondary colleges such as Bundoora Secondary College and Macleod College, was hard hit by the government's cuts to the Victorian certificate of applied learning program and along with all of the primary schools in my area will be hard hit by the Baillieu government's cuts to the School Start bonus and the education maintenance allowance. The combined impact of all these decisions on working families is significant and will be compounded by the cuts to the TAFE sector.

I call on the Minister for Education to apologise to the Greensborough College community for snubbing them and to take a stronger stand for schools like Greensborough College in next year's budget discussions. Families in my area, like everywhere else, want their kids to have the education and skills to get a good job, something the Baillieu government just does not get.

Melbourne Museum: ancient Mesopotamia exhibition

Mrs VICTORIA (Bayswater) — Yet again the team at the Melbourne Museum has staged a world-class exhibition in this, the arts capital of Australia. The exhibition, entitled *The Wonders of Ancient Mesopotamia*, is an array of beautiful and intriguing artefacts which explain much about why we do things the way we do in modern society — for example, why we have a 60-second minute and a 60-minute hour. The representatives of the British Museum who assisted in this collaborative project expressed how delighted they were with the Victorian-created digital and static displays. The local input is something to be proud of. Congratulations to all involved.

Rotary Club of Bayswater: art show

Mrs VICTORIA — For 38 years the Rotary Club of Bayswater has brought quality art to the eastern suburbs of Melbourne with its annual art show. This year the president, Neill Sheldon, and his team of dedicated helpers put on a fantastic fundraiser, with profits being donated to Irabina. The show takes a full 12 months of planning, and the professionalism and dedication of all involved is evident in the high standard of presentations and the entries. Well done to everyone!

Knox Hungarian Senior Citizens Club: celebration

Mrs VICTORIA — In the lead-up to Mothers' Day I was delighted to be able to share a wonderful celebration with the Knox Hungarian Senior Citizens group. Under the nurturing and very capable leadership of Les Stevens, the 100-plus attendees enjoyed the most fantastic goulash, accompanied by lots of singing and even dancing. I thank Les and everyone who made me feel very welcome on this terrific occasion.

Carbon tax: economic impact

Mrs VICTORIA — Members of the state parliamentary Labor Party should hang their heads in collective shame for not standing up for Victorian jobs by urging their federal counterparts to stop the introduction of the carbon tax. Extra costs are the last thing my local Bayswater district businesses and families need during these challenging financial times.

***Greeks in the Far Orient — A Remarkable History*: book launch**

Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) — Early in May I attended the launch in Melbourne by the Honourable John Brumby and the Honourable Theo Theophanous of the book entitled *Greeks in the Far Orient — A Remarkable History* written by Professor Anastasios M. Tamis. The book was also launched in Sydney by the Honourable Bob Hawke. The book is a 698-page volume containing 420 unpublished photographs depicting Greek immigration and settlement in the far east. In his preface to the book, which is now available in English, Professor Spiros Vryonis writes that the primary aim of the publication is to narrate and analyse the history of Greek and Cypriot settlement in countries of the Far Orient and China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines from 1875 to date.

Professor Tamis of the University of Notre Dame Australia, conducted research for over five years, from 2005 to 2010, covering 12 countries. The author and his team of researchers identified, categorised, documented and analysed thousands of documents and collected over 2000 photographs from the period 1890 to 2010. They held over 400 interviews with important diaspora figures, pioneer settlers and their descendants in the host countries, which resulted in the production of over 3000 pages of oral history. An official presentation of the book in Australia is scheduled for 4 November, followed by presentations in China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, the USA and Canada. Former Prime Minister R. J. Hawke characterised the book as 'an epic

achievement and a labour of love' and congratulated Professor Tamis on his work and his determination to conduct pioneer research based mainly on oral history.

Interchange Central Gippsland: volunteers

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — Last weekend I had the opportunity to attend Interchange Central Gippsland's volunteer appreciation event, which coincided with National Volunteers Week. This was an opportunity to acknowledge and give public thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers for the contributions and support they provide to young Gippslanders with a disability and their families. There were many service certificates awarded on the day to a loyal band of volunteers, and in particular I acknowledge Young Volunteer of the Year, Shantal Kelly, and Adult Volunteer of the Year, Trevor Waite, who, along with his wife, Yvonne, is well respected in the community for services in the disability sector. I say a big well done to Deb Knight from Interchange Central Gippsland for hosting such a wonderful event and also to Louise McCluskey and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria team for their sponsorship and support.

Yinnar Young Farmers: reunion ball

Mr NORTHE — I also had the great privilege of attending the Yinnar Young Farmers reunion ball last Saturday evening, which was an opportunity to honour and thank the original founders of the Yinnar Young Farmers. I commend the likes of Sally Gee, Dave Smith and Tony Lawless for organising such a successful event — —

Mr Weller — Great people!

Mr NORTHE — Great people. It was wonderful to see many past representatives of the Yinnar Young Farmers present including inaugural president, Marion O'Hara, and secretary Des Bennett, along with the legendary Jack Vinall and Lloyd Wicks.

Victorian Young Farmers: funding

Mr NORTHE — The coalition government, which understands the importance of the Victorian Young Farmers organisation, has reinstated financial support to Victorian Young Farmers to the tune of \$400 000 over the next four years to assist Victorian Young Farmers to develop social and professional networks for young farmers and rural youth.

Schools: education maintenance allowance

Ms DUNCAN (Macedon) — I rise to condemn the government's cuts to the education maintenance

allowance (EMA). Members will know that the EMA came in two parts — one part went to low-income families and the other part went to schools. It is this school component that has been slashed. I have spoken to a number of staff members at schools in the Macedon electorate, and they are deeply concerned about the impact this will have on their ability to support low-income families.

At many schools 50 per cent of the families who send their children to those schools are in receipt of this allowance — for example, at Sunbury College the EMA was used to pay for a range of resources, including school diaries and handbooks, provided to students from low-income families. Part of the EMA was also used to pay for subject materials for low-income families. These charges vary from subject to subject — for example, charges in relation to woodwork vary from \$25 to \$45, while outdoor education costs \$300. Low-income families who cannot afford these charges had them paid or subsidised by the EMA. Theoretically all these families will now have to meet the full costs, and we know many will not be able to do so.

What are the students expected to do? This government does not care what they do — the students can stay at home and miss excursions or not have the ability to enrol in a particular subject or the school will continue to try to support these families and find funds from other areas. We know this will ultimately be unsustainable. Some schools will lose over \$200 000 per year, depending on the size of the school and the number of students from low-income families who attend the school. The government is cutting the funds of families and schools who need them the most.

On top of cuts to Victorian certificate of applied learning coordination and TAFE — —

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

Former government: financial management

Mr WELLER (Rodney) — I wish to remind the people of Victoria about the recent blatant stunt by the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament as well as his appalling record while in charge of our state finances. In my electorate of Rodney, he damaged our community by saying no to a much-needed new hospital in Echuca. When the Labor Party was in government it surrendered \$5.6 million of Building the Education Revolution money for an important school merger of Echuca West Primary School, Echuca South Primary School and the Echuca Specialist School.

While in charge of the state finances the Leader of the Opposition also ignored the deteriorating state of our roads, leaving us with terrible driving conditions across our electorate and jeopardising the road safety of all. The state was left in a financial mess after the Labor government chalked up numerous instances of overspending, leaving us with no money for important projects, many of which were implemented and then abandoned by the Leader of the Opposition and his government.

Incidents of overspending totalling some billions have crippled the state — —

Dr Sykes — Billions!

Mr WELLER — Billions. They have crippled the state's economy. There is \$1.82 million a day being spent on the desalination plant, which will not be used for years. Eleven days worth of funding of the desalination plant could easily fund the \$20 million school merger in my electorate. Adding to the list of overspending are the myki system, which is \$350 million over budget, and the relocation of the Melbourne Markets, which is \$300 million over budget.

The people of my electorate need more than just stunts. Victorians will get action while we work hard to repair the damage left by the Labor government and the opposition leader. We will look to take action on issues that will benefit our region and this state.

Victorian certificate of applied learning: funding

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — The Baillieu government has set our young people up for further unemployment and longer jobless queues. In last year's budget the Baillieu government cut \$48 million from the VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) program. Even after the terrible impact that has had on our young people, this year's budget has failed to reinstate VCAL coordination funding. Narre Warren South P-12 College, the largest VCAL provider in the state, has lost \$126 000 from its VCAL program.

Last week I picked up the local paper, and there was one of the most breathtaking acts of hypocrisy I have seen from any politician. The Minister for Education, who still spins the line that there have been no funding cuts to VCAL, was posing and presenting awards to VCAL students from the Narre Warren South P-12 College. Outstanding students Lachlan Warner and Nathan Seeber deserve recognition for sure — my congratulations — as do their teachers for the support

they give the students so they can be their best, but I bet the staff and students at the college would have liked a cheque from the minister for the \$126 000 he has robbed from their school budget.

Higher education: TAFE funding

Ms GRALEY — After limiting young people's options at secondary school, the government now is taking the axe to our TAFEs. In this budget the Baillieu government has slashed \$290 million from the TAFE sector. This has threatened the viability of many TAFE institutes, with directors unable to say whether their TAFEs will stay open. They have been left with little choice but to sack staff, cancel courses, close campuses or massively increase fees. Funding for Chisholm TAFE, in my electorate, will be cut by \$25 million. The members of the Liberal-Nationals government should hang their heads in shame for their attacks on the education and the job futures of our young people. I say to the minister that the disingenuous media opportunities do not help.

Braeside Park: community garden and nursery open day

Ms WREFORD (Mordialloc) — Last Sunday I attended the community garden and nursery open day at Braeside Park, which included a barbecue for the Friends of Braeside Park. The friends do a magnificent job. I thank all the friends, particularly Bev Bancroft, Judith Sise and Dorothea Kassell, for educating me on the local plants, as well as president Margaret Hunter, secretary Elsie Anderson, Bev as treasurer and ranger Des Lucas.

Benevolent Association of Nafpaktians: Mother's Day lunch

Ms WREFORD — Last Sunday I also attended the Benevolent Association of Nafpaktians Mother's Day lunch. It included the opening of a new \$35 000 floor by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship. I want to thank everyone at the association for their hospitality and their excellent work day to day, particularly the president, Bill Prappas.

Dingley Village Community Bank: 10th anniversary

Ms WREFORD — I recently attended the Bendigo Bank's Dingley Village Community Bank 10th anniversary celebration. The community bank handed out \$200 000 in grants to local community groups. What a fantastic effort! The beneficiaries included Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre,

Dingley Village Community Advice Bureau, Christ Church Dingley, Kingswood Primary School, Dingley Kindergarten Centres, Dingley Sports and Recreation Club, the parents association of St Marks Primary School, the Abbeyfield Society of Dingley Village, Dingley Village Historical Society, the Little Villagers Child Care, the Salvation Army Kingston Gardens community church, Springvale Benevolent Society, the Australian Welsh Male Choir, the challenge grant 2020 committee, the Springvale and District Netball Association and the Dingley Tennis Club. Well done to the community bank.

Higher education: TAFE funding

Mr LIM (Clayton) — I rise to lament the Baillieu government's savage \$290 million cuts to our TAFE system, which will cost 2000 jobs and hundreds of courses. The Victorian economy is going backwards under this government. We have a skills shortage and need to be providing more training opportunities. TAFE campuses in Victoria play an extremely important role in providing opportunities for Victorians to up-skill, to further their education or to gain a trade certificate so they can access more highly skilled and better paid jobs.

These funding cutbacks fly in the face of the Council of Australian Governments agreement signed in April this year with the federal government and will brutally affect the operation of the successful local campuses of Holmesglen and Chisholm, used by many young people in my Clayton electorate. I wonder what the members for Mount Waverley, Bentleigh, Mordialloc, Carrum and Frankston have to say in supporting such savage cuts. They are indefensible, and the minister responsible needs to explain how he accepted the budget cuts while the government is still holding out its hands for the additional federal funding as per the agreement reached just last April.

It is shameful. Students, parents, teachers and employers are outraged by these cuts. Everyone is outraged by these cuts except members of the Liberal and Nationals parties. I call on members of these parties to support their constituents by demanding — —

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

Hon. William Kaye

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — With profound sadness I note the passing of the Honourable William Kaye, AO, QC, who died on 12 May. A graduate of Melbourne University in arts and law, Bill

Kaye saw active service during World War II as a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy, serving on both HMAS *Warrego* and HMAS *Cowra*. Returning from war service, he signed the Victorian Bar roll in October 1946. He rapidly developed an extensive practice and a reputation as a formidable advocate.

Bill Kaye also participated in a number of important inquiries, in particular the West Gate Bridge royal commission and the board of inquiry into allegations of corruption in the Victoria Police — the so called abortion inquiry — of which he was chair. He served a number of years on the Victorian Bar Council, ultimately as its chairman. He was president of the Australian Bar Association and an executive member of the Law Council of Australia before his elevation to the Victorian Supreme Court.

Justice Kaye served with distinction on the Supreme Court for 19 years. His Honour continued to serve his community, taking leadership roles in several bodies, from Monash University and the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists right through to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I extend my sincere condolences to his wife, Henrietta, and to his extensive and loving family on the passing of a very great, exemplary and honourable man. Judge, long life to your family.

Chandler Highway: bridge upgrade

Ms RICHARDSON (Northcote) — Chandler Highway bridge is a significant bottleneck that has been consistently ranked in traffic surveys as one of Melbourne's most troublesome congestion points. Residents in my electorate are particularly frustrated by the delays it causes, as are public transport users — particularly those on the SmartBus route into the city, who are delayed by traffic from the freeway exit. Cyclists and pedestrians have all had enough of this significant pinch point. Under Labor plans to duplicate the heritage-listed bridge were completed, and the community was consulted every step of the way about the best way to lessen congestion. While calls for an upgrade to the bridge have been consistent, the announcement by Amcor that it would vacate and sell its land in Alphington highlighted the urgency of these works.

As we know, major infrastructure projects have either been canned or ground to a halt under this lazy and incompetent Liberal government. Chandler Highway bridge is just one such project — no matter that it impacts immeasurably on the congestion problems in Melbourne. Contrast this decision with Liberal members' insatiable desire for studies and

consultancies, and you are left in no doubt that this government and the Minister for Public Transport in particular are simply not up to the job of fixing Melbourne's congestion woes. Put simply, we could have duplicated the bridge on Chandler Highway at least three times over with all the money the Minister for Public Transport has spent on consultancies. It would not be so bad if the minister were actually doing something and building something following all the studies he has commissioned, but he will not even commit to works when his own studies recommend proceeding. Unfortunately while this minister is doing more studies than a fourth-year medical student, time is being wasted and the community is being frustrated by his incompetence.

Murray Goulburn Co-operative: job losses

Mr McCURDY (Murray Valley) — I continue to work with the Moira Shire Council, which has acted promptly to assist Cobram employees who are facing retrenchment following the announcement of job cuts at Murray Goulburn Co-operative. The job losses may take up to \$3 million from the local economy. Moira has acted to establish a response plan to soften the impact through counselling and job matching. In a proactive move, seminars with job counsellors and Centrelink officers to identify skills have been arranged.

Floodstock 2012

Mr McCURDY — It was a celebration of community spirit when the flood-ravaged communities of Moira shire came together last weekend to share experiences at Floodstock 2012 at the Numurkah town hall. More than 200 photographs submitted by local residents for the flood photography competition were on display, with 15 of the photos enlarged and framed for a silent auction with proceeds going to flood relief. Many residents are still facing a long and painful flood recovery process, and Floodstock 2012 provided a way for the community to recognise this.

Lake Mulwala: Carp-O-Mania

Mr McCURDY — One of the biggest problems in our waterways, the European carp, was highlighted at the great carp carnival, Carp-O-Mania, at Lake Mulwala. The carnival was organised by the Murray Catchment Management Authority as a novel way of showing people the problems carp and other pest fish cause in the waterways of the Murray system.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee: flood mitigation hearing

Mr McCURDY — Last week's public hearing in Numurkah on flood mitigation infrastructure was attended by 150 people. It is clear that both individual and community flood plans are needed. I was grateful to the parliamentary committee for coming to hear and see firsthand the issues and emotions arising from the floods. I thank committee members for listening to our communities.

APPROPRIATION (2012/2013) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of Mr WELLS (Treasurer).

Mr HOWARD (Ballarat East) — When I started my contribution last night I was talking about my distress at the cutting of the education maintenance allowance, which is clearly going to hurt low-income families across my electorate and across the state. It will put schools that have a high number of education maintenance allowance students in their student bases under great difficulty.

I am also very distressed about the axing of the first home owner bonus, which benefited so many young couples across my electorate over a number of years. Now young couples who would have otherwise received this bonus will not, meaning that they will have to wait a lot longer before they can get into their first home. It also means a disruption to the home construction industry in my electorate. Clearly this bonus was benefiting regional Victoria, with its extra funding for regional Victorians. Again we will see not only no stimulus to our economy but also a loss of jobs in the construction sector.

The other thing I want to focus on is the cuts to the Department of Primary Industries, which will see the DPI office in Kyneton, which is part of my electorate, close. The people of Kyneton are quite rightly very distressed about this. They are starting to remember back to the last time the coalition government was in office and it started to cut services in regional Victoria. This seems to be just another start to more cuts.

I have to say that this budget has no good news for my electorate. It leaves me very distressed about the year ahead for many families across the Ballarat East electorate.

Dr SYKES (Benalla) — As a child I enjoyed having stories read to me. One that I particularly remember, which is relevant to my presentation today, is an Aesop fable titled *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, and it goes like this:

In a field one summer's day a grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

'Why not come and chat with me', said the grasshopper, 'instead of toiling and moiling in that way?'

'I'm helping to lay up food for the winter', said the ant, 'and recommend you to do the same'.

'Why bother about winter?' said the grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present.' But the ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

If members of the now opposition had read that when they were in government, then Victoria would not have been in the financial mess it was when the coalition came into government. Just like the grasshopper, the Labor government frivolously wasted taxpayers money during the good times and failed to prepare for the tough times. The Labor government spent more money than it received year in, year out, funding its lavish lifestyle by increasing our debt. Our debt — which had been reined in by the previous coalition government, which inherited a mess from the Cain and Kirner governments — blew out from somewhere under \$5 billion. The debt had been reined in to less than \$5 billion, but under the frivolous Brumby and Bracks Labor governments that debt increased to something like \$20 billion and was on track to get to \$60 billion. That was not sustainable.

The Labor government also increased the public service at a rate in excess of 5 per cent a year when the population was increasing at a rate of 3 per cent per year. That is not sustainable. Like the grasshopper, the Labor government did not understand our seasons. Under the Labor governments the Department of Treasury and Finance repeatedly assumed for budgetary purposes that the drought would break. This resulted in overestimates of income from agriculture and a slow response to the needs of country communities, which were under enormous pressure during the tough years.

This approach led to a panic decision by the Labor government to break a 2006 election promise not to build a north-south pipeline, and of course it built the

massive desalination plant. It built both of these projects in great haste and at great expense. These failings contributed significantly to the financial state Victoria was in when we came into government.

Under the leadership of the current Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer we are setting about fixing the mess. We are also grappling at this time with diminishing income because of a global financial credit crunch and the adjustment of GST revenue coming back to Victoria, which has left us substantially worse off than in times gone by. Under all of these trying circumstances the Treasurer has delivered a responsible budget which provides a firm foundation for Victoria to survive the tough times and to rebound when the world and national economies pick up.

I now turn to a Benalla electorate perspective on the budget. The Benalla electorate has a small number of line items in the budget, which we are very pleased about. In particular we have had announcements of upgrades to the Country Fire Authority sheds at Eildon and Boho, and they will be much appreciated. I should say in relation to Boho that we are also looking to incorporate some Regional Growth Fund money, from the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, to provide some additions to the Boho fire shed so that there can be greater community use of that facility. Greater community amenity will be provided by having meeting rooms at the fire shed. That is the coalition government working for the benefit of and protecting people during periods of fire danger and also by providing a community venue for small communities.

I am particularly pleased that we are able to get \$500 000 over two years for the Mansfield Autism Statewide Services travelling teacher program. The program is much appreciated by parents throughout regional Victoria who have children with autism. These travelling teachers go out and live with the family for a few days and work with the family, the school and the broader community to help those people — as a group, as a village, raising a child — to do the best they can to ensure that the young child can live and enjoy life to their full potential. I am particularly pleased that the government is able to give that \$500 000. I know Simone Reeves, Jenny Cleeland and all the other hardworking people at Mansfield Autism Statewide Services are very grateful for that money. There will be \$1 million going to the Moyhu sewerage project, which will be particularly beneficial.

I put these budgetary announcements, the one-day-in-May announcements, in the context of the announcements I have been able to make in my electorate over the past six months. I am talking about

\$25 million worth of programs coming through to the Benalla electorate. They include a \$300 000 grant towards the upgrading of the Avenel football and netball facilities. A similar amount is going to the Mansfield community gathering place. Something like \$90 000 is going to Maingamp for a community park project. Over \$2 million will go to Mansfield Adult Continuing Education's program to continue to provide education for our young people. Mansfield Bowls Club will receive \$100 000. For the Shire of Alpine there have been announcements of over \$600 000 for infrastructure upgrades on Mount Buffalo and a commitment of \$500 000 towards developing a plan that will ensure a sustainable future for the Mount Buffalo Chalet. The list goes on.

The critical thing is that the Liberal-Nationals coalition is delivering to our constituents in regional Victoria day in day out. Since the budget we have been able to make further announcements. Just recently at Mansfield I announced there will be \$50 000 to support the provision of education opportunities for young people in the Mansfield area so they can attain units required for tertiary qualifications that will enable them later to go to Melbourne to places such as RMIT to complete tertiary qualifications or in some cases to use technology to complete qualifications through distance learning.

Only last week I was also pleased to go to Bright to announce a grant of around \$30 000 for the Bright and Myrtleford community education centres. This is a small amount of money, yes, but it is being used wisely by those community education centres for targeted training. They have identified that in the alpine valleys there are employment opportunities in the aged-care industry and the snow industry in particular. The training courses they are looking at providing are in aged care and the responsible serving of alcohol for people gaining employment at the alpine resorts during winter and in the river valleys during summer, spring and autumn. There is a course in what they call snow tech, which trains people to work on the ski lifts and related activities out there in the alpine resorts.

A similar amount of money, \$20 000, is going to Mount Beauty for the Mount Beauty community centre to provide continuing education. Just recently at Benalla we announced there will be \$75 000 to assist Benalla Rural City Council in its endeavours to support local businesses and attract new businesses with the intention of creating more jobs in regional Victoria. The coalition is delivering for regional Victoria, and I am pleased to be part of that.

That said, yes, there is more to be done and, yes, we have a need for some significant projects in the electorate of Benalla. For example, at Benalla we need a \$40 million Benalla regeneration project. Forty million dollars is something like 20 or 25 days of the \$2 million we are paying each and every day to fund the desal plant. Twenty days of desal plant payments would pay for the Benalla regeneration project. At Bright there is a need for an aged-care and hospital facility upgrade — a \$30 million to \$40 million project. That could be funded 20 times over with what was spent on the north-south pipeline that now lies idle! Again, that is gross waste.

The Mansfield P-12 school needs an upgrade of the order of \$10 million or \$20 million, and Myrtleford P-12 College needs a similar amount of money. That could be funded from the interest on the billions of dollars that were wasted on myki, HealthSMART and all the other projects that the Auditor-General and many other independent people have identified. One that is particularly galling is that in the shire of Strathbogie there are many people on limited income, but no public hospital beds are available. For the sum of something like \$200 000 a year we could provide the much-needed public beds for the public patients in the Strathbogie shire.

The amount of \$200 000 is what the contractors and employees down at the desal plant get each and every year for activities that would be judged by many people as being of questionable productivity. For the wage package of one person working on that desal plant we could have a delivery of public beds for our people in the Strathbogie shire. That reflects just how outrageously the previous Labor government wasted the rivers of gold that flowed into the Victorian economy independent of its mismanagement.

I turn to my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Primary Industries. I wish to congratulate the minister for sharpening the focus and refocusing on our activities in agriculture. He is focusing on biosecurity, which is absolutely fundamental for the wellbeing of our agricultural industries and overall economy. It is well known that Victorian agriculture is a major contributor to Victorian income; I am talking about of the order of \$8 billion each year. We must protect those industries from incursions by foreign pests — not the local ones we have sitting on the other side of the house but foreign, exotic pests. Also in the focus of the minister are plans to improve productivity and double production over the next 20 years. That is eminently achievable. If we take the knowledge that exists, the knowledge that is being applied by our leading-edge

farmers, and top that up through our focused research efforts, we will enable increased productivity.

We are also going to drive and support increased profitability. Those two factors together will make the environment encouraging so young people will come into agriculture. We sorely need to have younger people taking over. It is a fantastic lifestyle, and there are myriad career opportunities. We want to make sure that young people recognise that. Of course we are going to protect our environment along the way, because profitable, productive farming goes hand in hand with sustainable farming practices.

We are also focusing on addressing the wild dog problem which the Labor government allowed to languish and which caused great animal cruelty and grief to the people of north-east Victoria and Gippsland and their livestock. We are also working hard to ensure that our something like 700 000 recreational fishers benefit from the \$16 million going into recreational fishing, a lot of which will go into restocking our rivers and streams. That is encouraging people to come to regional Victoria, as is our approach to game management. We are going to put in place a game management committee that will advise the minister, and we are going to deliver on improved game opportunities in north-east and regional Victoria — something that the Labor government failed to do. We are going to ensure that game hunting becomes another plank of tourism that will grow wealth and create employment opportunities in regional Victoria.

The coalition government has come in and we have inherited a mess from the outgoing Labor government. These are tough economic times, but we have delivered a responsible budget of which I am very proud.

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) — Under the Baillieu government education has gone backwards, transport has gone backwards and job numbers have gone backwards. This is a horror budget for students and their parents, for commuters and for people who want to work and earn an income both individually and for their families. The budget has failed to deliver, and it has comprehensively failed to deliver on the mantra that the Baillieu team took to the election, which was ‘We will fix the problems’. In fact they have created more unemployment in this state than we have seen for over a decade.

The topics I want to cover are education, transport and jobs. Education was the Labor government’s top priority, and our infrastructure funding was based on independent assessment by public servants within the department. What do we find in this budget with regard

to infrastructure funding? We find that 70 per cent of the schools that were funded in this budget are in coalition seats. When you look around this house, the government has 45 seats and the opposition has 43, yet our schools received 30 per cent of infrastructure expenditure in education. That is appalling.

The ministers who took an oath at Government House to deliver without fear or favour forgot their oath when they went into the budget and expenditure review committee. By contrast, under Labor the schools in my electorate, in Liberal electorates and in electorates held by members of The Nationals received funding based upon need. We delivered new schools and new infrastructure in my electorate, including a complete rebuild of Pascoe Vale North Primary School and Oak Park Primary School. We delivered on the revamp of the double-storey section of Pascoe Vale Primary School. Glenroy College received a magnificent science wing and Pascoe Vale Girls College had outstanding work done, all delivered independently of the pork-barrelling that has occurred under this government.

I want to look at the school that has the highest rating in relation to need for budget expenditure in my electorate, which is Westbreen Primary School. In December we had the benefit of the Minister for Education visiting the school. He was able to see for himself the presentation by the school council and principal. In November 2010 they completed their educational pedagogical work and presented it to the department. It was all ticked off and the school’s planning work was complete, ready for funding in the 2011 budget. That did not come through, nor did it in the 2012 budget, which is an appalling result in terms of the independent office of the minister.

The former Labor government’s program to upgrade every government school in this state was based on independent advice and assessment, and it was delivered on that basis. In terms of the future, I will be working with Westbreen to ensure that the minister and the government are critically aware of the urgent need before them right now, because, as I said, Westbreen completed its educational pedagogical work in November 2010.

The second educational issue in my electorate that I would like to discuss is the need for a complete universal intake high school in Coburg beginning at year 7. We have a senior high school in Coburg that begins at year 10. There is capacity in Moreland and in Coburg for a year 7 intake that would sustain a complete years 7–12 high school. While in government Labor did a demographic study that was released just

prior to the election, and it made a commitment that it would begin a year 7 intake in this term of government. The current Minister for Education came to that public meeting and made no such commitment. I ask — in fact I implore — the minister to look at the demographic study that he commissioned which provided exactly the same result, which is that we need a year 7 intake in Coburg. I will continue to work with the High School for Coburg Group, the local primary schools and Moreland City Council to ensure that that year 7 intake is delivered, ideally in this term of government. If it is not, people in Coburg need to remember that it was Labor that promised to deliver for the full educational needs of our high school students in Coburg.

There are three other points I would like to make in relation to our primary and secondary schools. The first is how callous the dumping of the School Start bonus is. Any member of the government who has struggled to pay for the uniform and establishment costs of getting a child into prep or year 7 knows it is a huge impost on a family budget. Not everybody receives the income of members of Parliament and not everybody can provide for the educational needs of their children in prep and year 7 without diabolical consequences for the family budget.

This callous government has dumped the School Start bonus. It has also cut the school component of the education maintenance allowance to parents of primary and secondary school students. That education maintenance allowance can never go to members of Parliament; our incomes would preclude us from receiving it. We are looking at the most needy families in this state. The callous Baillieu government has said, 'Look, even though this is means tested, we are going to scrap the component that is paid to schools for excursions, yearbooks and diaries that were provided in the past under the education maintenance allowance'.

The next point I would like to cover relates to the Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL). This house has heard extensive debate in relation to the effect the cuts to the VCAL program will have on schools. Again the schools and students who, generally speaking, will be hardest hit are the disadvantaged students in our secondary system. The construction, hospitality and welfare industries need VCAL. Students whose talents lie in hospitality, construction or the myriad other courses that are provided by VCAL need that program to continue. It was callously cut by the callous Baillieu government.

Regarding TAFE, this government has shamefully cut the TAFE budget. It is a deliberate choice. It will impact most severely on children, young adults and

those who are retraining in an attempt to get into the employment market. Without TAFE they are doomed to, generally speaking, casual or itinerant work. Give a person a TAFE certificate and they have a tradable commodity that enables them to go to an employer and say, 'Look, I have a TAFE certificate', I have my certificate III' or 'I have my certificate IV'; 'I am skilled and I am able to take up this employment opportunity'. That callous cut in the budget is, in my view, absolutely appalling.

In summary, in relation to education the Baillieu government comes out with a dodgy — D-O-D-G-Y — mark when it comes to schools and delivering without fear or favour. It is dodgy when it comes to ensuring that all students are given an opportunity to learn in secondary school under the VCAL or the Victorian certificate of education programs. It gets a fail, a zero mark, for dumping the School Start bonus and cutting the education maintenance allowance.

In relation to transport, I want to particularly pick up a point that has been brought to my attention by the cycling community in Moreland, and that is that new funding for cycling in this budget is zero. If you go to page 51 of budget paper 4, you see that the only funding that is coming through in this next financial year is unexpended funding. Funding for cycling is a win-win-win: it benefits people, it benefits the budget and it benefits the environment.

The Upfield shared pathway in my electorate urgently needs a final \$1 million to be completed. Under Labor we progressively worked up and linked a number of unmade sections of the Upfield shared pathway right up to Box Forest Road. Now that last link between Box Forest Road and the Western Ring Road and the links that then go to Merri Creek and up to Craigieburn urgently require funding. Moreland bicycle users are at this point communicating with the Premier and copying their emails to me. They want to have that final link funded in this financial year, and if not this year certainly early in the next financial year, using the unexpended funds.

Let us look at the cycling budget. If we had realistic funding in the budget, we would be able to upgrade the bicycle route on Shepherd Bridge across the Maribyrnong River in Footscray. We would be able to complete signal upgrades along Victoria Parade at Napier Street near the Australian Catholic University. We would be able to complete the Upfield path and we would be able to connect Deakin University to the Waurn Ponds shopping centre by a shared path. These are just a few examples.

Under the Baillieu government we are looking at zero funding for cycling. It is important that the government and its ministers understand that we have to care about cyclists' needs. The roads are not available for just vehicles or chauffeur-driven limousines. Cyclists are not considered to be regular road users, but we have to remember that cyclists are legitimate road users, and we need to care about them. We need to perhaps invest in a tandem bike for the Premier and have his chauffeur take him around in style so he can understand the infrastructure needs of cyclists.

The Labor government put \$16.3 million towards cycling. Guess what? New funding under the Baillieu government in the budget just announced is a big zero. I put it to members that cycling infrastructure is relatively inexpensive compared with roads and reaps great benefits for the community via a more healthy general population, decreased traffic congestion and of course decreased carbon emissions.

With rail, I lament the fact that the Glenroy Road level crossing has not been funded. Labor funded grade separations based upon need. We would never have funded a grade separation in Brighton, which is ranked at 223, when the Glenroy Road crossing is ranked at 10 and the Bell Street crossing is ranked at 5. We are looking at a budget that has failed on education, failed on transport and has put the white flag up on jobs.

Mr KOTSIRAS (Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) — It is interesting to observe that the member for Pascoe Vale has forgotten that she was once a minister — a minister with a chauffeur and a great white car that picked her up from home, took her to work and took her to every other event. Now she has the gall to stand up in this house and talk about white cars. It is a shame.

Despite demanding and challenging times, this is a good budget. It is a responsible budget, it is a sensible budget and it is a caring budget. It is a good example of how governments must learn to live within their means, because around the world we have seen what happens when countries decide not to do that. I am surprised by the comments of members of the Labor Party, who were in government for 11 long, dark and miserable years. If they go to *Hansard* and read my contributions in the budget debates over those 11 years, they will see that I have stood up every single year asking why they had not given any money to the Bulleen electorate — why they had ignored the residents of Bulleen, why they had secured funding for their own electorates and given nothing to Bulleen. This happened for 11 long years, and some have forgotten that we are here today

because of the mismanagement of the Labor government over 11 years.

I will list a few examples of that mismanagement. There is the desalination plant, which costs this state \$2 million a day. There are 88 electorates in this state, and that equates to \$22 700 that could be used per day per electorate. Over a year each electorate could be given \$8.3 million if we did not have to pay \$2 million per day for the desalination plant.

Ms Campbell interjected.

Mr KOTSIRAS — The member for Pascoe Vale could have built her bike paths, built a school and built infrastructure in her electorate if it were not for this \$2 million per day. There is also the \$3 billion loss as a result of the flawed auction process for gaming machine licences. How much does that equate to per electorate? It equates to \$34 million per electorate. You could buy the land and build a brand-new school with \$34 million. In my electorate I could do a complete upgrade of Templestowe Road with that money. This is \$34 million of waste as a result of the actions of the former Labor government. Those are just two examples. Of course we also have the myki debacle, the north-south pipeline debacle, the regional rail mismanagement and the HealthSMART blow-outs — the list goes on and on.

It is a bit rich that members opposite have decided that their projects have appeared overnight when they were not present during the last 11 years. I ask opposition members to go back to *Hansard* of the last 11 years to see if they stood up in this place and encouraged or urged ministers or the government to provide funding to build the valuable infrastructure that they are crying about today. I can assure the house that none of those members, or very few of them, would have stood up and urged the minister to provide extra funding, but all of a sudden after only two years of this government they want more money after they spent 11 years sitting on their backsides and doing nothing.

This time around, as was the case in the last budget, the electorate of Bulleen did receive some funding. In 2011–12 it received money for the installation of traffic lights at the T-intersection of Bulleen Road and Golden Way. That infrastructure is all up; it is just a matter of turning on the switch. Two pedestrian crossings at Templestowe Road are now completed, and of course there are the lights at Fitzsimons Lane, on which we are working with VicRoads at the moment on integrating the roundabout and the lights to ensure efficient traffic flow.

This year we have committed \$2.5 million to Templestowe College. It is a school that was crying out for financial assistance to upgrade its classrooms and the schoolgrounds. Despite the fact that during the time of the former government I raised this issue on many occasions and had the Parliamentary Secretary for Education visit the school, very little was given in those 11 long and dark years. We have promised the school \$5 million. We have provided \$2.5 million now, and the remainder will be given before the end of this term. Templestowe College will get \$5 million to improve the educational outcomes of the students. Keeping in mind that 30 per cent of the students come from Eltham, I would have thought that the member for Eltham — who is a nice member; he supports education — would have provided some assistance to ensure that the students of his electorate would benefit from an upgrade of Templestowe College. It took a coalition government to provide the money.

I wish to turn briefly to my portfolio area of multicultural affairs and citizenship. The budget for this portfolio has increased from \$19.6 million to \$21.4 million, an increase of 9.2 per cent. This increase is the result of the receipt of three grants. One is for \$2 million to the Hellenic cultural centre on Lonsdale Street, which has the support of both sides of the house. The second is the \$1.3 million to fund the refugee support program. Again, that is made up of \$1 million for the refugee action plan and \$0.3 million for the asylum seekers support program. I know it is a commonwealth government responsibility to look after refugees and asylum seekers, and, yes, we have called for the commonwealth government to ensure it provides enough money to ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers are treated as human beings and are provided with services to make sure that they are able to integrate into the community and feel part of Victoria; however, that does not mean that Victoria does not have a responsibility towards refugees and asylum seekers as well. That is why we have provided \$1.3 million per year over the next four years, which is the continuation of a program that was introduced by the previous government and was due to sunset this year. Unless we had agreed to continue the program, that money would not have been available.

Of course in this year's budget there is \$0.1 million in extra funding for the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) for the establishment of the regional advisory councils (RACs). As I have said in this house, the regional advisory councils are there to assist the commission to meet the needs of newly arrived migrants. They are composed of 13 members. The chair is a member of the VMC, and the remaining 12 are local members. It might include representatives

of local councils and local businesses, individuals or key stakeholders. They are the eyes and ears of the commission. They are there at the grassroots level to find out firsthand what the issues are and to relay that back to the commission, which in turn will pass that information on to me. The commission came to me and said it needed extra money to make sure that the regional advisory councils are able to carry out the tasks, so we are providing \$10 000 per council and \$3000 for administrative costs to ensure that the RACs are able to carry out their work.

This has been a good budget for multicultural affairs — and it is not just me who is saying this. A number of key stakeholders have put out press releases saying in regard to multicultural affairs that the government has continued the good work that it implemented in 2011. I wish to quote from some of those media releases. The first is from the Australian Multicultural Foundation. The heading on this press release is 'Tough times see continued investment and commitment in Victoria's cultural diversity'. It states:

Victoria has always been a leading multicultural state in Australia. It is encouraging to see that the Baillieu government's commitment to multicultural affairs continues, with support for programs that not only celebrate our diversity, but play a major role in the integration and settlement of new and emerging communities in Victoria.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth put out a media release on 2 May this year with the heading 'A sustained commitment to multiculturalism in tight budget'. It states:

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) welcomes the Victorian government's continued investment in multicultural affairs in tough budget conditions.

CMY is pleased to note the state government's commitment to initiatives for culturally and linguistically diverse ... communities which demonstrates a thriving commitment to multiculturalism.

CMY's CEO Carmel Guerra states:

We are pleased to see that the Victorian government continues to demonstrate its support for multiculturalism. Young people are one of its assets and CMY will continue to work with them to ensure multicultural youth play a key role in Victoria's future.

In its media release Community Languages Australia executive director Stefan Romaniw is quoted as saying:

The coalition government has embarked on implementing a strong languages education program. This will very much depend on having more qualified teachers and providing schools with resources to implement programs.

The media release continues:

In these tough economic times it is pleasing to see the government stay true to its word in support of languages education.

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) issued a press release with the heading 'Refugees and language services major wins for diverse Victorians in steady state budget'. It states:

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria today welcomed the 9.2 per cent state budget increase to \$21.4 million funding as a steady result for Victoria's multicultural communities.

ECCV chairperson Mr Joe Caputo said the major budget wins for diverse Victorians were in refugee support programs and language services funding in the areas of education, health and justice.

And finally, Multicultural Arts Victoria said:

In these tough economic times Multicultural Arts Victoria congratulates the state government's commitment to multiculturalism and refugee programs announced in the recent state budget.

The budget was well received by many key stakeholders because we care about newly arrived migrants. The one thing that we try to do as a government is to ensure that there is a whole-of-government approach to multiculturalism so that every government department and every minister is responsive to and is meeting the needs of every Victorian regardless of their background. Rather than just relying on the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship to deal with newly arrived migrants, we are ensuring that every minister is responsible.

Therefore I was a bit disappointed with the member for Altona. Her media release of 8 March 2012 says:

Member for Altona district ... today questioned the Baillieu government's decision to cut funding to Hobson's Bay City Council's 'Youth voice' program.

She says:

The funding has now been allocated to the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association for youth activities in Hobson's Bay ... and whilst I commend the work done by the AVWA, that funding should clearly have been allocated from multicultural affairs funding and not youth affairs funding ...

Again, why should it come from the office of multicultural affairs? It should come from the responsible department and from the responsible minister. The funding was not cut; it was just given to another organisation to provide the program. I know the member for Altona supports cultural diversity and supports young people — I am not questioning her

support — but we have to get out of the thought process that anything to do with newly arrived migrants must go to the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship. It should go to the appropriate minister and the appropriate department and agency, otherwise the whole-of-government approach has failed. As minister I am going to ensure that every department is responsive and relevant and I will make sure that, through the VMC and now through the regional advisory councils, programs are put in place to meet the needs of all Victorians regardless of their backgrounds, how many years they have lived here or whether they were born here. Everyone should be treated equally and everyone should be given a fair go.

It is not about privileges; it is about providing a fair go and for everyone to be able to engage in the community and feel part of the community, thereby ensuring that we will continue to live in a supportive and respectful community. But that can only be done if there is a whole-of-government approach to multicultural affairs. We have got the bipartisan approach and support, and now we have to ensure a whole-of-government approach in this very important area.

Mr EREN (Lara) — I wish to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. I wish I could say that I am pleased to be speaking on this bill today, but this was the government's second chance to get it right for Victorians and to deliver a budget that provides vision for Victorian communities. However, instead of setting up Victoria for the future, this budget has sent Victoria backwards — there is no question of that. As previous speakers on this appropriation bill have so eloquently put it, there have been so many areas that have gone backwards that it is a serious matter going forward for Victorians, particularly in the area of education.

I have made this point before and I want to put it on the record again. I know the government whinges about Labor's record when it was in government for 11 years from 1999 to 2010 but there is a stark contrast between those governments and the now government. It is not just us that is saying this about our economic credentials; the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) actually said that Victoria had one of the strongest and most resilient economies in the world and that was at a time when the GFC (global financial crisis) was at its worst. We know that the GFC has devastated many nations across the world but we were cocooned to a certain extent, and we were cocooned more so than any other state and territory in this nation. We were the engine room when it came to the creation of jobs even though we are not a mining state. We are not saying this about our

credentials; respectable organisations like the OECD are actually saying it for us. When we look back over the 11 years of Labor government, we had some of the best fiscal and financial brains in the nation working to make sure that every single year that we were in government we were not only in surplus but we also maintained our AAA credit rating.

I think that is where this government is struggling. It is struggling in the sense that it is finding it difficult to keep the AAA credit rating. Soon after this government was elected, the Premier said on one of the FM radio stations that the government had inherited a AAA credit rating budget and a surplus but times would get tough. Clearly he knew he was incapable of maintaining that fiscal responsibility — a responsibility that we took very seriously and as a result made sure that we were in surplus every year and maintained a strong AAA credit rating — and that he would struggle. It is not over yet; the state's financial position will unravel over the course of the next couple of years.

In the light of this budget and the cutbacks it contains, job prospects will get even worse, and that is a problem. To protect jobs the state government must have the right programs and policies in place to attract businesses to and retain businesses in Victoria. I am not sure whether the government is putting such programs and policies in place. The government is asleep at the wheel, with no real plan to create jobs or attract new investment to Victoria. That is a shame, because it will mean that thousands of people will lose their jobs on top of the thousands who have already lost their jobs as a result of this government's mismanagement.

The government has decided to dump the first home bonus, which will obviously hurt families — not to mention the loss of thousands of jobs in the construction industry across the state. In addition, with the abolition of the School Start bonus from 2013 the government has further highlighted the fact that it does not care about families. Those opposite seem to think the cut will not affect families, but I have news for them: the government needs to understand that times are tough out there and many families are struggling under the cost of living pressures that have come to bear on them. If government members think these cuts will not affect families, they are kidding themselves. They obviously live a different lifestyle to that of many Victorians.

I urge the government to reconsider its cutting of these vitally important programs to provide financial assistance to those families that really need it. My wife and I have five children. They are adults now, but we still have one at school, and it is tough. Before children

start school each year literally hundreds of dollars are needed to assist them in attaining their education. It is mean spirited of the government to cut back on the vitally important financial assistance that families normally received under the Labor government.

Last year the government spun to us that unemployment growth would be 1.75 per cent and promised it would create 55 000 jobs each year over the next four years. It is a bit embarrassing for the government now — and especially for those opposite on the back benches, who are going red faced at the moment — knowing that it has broken that promise. It has been highlighted that in the current financial year the employment growth rate is 0, and it is predicted to grow by just 0.25 per cent in 2012–13. Where are those jobs that were promised by the Treasurer and indeed the Premier? They are nowhere to be seen.

Part of the problem with the government is that it does not know how to plan, not only in terms of how to protect the jobs that are already here but also in terms of how to get people to invest in Victoria to create new jobs. Since the government came to office, the only thing that has gone up is the unemployment rate. Over 30 000 more Victorians have joined the unemployment queue, the employment participation rate is dropping and there are 16 500 fewer full-time jobs in Victoria than there were when this government came to power. To add insult to injury, in this budget there is a further cut of 600 jobs from the public sector, which brings the number of jobs cut to 4200 — this from a Premier who promised he would not cut a single job.

As I indicated before, the government needs a plan to create and protect the thing Victorian households value most — that is, a meaningful job. It is extremely disappointing that the Baillieu government has again ignored the needs of our communities, in particular the need for a jobs plan. There has been a lot of talk but clearly no action.

This budget does nothing for the future of Geelong. The Gordon Institute of TAFE, which is in Geelong, is a magnificent institution that provides a good-quality education for many students who find alternative pathways to advance their careers. It is coming to terms with the effects of the Baillieu government's decision to cut \$100 million from the TAFE sector in this budget. The effects this will have on Geelong are enormous. I take this opportunity to inform anybody who would like to attend that next Thursday at 12.15 p.m. there will be a mass protest in Johnstone Park in Geelong in relation to the cutbacks in this vital sector. This is the largest single cut to TAFE funding in Victoria's history, and it is on top of the \$40 million cut to TAFE funding last

October and the \$50 million cut to the Victorian certificate of applied learning last year. These cuts are clearly designed to have an impact on those who most need assistance. That is what is upsetting about what this government is doing. Its actions are deliberately aimed at those people who can least afford it, and that is very mean spirited.

Again there is a lot of spin from this government on caring about helping Victorians to get a job and improving the productivity of Victoria's workplaces by investing in the skills of our young people. Despite that, the government has taken the knife to trade and vocational education and training, and too bad for those Victorians who have lost their jobs and are hoping to retrain and seek skills to find new employment. It is extremely disappointing that the people of Geelong have been waiting so long for support from the government on jobs, infrastructure and services. This budget yet again ignores the needs of the Geelong region.

You would think that \$93 million was a lot of money to put into an area — \$93 million was allocated towards Geelong Hospital, but it is a total scam and yet again a cruel hoax on the Geelong community because what the government does not tell the community is that only \$3.8 million has been dedicated to that project in the 2012–13 budget. The rest of it will be coming later on. We do not know when later on is — but it will be coming. The cheque is in the mail. This means it will be literally years before the much-needed upgrade to the hospital will be completed. There was an election commitment given by this government to build a second hospital for Geelong, but there is no funding in sight for that. That is clearly another broken promise. The government said, 'Forget the promise we made about the second hospital in Geelong. What we will do is allocate \$93 million for the current hospital, but we will only dedicate \$3.8 million in this financial year and the rest of the money will come along whenever we can afford it'. We can see right through that. This is a total scam and a broken promise; there is no question about that.

The so-called boost to regional trains will make hardly any difference to Geelong communities, due to the fact that the services will not arrive for years, and in that time patronage levels will have increased due to the population growth that is forecast for the Geelong region. People in the Lara electorate and across the Geelong region are confronting job losses, but this budget does nothing to support or develop our industries or meet the transport and educational needs of our people. This budget does not include any substantial investment in the local manufacturing or

aviation industries, including Qantas, services at Avalon or jobs at the Alcoa Point Henry plant.

Focusing on my electorate of Lara, unlike the situation when Labor was in government there is not much for me to say in relation to the budget. I acknowledge that the government has provided funding — a mere \$8.3 million — towards the second stage of the Corio-Norlane education regeneration project, but that is only half the funding that is needed. The second stage needed \$16.9 million last year to further the three-phase redevelopment of education in that area, but the project received a paltry \$8.3 million.

I recently visited one of the campuses at Northern Bay College and was horrified to find that one side of the school has brand-new, state-of-the-art fantastic learning facilities, thanks to the former Labor government, which allocated the funding, along with Building the Education Revolution funding from the federal government. Funding for the other side of the campus, which had been expected, did not come, and it has leaky roofs. Students in prep to grade 2 are sitting in classrooms where if it rains they may need to bring umbrellas to school. That is outrageous. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development needs to seriously consider making sure that children in prep to grade 2 do not have such an environment. You cannot learn in that environment. You cannot sit there with water dripping on an umbrella above you while listening to the teacher and trying to learn. It is just ridiculous. This government should understand that it needs to commit the funding this school deserves.

Avalon Airport received \$2 million, but other than that there was no real investment in the electorate of Lara. This \$2 million is a ploy by the government. The government estimates that a rail link to Avalon would cost \$250 million, but there is a catch: it is dependent on federal funding. It did not consult the federal government when it proposed this project, so what it is going to say is, 'We are going to spend \$2 million and do a feasibility study on the rail link, but without federal government moneys this project cannot happen. We are sorry. It is not our fault; it is the federal government's fault'. Hang on, that is a scam. This government is either going to commit the funding or it is not. It should tell the people the truth. That is what it needs to do.

It is an absolute disgrace that this government totally ignored Wyndham. Wyndham is the fastest growing region in the whole nation, but unfortunately no moneys were dedicated to that area. I could go on and on. I did not even get to talk about the lack of

investment in sport and recreation, particularly in the volunteer sector. Shame on the minister for not getting more money allocated in that portfolio.

Mrs BAUER (Carrum) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2012/13) Bill 2012, and it is a privilege to contribute to the debate. I commend the Baillieu government on its second budget. We are setting up the foundations for Victoria through this budget. It is a budget that I am sure we all agree is being delivered during tough economic times. The economic landscape we are faced with in Victoria is challenging, but it is a challenge that Victorians are not facing alone. All states across Australia are having to implement austerity measures. Our Victorian budget is responsible; it is putting our state in a strong financial position. It is demonstrating that our government is focused on investing in infrastructure, driving productivity, creating jobs and delivering on its promises. It delivers at a time when the impacts from the former Labor government's financial mismanagement and unsustainable budget position are still being felt; we are still feeling the shockwaves from it. We heard the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and the member for Benalla in their speeches eloquently outline projects bungled by the former government. We are still dealing with all of that.

Had we continued on this unsustainable path, we would have been facing deficits for many years to come. Our government is leading by example. People expect leadership from their elected members of Parliament. We need to live within our means to instil community confidence; therefore, I commend the Treasurer and the Premier on the delivery of their budget. This budget is putting Victoria on a sustainable budgetary path. We are delivering a budget surplus, and we are also managing to keep our AAA rating. This is at a time when Victoria is faced with significant economic challenges. We have declining revenue, the federal government is ripping out \$7.6 billion of our GST revenue over four years, and then there is the federal government's lack of support for infrastructure projects and major partnership programs.

My electorate of Carrum has already benefited from the delivery of state initiatives in the former budget. These initiatives are in relation to health, education, police, infrastructure and transport. This budget builds on all the improvements the coalition has introduced since November 2010. Benefits have already flowed through the Carrum electorate; there have been improvements to health and transport. The punctuality of trains on the Frankston line has greatly improved. We have started to dredge Mordialloc Creek, which has been welcomed not only those in the Mordialloc and Carrum electorates

but also by people throughout Melbourne who utilise the beautiful Mordialloc Creek. We have already delivered extra police. Yarrabah School and Nepean School in my electorate have been delighted with the \$100 000 contributions they have received, along with Patterson Lakes Primary School, which received funds in our first budget.

I will focus on education in this budget and on some local schools that will benefit from some of the investments we are making. The communities at Seaford North Primary School and Seaford Primary School are both delighted to be receiving \$875 000 for refurbishment projects at their schools.

Seaford North Primary School is quite small; it has 270 pupils. It is a hidden gem in my electorate of Carrum. It sits on extensive land and backs onto the wetlands. It has its own natural bushland site and animal palace. Every time I visit the school I feel like I am visiting a country location. It is a special place. The school did not receive any funding under the former government, but it will now be receiving \$875 000 to refurbish its classrooms.

The school is planning to create a cooperative learning space which will complement the existing spaces and teacher and learning styles. The school is currently constrained by its building structure. The refurbishment will provide students and teachers with a flexible learning space to deliver personalised learning, which is an integral part of the education philosophy of this dynamic school. I congratulate Lee Murnane, the school principal, and his team of very dedicated staff on their vision for this beautiful school. I know school community members have already been briefed on details of the development project and are excited and looking forward to the beginning of the development.

Seaford Primary School will also be receiving \$875 000 in this budget. The school has a terrific local history. It is the original school in Seaford area and has a current population of 162 students. Seaford Primary School attracts 45 per cent of its students from outside the Seaford area. It is the only school in the south-east with a specialised language assistance unit. This unit caters for students with diagnosed language disorders. The academic standards at Seaford Primary School compare favourably with like schools and statewide data. The school is located closely to the Edithvale and Seaford wetlands, Kananook Creek and the Seaford foreshore. It provides a terrific opportunity for the Seaford Primary School community to engage with local community organisations that run environmental education programs and to utilise the expertise of local volunteers.

I commend the Seaford Primary School principal, Michael Browne. Michael has said to me that the school community was thrilled to be allocated \$875 000 of funds from the recent state budget. It has already completed the master planning and the funding will be used to demolish part of the old wing, which was constructed in the 1950s, and put in its place a newly constructed building with four classrooms and additional open space to provide flexibility for teaching and learning. Michael told me that the school leadership team has great plans for this small, supportive school, which has an exciting future. I support Michael and his team in their endeavours, and I commend him and his staff on their hard work and dedication in providing so many wonderful learning opportunities to their students from Seaford and the wider electorate.

The Minister for Education visited not only Seaford North Primary School and Seaford Primary School but also Aspendale Primary School late last year. He had terrific discussions with members of that school community including the principal, Phil Anthony. I know the community of Aspendale Primary School is very much looking forward to receiving the \$2 million we have committed to and will deliver during our first term of government.

Opposition members have had the nerve to criticise the fact that we have not yet delivered the funding for Aspendale Primary School. The member for Benalla spoke during his contribution about \$2 million being spent each day for the next 28 years on the desalination plant. My commitment to Aspendale Primary School is \$2 million. Imagine this: if there were not the commitment to pay \$2 million a day over the next 28 years for a desalination plant, Aspendale Primary School could have already had its \$2 million. It is really disappointing to hear opposition members criticising the fact we have not delivered those funds, because we will be delivering them.

I also welcome some great transport initiatives in this budget. There is a huge investment of \$155.7 million to complete the Dingley bypass. Heading into the last election we pledged \$55 million to continue this project, so the \$155.7 million is a fantastic investment. A four-lane divided arterial road will link Warrigal Road with Westall Road. Construction will begin in 2014, and we expect it will be completed by 2016. Residents of the Carrum electorate are really excited about this development as it will ease the congestion on our local streets and road network. They experience this not only locally but in the whole of the south-east corridor.

The Dingley bypass was promised and then delayed time and again by the previous government, but we are committed to completing this vital link as soon as possible. I would like to take a moment to quote a former Labor member, the former member for Carrum, who in November 1999 said:

Labor recognises the importance of both the Dingley bypass and the extension of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway to the long-term future of the south-eastern and bayside suburbs and has committed to commence a 10-year program to ensure that both those roads are constructed.

Guess what? These roads were never constructed, and they were never delivered. It was another broken promise.

The Dingley bypass we will deliver will link with the Dingley arterial. Works are currently under way through Keysborough between Springvale Road and Perry Road and are scheduled for completion in 2013. The bypass will complete the western section of the 19-kilometre fully divided arterial road link between Moorabbin and Dandenong South. When complete, the bypass is expected to carry approximately 45 000 vehicles a day. The coalition's commitment to the bypass and to many other significant road projects across our state, including the removal of the rail crossing at Springvale Road, which is the extension of Edithvale Road, demonstrates that it is focused on addressing traffic congestion in the south-east.

I make mention also of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway. We pledged \$1 million for a feasibility study for the Mornington Peninsula Freeway extension. We recognise the importance of traffic planning and the impact congestion has on the daily lives of our constituents, not just in my Carrum electorate but across Victoria. The study will be conducted in two phases. There will be a strategic assessment of the road network in the middle south-eastern suburbs, identifying the transport deficiencies and needs, and I am delighted to report that engagement with the local stakeholders and community, government departments and councils will commence in mid-2012. This is very exciting for our local community and for my electorate of Carrum.

Local families have also welcomed the health portfolio announcement of \$39.96 million for the redevelopment of the Frankston Hospital emergency department. Frankston Hospital is our local public hospital, and it is very well utilised within my Carrum electorate. The emergency department has been under strain for some time, and unfortunately at peak periods waiting times can be considerable. The redevelopment will improve patient capacity in the emergency department. With

growing health demands, this is incredibly important. The funding will also include a new medical imaging service which will back up and support the emergency department. This funding is on top of last year's funding for extra surgical and medical beds at the hospital, which was warmly received by residents in my electorate when it was announced last year. People in the Carrum electorate also utilise the Monash Medical Centre in Clayton, so I very much welcome the commitment of \$15.8 million for the planning and development of a children's hospital at Monash.

I commend the Minister for Health and the coalition government for their continued focus on delivering better health services for people right across Victoria as well as in my electorate. I also commend the government for the investments in our mental health services. These will be made in a range of services, including modification, refurbishment and redevelopment of community-based mental health infrastructure. There will be more than \$7 million to plan for the second stage of the provision of mental health beds.

In conclusion, I commend the Baillieu government on a state budget that restores the faith of the Victorian people. We deliver on our promises, and we are focused on securing Victoria's future. We are addressing the problems we have inherited, we are setting Victoria up in a strong financial position and we are implementing responsible financial management.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — Welcome to year zero for employment growth under the Baillieu-Ryan regime. The coalition has flatlined job creation in Victoria, all but inducing a coma. The state is laid out like a patient etherised upon a table, to borrow from T. S. Eliot. The theme of my contribution is the need for a balanced strategy to provide fiscal consolidation that also delivers jobs, growth and confidence.

After Queensland comprehensively defeated Victoria in securing Qantas jobs in the state of origin contest that counts, the Treasurer came into this house, pumped up his chest to the full barrel and boasted about his budget in comparison to — Tasmania. That is right, after Labor delivered a budget surplus in each of its 11 years in office, despite fire, drought and the global financial crisis, and after it locked in a AAA rating and left Melbourne as the world's most livable city, the Treasurer is trying to make himself look good in comparison with the smallest, poorest state in the nation.

The reason is clear. The comparison the Treasurer wants to avoid is with the G8 nations of the world, whose leaders met this week in the largest gathering of international leaders at Camp David. These are the countries that produce more than half the world's economic activity — not Tassie. The consensus the G8 leaders reached was that an austerity strategy of budget cuts alone is not good enough. The world needs jobs and growth. The world needs renewed confidence. US President Barack Obama summed up the consensus by saying, 'Growth and jobs must be our top priority'. Placing this strategy beyond ideology, the UK Tory Prime Minister, David Cameron, conceded that while every country needs strong plans to deal with their deficits, 'Growth and austerity are not alternatives'. The G8 strategy reveals the critical flaw in the Baillieu-Ryan regime's budget. It lacks the required balance between jobs, growth and cuts. It lacks the balance required to deliver confidence.

The coalition's grandest boast for this budget is that it is responsible. Let us be clear: the year zero plan for employment growth in Victoria is not responsible. The coalition's approach is even more remarkable because the Treasurer's greatest failure in his first budget is the fact that he did not even mention jobs, a revelation that beggars belief. In damage control mode, he promised to create 50 000 to 55 000 jobs every year until 2015. Instead nearly 50 000 full-time jobs have been lost on his watch. John Ferguson declared in his budget commentary in the *Australian* of 2 May:

Wells has largely made a dark art of rarely appearing in public and each time he does, he seems to break promises.

No job cuts before the election, then 3600. No more than 3600, he said after taking the razor out in December.

Now no more than 600 extra.

But on top of the 600, he has raised the spectre of forced redundancies, which is political dynamite in a state that well remembers the political conflict under Jeff Kennett.

Then the political commentator for the national broadsheet delivers the punchline:

There is nothing wrong, of course, with running a tight ship but Wells seems to be making a habit of telling big-time fibs.

Big-time fibs; that is an extraordinary criticism of a Victorian Treasurer, especially after only two budgets. How can business and the broader community have confidence in the Treasurer of Victoria when he is publicly written off for telling big-time fibs concerning an issue as vital to families, the community and the economy as jobs? In the lead-up to the budget I highlighted these concerns in the *Herald Sun* of 17 February, declaring:

From the business community to Broadmeadows, people are underwhelmed by the government's performance and

dubious about its election-winning promises to fix the problems, build the future, cut the cost of living and govern for all.

Many people feel duded.

The jail-led jobs recovery pitch exposes the government as having no genuine plan for job creation.

In Broadmeadows, there is a fully budgeted, design-approved, shovel-ready plan that will deliver up to 800 jobs in an area of great need.

It would provide a building for government services, business hub and catalyst for commercial and community development in the capital of Melbourne's north — which produces a third of Victoria's manufactured exports and has underwritten the state's prosperity for generations.

Business craves certainty. The government's silence costs private investment. In response I offered to move my electorate office into the building to provide a long-term tenant and, in the spirit of bipartisanship, asked the Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy, to join me, given that the government identified Broadmeadows as one of Victoria's fastest growing regions and the minister had testified that such areas would benefit greatly from government support.

So what happened in the budget? The coalition performed a reverse Robin Hood: it robbed from the poor to give to the prosperous. Planning Minister Matthew Guy axed the \$14.7 million designated for the electorate he represents, which by any measure of need and equity should receive it. Instead the budget declares that the coalition will take the money for the Broadmeadows central activities area and redistribute it elsewhere. By dudding the disadvantaged the coalition has proved that it does not care. 'By indignities men come to dignities', Francis Bacon wrote, but for the people of Broadmeadows there are only indignities from Liberal and coalition governments. No plaque has been found in Broadmeadows with a Liberal Premier's name on it for a Liberal or coalition-funded project. This latest indignity adds to this historic disgrace.

Why did this reverse Robin Hood strategy happen? *Age* commentator Tim Colebatch makes the pertinent point that underscores my critique of the budget's failings when he declares:

... nor was there anything resembling a jobs plan, or anything aiming to get the economy to fire on all cylinders again.

The seasoned observer of Victorian politics defined another reason why there is a lack of confidence in the coalition:

And there was nothing to answer the questions Victorians are asking: why does Ted Baillieu want to be Premier? Where does he want to take us?

At some point, his government is going to have to tell us what it stands for. The budget was a missed chance to do that.

The reason is an identity crisis. The coalition does not have a vision for Victoria or an economic plan. All it has is a political scheme. This is called gesture politics. I revealed that political scheme in an article in the *Herald Sun* of 26 March in the lead-up to the budget. The headline defined my call to action declaring 'Forget the gestures, it's time to start creating jobs'. It reads:

Wise up. Gesture politics is causing Victoria to languish on job creation.

The Baillieu government won power promising action. Instead, the hallmark of its reign is the triumph of gestures lacking substance over a sustainable plan and vision for Victoria.

...

The Baillieu-Ryan regime's initial plan was to avoid bold policy decisions in an attempt to manipulate the electorate into a feeling of stability and consistency by delivering PR events rather than risk substantive change.

This strategy was leaked by a senior Baillieu insider and the government's record confirms this approach.

The political scheme is not to govern in the public interest but to manipulate the electoral cycle for self-interest. The aim is to build a \$1 billion war chest in time for the next Victorian election. This scheme is being implemented at the cost of a responsible strategy for jobs and growth and massive cuts to TAFE and the skills required to build Victoria's future, which saw the minister responsible consider resigning because he shared the community's 'shock, incredulity, disbelief and anger'. While promoting training as the key to productivity, this budget inflicted the single largest cut to the TAFE sector in Victoria's history. These cuts prove that the coalition does not care.

The four pillars of the new economic reality in Victoria are axe, tax, cut and run. This strategy is about as far removed as possible from the coalition's election-winning promises to 'fix the problems, build the future, cut the cost of living and govern for all'. Rather than advancing, we are going backwards under the Baillieu-Ryan regime. The reverse Robin Hood is the prevailing philosophy.

Confidence is founded on competence. The lack of public confidence is because the Premier is seen to be going through Hamlet's existential angst. He is staring out the window at no. 1 Treasury Place and

asking himself, 'To lead or not to lead; is that the question?'. The Treasurer is either in hiding or has been written off for telling big fibs. He declared that this budget was about driving productivity, yet the minister for manufacturing could not even define the term. The Treasurer declared that this budget was about driving jobs, yet it implements year zero for employment growth. The Minister for Youth Affairs did not know the youth unemployment rate when questioned. As the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the member for Warrandyte then trumped that believe-it-or-not response by declaring that the government's strategy to reduce carbon pollution includes 'putting money towards beaches and that sort of thing'. So much for competence. No wonder the community lacks confidence.

The government either delivers gestures lacking substance, is ideologically split and does not want to intervene or, if it finally engages, fails to deliver. The bottom line is that it has no vision or plan to govern in the best interests of Victorians. All it has is a political scheme to win the next election, no matter the cost.

The final comment on the risks of scheming comes from the Scottish bard, Robert Burns:

The best laid schemes of mice and men
Go often askew,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
For promised joy!

Mrs VICTORIA (Bayswater) — In these very challenging times here in Victoria it is amazing that so many of those opposite have to give prepared speeches, without actually talking from the heart and from the facts. Not only did the Labor government leave Victoria with unsustainable spending growth and escalating debt, but the federal government unfairly and cruelly severely cut our GST revenue and is introducing a carbon tax which will hit Victoria hardest of all the states. This responsible Baillieu government budget takes the very necessary steps to rebuild the state's finances and secure a much better future for all Victorians.

I want to quickly present a snapshot, if you will, of the past here in Victoria, because it is relevant to where we are now and where we are going in the future. I will look at the snapshot of the past to explain why we are doing what we are doing in Victoria and why real leadership is needed in these difficult times. In the decade or so that the ALP was in government in this state, expenditure growth averaged 7.3 per cent per annum. You can live with that — unless your revenue is growing at only 6.9 per cent. Those of us who have run businesses and have had to be responsible know

that what is coming in must be more than what is going out, so you need to actually earn more than you spend. This is the responsible way of living. Even if you have run only a household budget, you know that if you earn only X number of dollars per week you cannot spend more than that on loan repayments, food or school education. You have to live within your means.

Under the ALP government, this state was simply not living within its means. It was shameful, and it was taking Victoria into a very deep financial hole that would have been extremely difficult to get out of. As it is, it will still be difficult. That is why the Treasurer needs applause for the responsible budget he has brought down, for the vision he has shown and for saying, 'This needs to stop now, and we need to reverse this dreadful trend'.

I referred to the GST revenue being cut. For three years in a row the federal government has short-changed Victoria and not given our state its fair share of infrastructure funding. We have asked for money; the federal government has not delivered it. I will come back to that. The funny thing is that we had an awful lot of infrastructure money come into Victoria under a Queensland Prime Minister. When Kevin Rudd was Prime Minister, Victoria actually got quite a bit in infrastructure money.

Mr O'Brien — Bring him back!

Mrs VICTORIA — The Minister for Gaming says we should bring him back. Perhaps that is exactly what federal Labor needs. Under the former Prime Minister Victoria actually did quite well. Under the current Prime Minister, who is a Victorian, we get zip or zero. We have nothing for major infrastructure contributed by the federal Labor government, and that is absolutely reprehensible. We receive less funding from the feds than any other state. Again that is reprehensible. As well as receiving less than any other state, for the first time we are being given less than half of what the federal government is giving to the Northern Territory. Despite our population and the infrastructure we are building here, we are being given less than half of what is being given to the Northern Territory.

I want to talk a bit about infrastructure. I am delighted that in the Bayswater district we will be building a major infrastructure project — fully funded by the state government, I must add. We have allocated nearly \$12 million to the duplication of Stud Road between Boronia Road and Mountain Highway. This road is something that I use every day; my house is right near there. I live in my electorate, and I am very pleased to say that this will take away the danger of that piece of

road. Obviously Stud Road goes for kilometres. It goes all the way down to Dandenong, and in some sections it is three lanes each way. For the very last kilometre of Stud Road we have only one lane each way, and it is dangerous. There are schools and commercial, wholesale and retail businesses nearby, and we have had many accidents in that area. It is difficult for trucks to access. We have Glen Cameron Trucking, a major trucking company with trucks coming and going along there all the time. The company has great drivers, but sometimes they are just stuck right where they should not be. They should be out there, getting on the road the products that people are needing. We have bottlenecks there all the time.

This government has said, 'We will fix this. It's dangerous, it's inconvenient and it's hampering trade. Let's do something about it'. I am delighted. Public consultation has already been undertaken on this, so we are already well out there. Of the hundreds and hundreds of responses, literally only a handful said, 'We're not so sure that this is the right thing to do'. The overwhelming majority of people said, 'It's about time'. This is something I called for when we were in opposition. My call fell on deaf ears, as did so many other calls for projects in the Bayswater district. We missed out on an awful lot of things out there, but under this government we have certainly been kicking some goals in the local community.

There are some other major projects in the state that we were hoping to undertake. We were hoping that the federal government would consider them to be beneficial to all Victorians. I will give members the example of the east-west link. When I travel into town, I travel along the Eastern Freeway and EastLink, and there is always a bottleneck at the Hoddle Street end. If we build the east-west link, a lot of that traffic will be taken away. A lot of congestion will go and the traffic will flow. We asked for a \$30 million contribution from the commonwealth government towards this project. The Victorian government has committed \$15 million. What did we get from the feds? Zero.

Other projects include the Melbourne metropolitan rail initiative. The funding that was sought was \$130 million, with Victorian funding of \$50 million already committed. What did we get? Zero. The port of Hastings will be very important for trade to keep Victoria commercially viable and for exports predominantly but also for imports for Australia. Markets are being expanded at the moment through the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business and other ministers leading fantastic trade missions to places such as India and China. We are also discovering the Middle East as a major market for us at the

moment. So we need ports. We were looking for \$120 million to expand the port of Hastings. We are putting in \$4 million. What did we get from the feds? Zero.

Removing level crossings is an absolute passion of mine. We have very dangerous level crossings in the Bayswater district on which we have already undertaken public consultation, and we have committed to the development of the plans. We asked for the removal of dangerous level crossings to the tune of \$16 million — that was all, just \$16 million when we are coughing up nearly \$350 million in this state. Do you know what we got? Zero. Unbelievable but true. The federal government has duded Victorians, and that needs to be out there so the public realise what the Prime Minister is doing. She is a Victorian, and I say shame on her!

We have made major investments in the arts, a portfolio that is obviously very dear and near to my heart as I assist the Premier with his duties there. We are of course the Australian arts capital here in Victoria, and certainly in Melbourne we have some of the greatest arts infrastructure. We understand the need to educate children in the arts and that the arts are a major part of everybody's daily life. Not everybody realises how much of a part of life the arts are, but design, television and radio are all part of the arts.

Of course we recognise very keenly the economic impact the arts have on state revenue. It is important that we continue to be the arts capital and the way to ensure that is through further investment. So the Australian Centre for the Moving Image is getting new money for upgrades of its digital learning and other systems throughout the institution. Digital storytelling is a fantastic initiative that happens out in the regions, where red carpet events are held for people in towns who have been able to tell their stories and capture their town's history.

We are also giving more money to the planetarium at Scienceworks. If anyone has taken their kids out there, they will know that kids just love the film *Tycho to the Moon*, which explains a bit about astronomy. Of course learning about the constellations is good for people of all ages. We are also giving more money to the performing arts sector so that we can gain some money from the federal government there.

We are putting in over \$3 million towards Museum Victoria's very successful program of exhibition renewal, and the museum is delighted. The number of congratulatory emails and phone calls I have had from our arts institutions since the budget was delivered is

really quite staggering. They are delighted and are saying, 'Thank you; there is finally a government which hears our pleas and is willing to put some money into our future here in Victoria'.

We are also putting some more money into the Arts Centre Melbourne and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, which were needing some major critical capital works upgrades — things that were neglected under the former government. We are also putting money into the Arts Centre Melbourne for additional operations that will be needed once Hamer Hall is reopened in a couple of months time, and of course we made a major announcement of \$11.3 million back in December for the expansion of the pit in the State Theatre to accommodate Wagnerian-size orchestras, especially for the *Ring* cycle next year, which will also give us a competitive edge over any other performing arts centre or theatre in Australia. There is not another centre that will have a pit the size of the one we will have.

I want to touch on business as well, because of course Bayswater is a thriving area. We have a lot of manufacturers and a lot of wholesalers. The development of markets is very important for a lot of them, but one of the most important things which they came to us with when we were in opposition was WorkCover. They said, 'Help us out with WorkCover; why are those of us who are doing the right thing being penalised?'. We are delighted to announce that there will be an average reduction in premiums for businesses of around 3 per cent. That will obviously vary, but those who are doing the right thing, those who have a good record, will in fact have major cuts, sometimes up towards 10 per cent. This is good for business, it is good for safety — because everyone wants to stay safe — but it is also good for Victorians. It is an all-round fantastic initiative.

We also have some really wonderful initiatives for concession holders. We have already expanded the 17.5 per cent electricity bill concession to apply all year round, not just during winter. That is important in Bayswater because we have in the district a slightly higher than average proportion of residents over the age of 65 and also of one-parent families, so that is very good news for locals there. We are also increasing funding for concessions by more than 30 per cent over two years across the board. There are various different initiatives within that. In fact through our concession initiatives we are delivering over \$150 million more in concessions than Labor did in its last term.

For seniors there will be additional funding for HACC (home and community care). We know that there are about 300 000 Victorians who rely on HACC

programs. Those are being expanded. Also, for those who are self-funded retirees, those who are wanting to change properties, perhaps downsize, there is a fantastic initiative of land transfer stamp duty exemptions for properties and also a lowering of the gap between the rates. There will also be a lowering of concession fares. The public transport benefits for concession holders are going to be expanded.

Then of course there is the myki system, which we had thrust upon us. So much money had been spent on that that there was really no way out for us, and the independent investigation into it said we basically needed to keep it. When I look at what we spent on myki and what was spent on the desalination plant, it is incredible. If you just take the desal plant, at a cost of almost \$2 million a day to the Victorian people, if you worked that out over a year and divided it between the 88 Assembly electorates, we would each gain just over \$8 million that we could spend on local services. Imagine the number of schools that could be rebuilt, imagine the number of hospitals that could be built, the roads that could be fixed. All the things the opposition is crying out for could be achieved if we had that extra \$8 million a year in our electorates to be able to do the stuff that is really needed.

It has rained; it happens in Australia, and we do not need a desalination plant. This is a great financial step forward for Victoria. I commend the Treasurer. It is a very good budget.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Dandenong) — Nirvana has arrived in Victoria! It is utopia suddenly overnight because of the Baillieu government! The rest of the Victorian public has a very different opinion. If you go and ask any average Victorian out there, they will say that we have gone from a government with a AAA credit rating, a government that had a vision to a government that is just barely crawling. It has no idea. It was all about getting into government, the usual sort of Liberal thing — Liberal members get into government but then have no idea what to do when they get there except for cut, cut, cut. They hate public servants, they hate low-income people being supported, particularly in these tough economic times, and they go on with the same old rhetoric.

I have been in this chamber now for the last couple of hours, and every coalition member has done the same thing — bagged the GST, when even the budget papers themselves show that in actual dollars more GST is coming into Victoria now than in the previous budget. For political reasons they want to attack the federal Labor government, but I remind them that these are similar complaints to the complaints we had when we

were in government. The formula for the GST carve-up that applies now is the same formula that was created when Peter Costello was the Treasurer of Australia.

If government members are really concerned about the lack of GST revenue, as we were concerned with that formula, they should not complain about Prime Minister Gillard, they should go and talk to the coalition governments in all the other states. Queensland and Western Australia should give us money back, because the formula is simply an old formula that was based on the economy of Australia back in the 1950s, when we did not have mining booms and tourism booms. It was so that we could support the large, less-developed states, because manufacturing was the key driver of the Australian economy. These are the formulas we are stuck with. If we want to be realists and be honest with the public, let us do it there rather than play politics about Prime Minister Gillard.

The reality is: there is more money in the budget. All we really have is a whole range of excuses for why the government is not doing a whole lot of things that the public would normally expect governments to do — like to fund the TAFE sector properly, not to decimate it with, in effect, a de facto privatisation. That is the philosophical approach of this government. It should be honest and come out and say, ‘We want a level playing field, and we want the private sector to pick up the market share from the TAFE sector, from the government sector. We want to do it that way because our philosophical approach is about small government, and we don’t really care about the quality of education because we believe the market will fix that up’. It should be honest and come out and say that, rather than repeating all the lies about desal plants that we keep on hearing. We all know that funding for any water infrastructure or any electricity infrastructure does not come direct from a line in the budget; it comes out of the bills that water customers and electricity customers pay. Of course it does.

The government is just looking for excuses. It inherited a AAA credit rating, and it has squandered it. It has gone from having the strongest economy to being laughed at by other parts of Australia. New South Wales, which was the basket case, is suddenly running miles ahead of Victoria. Why? Because it has a vision and it had a deliberate strategy for creating confidence in the marketplace. This government came in and spent nearly two years demonising the previous government. Despite the comments from the financial markets and the business sector about the strong budget and the infrastructure pipeline that was supporting the Victorian economy and making Victoria more efficient and more productive and supporting business that way at a

difficult time for manufacturing, we have fallen way behind. We have lost so many jobs. We have no jobs plan and we have no jobs vision. The government says, ‘Let the market rule. Let us not intervene’.

That is very different to what the New South Wales government is doing. That is why we have fallen behind. If you do not have the infrastructure projects in the pipeline, clearly you are generating a lack of confidence in the marketplace and in the manufacturing sector, which very much depends on these major infrastructure works. The government is like the schoolchild who did not study or do its homework and failed, but is complaining about the teacher — ‘The teacher was too tough on me’. The government says, ‘Oh, we didn’t get funding for the east–west link. We didn’t get funding for the port of Hastings’. Do you know what? You never get funding from the federal government until you have a committed project. That means that if you go and do your research and your studies and your site analyses and your drillings in order to put your business case together, which is an essential part of mapping the whole project — and by mapping the whole project, you can actually put a cost to it — then you can go to the government.

Let us not forget that Infrastructure Australia criticised Victoria because it had not done its homework. Now Baillieu government members have the audacity to come into this place and say, ‘Oh, gee, we would really love to do these projects, but the mean, nasty federal Labor government won’t do it’. No, they did not do their homework, and of course they did not get the money. It is like the kid who did not do its work and failed, and then blamed the poor old teacher and everything else except its own lack of commitment and effort. That is exactly what we are seeing. As a result, Victoria has been duded. There is no reason why these studies could not have been done a year ago. It is not a huge amount of money compared to the investment they have made in the budget. They could have done that rather than demonise a whole lot of other projects that they were going to commit to anyway. With the regional rail link what did they do? They messed around with that for ages. Finally they committed to it.

I understand that when there is a change of government there is a tendency to want to provide distance from the past, to differentiate, to demonise and to say things were all bad and to say costs have blown out. We had the same thing when we came to government in 1999. We had major cost blow-outs. I was responsible for Federation Square, and at the first meeting I had with Major Projects Victoria I was told, ‘Minister, this project is going to cost \$550 million and we only got \$110 million’. When you take over Docklands they say,

'Minister, Docklands is pretty dead. We're going to have to spend \$40-odd million to do the Collins Street bridge to reactivate it'. That was stuff the previous government had on the books but had not funded. That is the reality. When you come into government there are a whole lot of unexpected things. But the government has also made a whole lot of commitments that are not priorities — this is one of the areas where the business sector has criticised the government. There are a whole lot of smaller scale capital projects but they are not high priorities in the sense of the economic efficiency of the state. They are actually political commitments.

That is evident in the schools list; there are only three schools in Labor electorates that will get funding. The reality is, as we all know as members, that we all want stuff to happen in our electorates but we also have to be patient. We know that every region in the education department provides a list of priorities for schools, based on a range of competing needs. You come in as a political party, you go to the electorate and you pick out a whole lot of nice, needy, worthy projects in your electorate, and suddenly you have to find money for those. You make those choices, and that is fine — you went out to the public, you made the choices. But are they the most productive investments to put the money into? Are they investments that will have economic returns as well? They are simply political commitments. They are worthy, but — like the New Street rail crossing in Brighton — they might be priority number 223 compared to a whole lot of other stuff.

Please let us understand that the public has every right to be cynical about this government, and ask: what is its vision? What is its plan? What is its direction? Yes, of course we want to have budgets that are reasonably balanced, but there are choices about what is hit. Where is it that the government has hit? It has hit 4000 public sector jobs. It has hit 2000 jobs in TAFE. It has hit the TAFE sector so severely that Chisholm TAFE has had one-third of its budget disappear. What does that mean with the courses that will no longer be available? What does it mean for the people in those communities who will either not get the courses they want to study to advance their careers or will have to travel greater distances?

What happens to all the infrastructure that has been put in place, new infrastructure, in all those campuses that now will not be used and will be underutilised and remain dormant? What happens with all those courses that remain? One of the priorities for the TAFEs would be to try to maintain as many courses as they can by jacking up the course fees. This government, which

says it is concerned about the cost of living, is forcing extra costs on the people who can least afford it. The people who go to TAFE are the most needy, and regional MPs should understand that a lot better. TAFE is often the only tertiary institution that locals can choose to go to if they do not want to leave their local areas.

What the government is really saying is, 'We don't really care about that, we have a different philosophical approach'. Even the good, private RTOs (registered training organisations) out there are worried about the lack of direction and how the government is going to implement this. They are worried about the sharks and the fly-by-nighters, like those we saw with international education. They believe, and I agree, that similar things are going to start happening in this area, because this is all really just a cost-cutting exercise, not a focus on quality and need.

What else do we do? We do not even pass on the full benefits to pensioner concessions. We sit there and give them 2 per cent while we get a 2.5 per cent pay rise. On paper it might not look like a lot of money, but collectively it is quite a few hundred million dollars. When the ministers were sitting around at the expenditure review committee they made a deliberate decision to take away entitlements to pensioners to go and spend them on other things. Governments are about choices, and this government deliberately chose not to pass on the full inflation cost to pension concessions, even though the budget papers show that inflation is higher than 2 per cent.

What does the government do? It takes away the School Start bonus, which is so important to so many families as their children start primary and secondary school — that first year when costs are suddenly through the roof. Thankfully we have a federal government that actually recognises the importance of this and is putting money back in the system, rewarding parents and acknowledging that there are costs of education. This government just wants to take from the people who can least afford it, simply because they tend not to be people who vote for the coalition. That is the reality.

Those people are like the people in Dandenong. There is nothing new in this budget for Dandenong — nothing new in terms of facilities. All this budget brings is pain, cost and the area being overlooked again. Even in the budget papers the government tries to trump it up. Its press release says there are new mental health beds at Dandenong. We are the ones who built the new mental health hospital. We doubled the beds, and we put the funding in place. There just happens to be money in the

budget for the beds again this year. Thanks for acknowledging us and thanks for acknowledging our investment and commitment, because I can tell you it is only Labor governments that fund things in places like Dandenong — absolutely it is.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS — I have been in this place long enough to have seen what the Kennett government did not fund in seven and a half years — to have seen what it closed, cut and did not invest in.

We make choices, and the choices we made as Labor governments were to put money into hospitals, schools and community facilities and to make sure that the lowest income earners are protected from any difficulties in the economy. To come in here as the Treasurer did and tell us, ‘It is the worst financial position Victoria has ever been in’ — well, it is not. The global financial crisis we had a few years ago was the most difficult time in recent years. We had to face pressures, including the downturn in the economy, and we still delivered a surplus budget.

This is a government of excuses and a government that just wants to manage; it is managerialist, it lacks vision and it has lost the confidence of this state. That is why we are seeing job losses. The private sector is using this opportunity to sit there and say, ‘You know what? Ted is not going to come after us. Ted is not going to sit down and try to renegotiate’.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! Members of Parliament will be referred to by their correct title.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS — Yes — the Premier. This is not a government that tries to protect jobs and that has a role of intervening in an appropriate, proactive, affordable way in the marketplace to be able to protect jobs and provide some growth in a difficult economic climate. That is why this economy is slowing down and that is why we are seeing so many job losses and that is why this budget is very disappointing for all Victorians, not just the people of Dandenong.

The government should just be honest and simply say: ‘We believe in small government and we believe in a small public sector — that is our philosophical approach’. Be honest and say that, because all that means is fewer front-line people. We are seeing Department of Primary Industries district offices closing. We are going to see TAFE jobs disappear. We are seeing a whole lot of jobs going from the Department of Sustainability and Environment. We are going to see that all over the place from a government

that basically keeps on telling us, ‘They are not front line, though’. No, they are real people who do real jobs for the community and on behalf of the community.

Debated adjourned on motion of Mr MORRIS (Mornington).

Debated adjourned until later this day.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Statement of compatibility

Mr CLARK (Attorney-General) 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 (charter act), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Working with Children Amendment Bill 2012.

In my opinion, the Working with Children Amendment Bill 2012, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights set out in part 2 of the charter act. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview of bill

The bill makes a number of amendments to the Working with Children Act 2005 (the act) that strengthen the protection of children by:

strengthening the tests that must be satisfied before an assessment notice is given;

changing and expanding the categories of offences, including making murder a category 1 offence and adding a range of older offences that, despite being serious, are not presently captured by the act;

ensuring that persons who have been convicted of or charged with serious offences and who apply for a WWC check are not able to work with children while an assessment of their application is being conducted;

ensuring that persons who have a current WWC assessment notice but are convicted of or charged with serious offences have their assessment notice suspended while their eligibility is reassessed;

clarifying provisions relating to applications to VCAT by persons subject to supervision or detention orders under the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009.

Human rights issues

The bill raises a number of human rights issues. However, it is my view that the provisions are compatible with the charter act for the reasons set out below.

Changes to application categories

The bill makes a number of amendments that change the category of offences and increases the range of offences that attract the provisions of the act.

Clause 3 makes the offence of murder a category 1 offence. This means that the secretary must refuse to give an assessment notice (section 12(2)). In such circumstances only VCAT can grant an assessment notice.

Clause 4(2) amends section 13(1)(g) to render applications by persons charged with murder as a category 2 application, thereby requiring the secretary to refuse the application unless the secretary is satisfied that the person would not pose an unjustifiable risk to children (section 13(2)).

Clause 5 expands the offences that render the application a category 3 application, including a range of older Victorian offences that have since been amended.

I consider that these amendments are consistent with the offences already listed in the act, and with the overriding purpose of protecting children. They do not effect any changes that would result in incompatibility with human rights in the charter act.

Clause 10 — Suspension of a person's assessment notice during reassessment

Under section 21 of the act, the secretary must reassess a person's eligibility to hold an assessment notice in certain circumstances, including when she is notified that the person has been charged with or been convicted or found guilty of a category 1 or 2 offence. However, under the current act, a person is currently able to engage in child-related work pending the reassessment. Category 1 and 2 offences are serious matters and, in the government's view, this does not provide sufficient protection for children.

Clause 10(1) of the bill changes this position to provide that the secretary must suspend a person's assessment notice upon being made aware that the person has been charged with or been convicted or found guilty of a category 1 or 2 offence. The secretary is then required to reassess the person's eligibility to hold an assessment notice pursuant to section 21 of the act. A person whose assessment notice has been suspended is treated as not having a current assessment notice for the period of the suspension (clause 10(3)). This means that a person whose assessment notice is suspended would be guilty of an offence if he or she engages in child-related work during the suspension period. In addition to the reassessment under section 21, clause 10(2) provides that the secretary may reinstate the person's assessment notice if the charge against the person is withdrawn, the charge is dismissed by a court, or the person is acquitted of the offence by a court.

Clause 10(5) of the bill also requires the secretary to notify in writing any person whose assessment notice is suspended and any person (of whom the secretary knows) who is or is proposing to, engage that person in child-related work, or any agency with whom the person is listed.

I consider that these provisions are compatible with the human rights in the charter act. I acknowledge that suspension occurs automatically; that this may involve a significant restriction upon a person's ability to engage in their employment; and that the notification to the person's employer and agency with whom they are registered may

affect the person's reputation. As a result, it is arguable that the right to privacy (section 13) is engaged.

I do not consider that the right to a fair hearing (section 24(1)) is engaged because:

a suspension resulting from a charge of a criminal offence will not affect the right of the person to have the charge heard and determined by a court in the normal way; and

the suspension is not a civil proceeding to which the person is a party under section 24. (The terms of section 24 in this regard are quite different to article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights in this regard making overseas decisions on that article inapplicable in this context.)

I do not consider that the provisions engage the rights in sections 26 (right not to be tried or punished more than once) and 27 (right not to have a penalty imposed for a criminal offence which is greater than that which applied at the time of commission of the offence) of the charter act. The purpose and effect of the WWC provisions is not to impose additional penalties on offenders for a criminal offence but to protect children. While the presumption of innocence in section 25(1) will need to be respected by the secretary and VCAT in carrying out their reassessments where a person is charged with an offence, the provisions are compatible with that right.

In my view, the provisions are compatible with the right to privacy in section 13. Section 13 rights have to fit with the interests of children and the responsibilities of society and parents and guardians in protecting children as well as the specific right of children to protection under section 17 of the charter. Category 1 and 2 offences are serious matters. Category 1 offences include serious sexual offences committed by an adult against a child victim. Category 2 offences include serious violent and drug-related offences. The fact that a person has been convicted of or charged with such an offence raises very real concerns for the safety of children. I consider it is appropriate that the person is suspended from engaging in child-related work until the secretary or VCAT are satisfied that the person does not pose an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above, I consider that the bill is compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Hon. Robert Clark, MP
Attorney-General

Second reading

Mr CLARK (Attorney-General) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The sexual and violent abuse of children are appalling offences against innocent and vulnerable victims that can inflict a lifetime of pain and suffering.

The objective of the Working with Children Act 2005 (the act) is to help protect children from physical or

sexual harm by requiring that people who work with, or care for, children have their suitability to do so checked by a government body.

Since commencement of the act in 2006, and as of 30 April this year, over 910 000 Victorians have applied for a working-with-children check and approximately 1024 people have been issued with a negative notice, thereby preventing them from lawfully engaging in child-related work.

On 30 June 2011, the working-with-children check completed its five-year phasing in of 20 occupational categories so that all people engaged in child-related work across these 20 occupational fields are now required by law to obtain a working-with-children check.

However, the government has become increasingly concerned about the operation of a key aspect of the scheme, namely the tests that are applied when deciding whether or not to issue a working-with-children check.

This concern applies both to the tests the Secretary to the Department of Justice is required to apply when assessing applications and to the tests VCAT is required to apply when it considers a category 1 application or reviews a decision by the secretary.

The top priority of the tests for deciding on working-with-children-check applications should be the interests of children and their families. However, the tests that apply under the current law are too focused on the interests of the individuals who apply for checks.

The changes proposed by this bill will instead ensure working-with-children-check tests give priority to the interests and welfare of children and their families, including when VCAT is reviewing decisions by the secretary to refuse to issue a working-with-children check for applicants whom the secretary has assessed as posing an unacceptable risk to children.

The bill also makes three other substantive amendments, as well as various housekeeping or consequential amendments.

Purposes of the bill

The main purposes of the bill are to:

strengthen the tests to be satisfied before a working-with-children check is given or maintained;

prevent a person, who has made a category 1 or 2 application, from engaging in child-related work while his or her application for a check is assessed;

make murder a category 1 offence;

authorise the secretary to the Department of Justice to revoke a working-with-children check if the holder fails to provide the secretary with requested information.

I now turn to the key substantive elements of the bill.

Strengthening the tests to be satisfied before a working-with-children check is issued

The bill will strengthen the tests applied by the secretary and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for obtaining and maintaining a working-with-children check to provide more guidance in determining a person's suitability to hold a working-with-children check and thereby engage in child-related work.

At present, upon receiving an application for a check, the secretary determines the category into which the application falls:

category 1 applications include the most serious sexual offences committed by an adult against a child as well as child pornography offences;

category 2 applications are the most serious sexual, drug and violent offences;

category 3 applications include less serious offences.

For category 1 applications, the secretary must refuse to issue a working-with-children check and must issue that person a negative notice.

Category 2 and 3 applications have a statutory test to be applied by the secretary, and on review, by VCAT.

For category 1 applications:

in deciding the application, VCAT applies an 'unjustifiable risk to the safety of children' ('unjustifiable risk') test and a 'public interest' test;

VCAT cannot direct that a working-with-children check be issued unless it is satisfied that the applicant does not pose an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children and it is in the public interest to do so.

For category 2 applications:

the secretary applies the 'unjustifiable risk' test;

in reviewing category 2 decisions, VCAT applies the same test in addition to the 'public interest' test.

For category 3 applications:

the secretary must give a working-with-children check unless satisfied that it is appropriate to refuse to do so ('appropriate to refuse to do so' test);

in reviewing category 3 decisions, VCAT applies this same test and the 'public interest' test.

Apart from these category applications, the secretary can also refuse a working-with-children check in exceptional circumstances, where there is a significant link between the offence and a risk to the safety of children. For these cases both the secretary and VCAT apply the 'unjustifiable risk' test.

Once a person has a working-with-children check, they are subject to weekly ongoing monitoring by Victoria Police. If the holder of the check is subsequently charged with, convicted or found guilty of a relevant offence, the secretary must reassess their eligibility and can revoke the check if the person is deemed unsuitable to engage in child-related work.

The amendments made by the bill will strengthen the 'unjustifiable risk' test so that:

the secretary and VCAT cannot be satisfied as to the 'unjustifiable risk' test unless satisfied that a reasonable person would allow his or her child to have direct contact with the applicant in an unsupervised capacity while the applicant is engaged in any type of child-related work. That is, would a reasonable person as parent or guardian agree to their child being cared for by the applicant in an unsupervised capacity?

further, the secretary and VCAT must be satisfied that the applicant is able to engage in any type of child-related work without posing an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children. This recognises the portability of a working-with-children check once issued.

The 'appropriate to refuse to do so' test is maintained for category 3 applications, but the bill strengthens that test by adding to it in a similar manner to the changes to the category 1 and 2 tests.

In addition to strengthening these tests, the bill will clarify that the 'public interest' test is a secondary test to be considered by VCAT only after VCAT has determined that the applicant does not pose an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children or that it is not appropriate to refuse a working-with-children check.

Removing the ability to engage in child-related work on an application receipt or during a period of reassessment on category 1 and 2 notifications

The bill will add further protections for children by removing the right of an applicant to engage in child-related work on an application receipt or during a period of reassessment, where the applicant or person who holds a check has a serious criminal history or charge.

This amendment will make it an offence for a person with a charge, conviction or finding of guilt in relation to a category 1 or category 2 offence from engaging in child-related work while their application is being assessed or their suitability to engage in child-related work is being reassessed.

In the case of a person who already has a working-with-children check and has been charged, convicted or found guilty of a category 1 or category 2 offence, the secretary will be able to immediately suspend that person's working-with-children check while their suitability to engage in child-related work is reassessed. If the charges are withdrawn or dismissed by a court, the suspended check can be reinstated.

There is a strong public interest and expectation that people with a serious criminal history or facing serious criminal charges should not be able to work with children until such time as it is determined otherwise.

For those applicants who have no criminal history there will be no change and they can continue to expect to be automatically issued with a working-with-children check. For applicants with a relevant charge or offence, a full assessment is conducted by the secretary prior to engaging in child-related work. People in these categories intending to engage in child-related work will be required to obtain their working-with-children check prior to commencing work rather than relying on an application receipt.

Murder as a category 1 offence

A further substantive amendment is to make murder a category 1 offence. Currently, murder is treated in the act as a category 2 offence. The change to a category 1 offence is considered more in keeping with the need to protect children and the treatment of serious offenders. As a category 1 offence, the secretary will be required to refuse a working-with-children check and issue a negative notice where an applicant has been convicted of murder. The applicant may, however, apply to VCAT for a working-with-children check.

Revoking a working-with-children check for failure to provide requested information

The bill will provide the secretary with the power to revoke a working-with-children check where the holder fails to provide the secretary with requested information. Currently, the secretary can request that a person who holds a working-with-children check to provide further information during a reassessment. If the holder fails to provide the information, the secretary can suspend that person's check for up to six months. After this six-month period, however, the suspended working-with-children check becomes valid again even if the requested information has not been provided.

The bill will give the secretary the power to revoke a working-with-children check where the person holding the check fails to provide the requested information following the suspension period. A revoked working-with-children check prevents that person from lawfully engaging in child-related work. If the person still wants a working-with-children check, then they can apply for one in the usual manner and undergo the usual assessment.

This amendment strengthens the scheme by ensuring that people who may present a risk to the safety of children are not able to maintain their working-with-children check and engage in child-related work unless the secretary has been provided with all relevant information.

In addition to the substantive amendments the bill seeks to improve the operation of the scheme through a number of housekeeping amendments.

Clarifying provisions relating to applications to VCAT by persons subject to supervision or detention orders

The bill will prescribe persons subject to supervision and detention orders under the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 as a category of person unable to apply to VCAT for a review of the secretary's decision except in the case of mistaken identity. This aligns with the current treatment of registered sex offenders under the act.

Clarifying the process to be applied for conducting a reassessment of a person's ongoing suitability to hold a working-with-children check

The bill will clarify the process to be applied by the secretary when reassessing a person's ongoing suitability to hold a working-with-children check where there has been a relevant change in circumstances. Specifically, the secretary will be required to conduct a

reassessment according to the test which applies in respect of the offence which triggered the reassessment rather than any offence already considered by the secretary or VCAT in granting the current working-with-children check.

Capturing earlier Victorian offences

The bill will capture earlier Victorian offences within the act. Adding the earlier version of the offences of 'causing injury intentionally or recklessly' and 'obscene exposure' as defined in the Crimes Act 1958 and the Summary Offences Act 1966 respectively, will enhance the rigour of the scheme by allowing such offences to be considered by the secretary when assessing a person's suitability to hold a working-with-children check.

Streamlining the move from a volunteer to an employee working-with-children check

Finally, the bill will streamline the process for moving from a volunteer working-with-children check to an employee check. The secretary will be able to consider an application from a volunteer who wishes to move to an employee working-with-children check without having regard to any offences or conduct that were already considered in issuing the volunteer working-with-children check. This will improve the timely processing of applications.

Consequential amendments

The ability of the secretary to suspend a working-with-children check needs to be reflected in the accredited driver exemption provisions in the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983. The bill makes consequential amendments to this act to ensure consistency between the schemes.

There is strong public acceptance of and support for the working-with-children check scheme. The amendments made by this bill will strengthen and improve the operation of the scheme and enhance the protection of children from physical and sexual harm, in line with the government's ongoing commitment to protect children, support their families and build stronger, safer communities.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr WYNNE (Richmond).

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 7 June.

APPROPRIATION (2012/2013) BILL 2012*Second reading***Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr WELLS (Treasurer).**

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — It is a great pleasure to rise to address the appropriation bill. It has been an interesting debate, and before I come to the substance of my contribution I want to respond to at least one earlier contribution. The member for Dandenong made some interesting comments, but I will let those pass. I do want to comment on the contribution of the member for Broadmeadows. I have to say that it was beautifully written and beautifully read.

Mr Katos — It was eloquent.

Mr MORRIS — It was eloquent, as the member for South Barwon said. It was absolutely eloquent. I think at one stage I heard him quoting himself with approval. I certainly heard him quoting Robbie Burns. You will not find me quoting either of those people. I want to bring some accuracy to the comments made by the member for Broadmeadows and other members about the issue of unemployment in Victoria. The member for Broadmeadows in particular made some rather extravagant claims.

I draw his attention and the attention of the house to the most recent employment figures — April 2012 — which show that Victoria has an unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent. The unemployment rate in the state of Victoria exceeded 5.3 per cent for a total of 83 months under the former government — that is 83 months of a total of 134 months in government. For two-thirds of the Labor Party's most recent terms in office in this state Victoria exceeded its current unemployment rate. The second point I want to make in relation to the unemployment rate is that I was very pleased to observe, again in the April 2012 unemployment figures, that we have a participation rate in this state of 65.4 per cent. That is the third best of all the states. We are behind only Western Australia and Queensland, which we know are both resource-rich states and have had incredible labour shortages. Given the current circumstances in the nation we need to have accurate figures.

I am very pleased to return to the appropriation bill and indeed to the budget, which was brought down in this house a bit over three weeks ago by our colleague the Treasurer. I must say it does seem a lot longer than three weeks since the budget came down. I have spent the two intervening weeks sitting in the Public

Accounts and Estimates Committee with minister after minister passing through. There is sometimes a feeling of Groundhog Day, and certainly a bit of cabin fever develops amongst those who are in the room for those 50-plus hours, but it is a useful experience. I would not suggest that all of my colleagues should sit through it, but if they have an interest in a particular portfolio or area of government administration, it is useful from that point of view.

As I have said on more than one occasion, we are in extremely challenging times. We are facing a more difficult economic situation than has been the case in this state for many years. There is a difficult global environment, and of course we have local revenue issues as well. From the debate we have heard so far, it seems that many members do not have any meaningful recollection of the Cain-Kirner years. I am not suggesting that John Cain in particular or the government that he led did not do some things right. It was a reforming government, and in particular many of the social measures he introduced were worthwhile and had the support of the population.

However, in economic terms Labor was an abject and total failure. The philosophy was 'Spend your way out of it'. It was a philosophy which said, 'Just keep throwing money at it and hopefully, eventually, you might achieve something'. That was the philosophy of the Cain and Kirner governments, that was the philosophy of Rudd government, that is the philosophy of the Gillard government and that seems to be the philosophy of the current opposition.

I suggest that the opposition has learnt nothing from history. It has learnt absolutely nothing from experience. We have had a decade where expenditure rose at a faster rate than income. That in itself means that action is necessary, that you cannot go on that way forever. But of course the situation has been compounded by a series of black holes, a series of cost blow-outs involving poor management, corner cutting and abject policy failures in so many areas. Indeed the more you put the Labor years under the microscope, the more you realise just how many failures, how many blow-outs and how many poor decisions there were.

In a time of surging revenues we had a state economy underwritten, it has to be said, by the economic brilliance of the Howard-Costello team and an economy that was on a very firm foundation put in place by Premier Kennett. We all recall the conditions that prevailed in 1992 before Premier Kennett took office. We were very much a rust bucket state. Premier Kennett did so much of the hard work to put Victoria on a sound and sustainable footing, and the Labor

governments that succeeded him lived off the back of that for a very long time. However, the point needs to be made that it was not, of course, just one, two or three people sitting on this side of the house who did so much of that work. The credit for the outcomes that were achieved by the Kennett government has to go to the Victorian people. They were the ones who did the work, they were the ones who put their shoulders to the wheel and they were the ones who achieved the outcomes that the Labor Party was able to live off for 11 years.

When there was a real opportunity to capitalise on the foundation that had been laid and on the work being done by John Howard and Peter Costello, that opportunity was squandered by the Labor Party. It was in fact a betrayal of all of those Victorians who worked so hard for so long to get the state back on a path of growth. Labor failed to keep pace with the growing demands of population. It failed to invest in the infrastructure or the services required to meet the needs of a growing population; it failed to deliver on every front. Yet for the entire period that Labor was in office its expenditure soared.

Why is any of this important in terms of this budget? It is important because this is the legacy that we have been left, these are the challenges that we have to deal with and yet you would think from listening to the debate that Victoria had been left in A-grade condition economically. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr Noonan — No, it is AAA.

Mr MORRIS — The interjection is that it is AAA, and that is correct. It was AAA — —

Mr Noonan interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! Enough interjections and enough chat in the chamber.

Mr MORRIS — It was AAA in terms of investment grade, and that is an important point, but it does not take into account the missed opportunities and the overexpenditure. What we are talking about is not what the ratings were or what they need to be; it is the services and the infrastructure forgone, the works that should have been done, the drag that we now have on our economy because of the lost opportunities and the debt that we now have to carry because of the Labor government's investment in totally unproductive infrastructure. We had of course, as members will recall, a rail system that was crippled by underinvestment, a failure to maintain the network and a failure to confront the restrictive work practices of

some employees in that system. We had a serious underinvestment in Victoria Police and that necessitated — —

Mr Noonan — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Mornington has been speaking for almost 10 minutes without one single reflection upon this appropriation bill, and I would ask you to draw him back to the bill.

Mr MORRIS — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the underlying circumstances, the environment and the legacy inherited from the former government are an integral part of the current budget. They frame the circumstances of this appropriation.

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

Mr Noonan — On a further point of order, Acting Speaker, if the member for Mornington cannot make one reflection upon this budget in relation to his own electorate of Mornington — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! That is not a point of order. I do not uphold the point of order, and I will say that all speakers from both sides have been given a lot of latitude in what they are saying today.

Mr MORRIS — It has to be said the underinvestment in infrastructure and the debt we are carrying is undoubtedly a millstone around the neck of Victorians. We had 11 years of wasted opportunities.

Mr Eren interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Victoria) — Order! The member for Lara has had his turn.

Mr MORRIS — In my own electorate — and this is just so typical of the approach taken by the Labor Party for so long — there was commitment after commitment to do something about the Mornington pier. In the 2006 election campaign a cast-iron figure was finally put on the reconstruction works for the Mornington pier, and yet by, I think it was, September 2010 nothing had been done. Then all of a sudden there was a rush of activity, the project started and \$3.5 million was provided. I have commented on this in the house before, but Labor could not complete the project within the budget in the time allocated. It totally failed to deliver the project. The pier was built but the wave screens were not fitted. There was a 60 per cent blow-out in terms of cost to get the project done and the project was not completed. It has taken a coalition government to get it done.

Mr Katos interjected.

Mr MORRIS — I will not take up that interjection. It has taken a coalition government to get it done, and I certainly thank the Minister for Ports for the investment that will soon be made to finish Labor's incomplete projects and Labor's mess. That is an analogy.

With 2 minutes to go I am very pleased to support the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012 and to support the budget on which it stands. It takes the first step toward restoring the state's finances. Despite the challenges to revenue, the debt load and the legacy that we inherited from our predecessors, this budget contains a record infrastructure spend by the state, greater than any government ever in this state.

I want to particularly recognise the response to the investigation into child protection — a \$336 million package. I commend both the Minister for Community Services and the Premier for their leadership in this field. This is an opportunity that Labor refused to take throughout its time in office. It had opportunity after opportunity yet nothing was done. So we have a package in this budget that provides \$80 million to strengthen the child protection system; \$52 million to increase support to families; \$48 million for early years services; \$41 million to reform court processes; \$70 million to increase capacity and improve outcomes for children in state care; \$10 million for a new Children's Court at Broadmeadows; and \$9.1 million extra for out-of-home care. It is the most significant package in this field in the state's history, and I commend everyone involved in the process — and I know that includes a number of ministers.

I conclude by saying this is a good budget in very difficult times. The external environment is incredibly challenging, we have had to deal with substantial revenue reductions across a range of revenue sources and the profligacy of the former government has left us an enormous legacy burden. The budget will ensure that the Victorian economy can deal with the challenges of the present and is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities of the future.

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — I wish to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. It is unfortunate that this right-wing, conservative government is not taking this great state anywhere. When you consider the previous budget and this year's budget, you realise that the government has no vision for the great state of Victoria. It is only interested in a political budget surplus, and it has relied on a 12.5 per cent increase to speed camera fines to achieve that surplus. During the coalition's long time in opposition

it was a different story. The coalition then said that speed cameras were revenue raisers and that is all; now it has done an about-face. What sort of spin doctoring is that? Labor handed down a AAA budget and a surplus every year, but after 18 months under the new government the state has gone backwards. How could this have happened so soon? Unfortunately we are back to the dark, old days of former Premier Kennett.

We are seeing the gradual demise of the TAFE system. The Premier and the government should understand that decent, beautiful Victorians cannot all be brain surgeons or corporate lawyers — or even architects! More than \$290 million has been taken from the TAFE sector in the budget, which will result in the loss of 1500 jobs in that sector. Chisholm TAFE has campuses in my electorate of Cranbourne, in Frankston and in Dandenong, to name just a few. It has had a funding cut of \$25.5 million on top of the \$4 million that was taken from it in the last budget. I am interested to know what the member for Frankston will say about this — when he is not doing other things!

The government says, 'We have got it all in hand'. Interestingly, the Minister for Education went to Casey and said the government had increased the budget for the TAFE sector by \$1.3 billion. What he conveniently omitted was the fact that the \$1.3 billion figure is for the whole vocational education sector, which contains only 18 public TAFEs but almost 500 private registered training organisations, among which there are a few good ones and there are shonky ones. What great spin doctoring that is.

There are 365 000 students enrolled in the TAFE system, most of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are going to lose out on a good quality education with these cutbacks. Putting public and private providers on an equal footing amounts to privatisation by stealth. Cutting public investment in education and training is not only false economy but also bad governing. Chisholm Institute of TAFE will lose over \$15 million in full service provider funding — that is, for staff salaries at the public sector level, libraries and other services — and over \$5 million in tuition funding based on contact hours. The government will force students to pay the difference. The contact hours could be anything from 200 to about 400, which means students will end up paying an extra \$600 to \$1200 — or more — for a simple certificate course. This will cut the demand for such courses, and at the end of the day TAFEs will have to close their doors when it comes to such courses.

For diploma courses funding will be cut by about \$5 to \$6 per hour, and students enrolled in a course that

requires about 800 contact hours will have to pay an extra \$4000 to \$5000. Students in diploma courses are entitled to commonwealth loans, but why would such students take a TAFE course when higher education contribution scheme funding is available for students enrolled in a university course? These changes will hit the TAFE system very hard. The government boasts about not cutting funding for apprenticeships, but they are only 14 per cent of the total share. The Baillieu government is creating an environment where people from low-income families will not be able to get a good education in the TAFE system. The government must think such people are Labor voters.

Unfortunately the government has decided to dump the much-needed first home bonus as well. This will affect not only jobs but also many couples who wish to build their dream first home in the Frankston, Skye, Carrum Downs and Cranbourne areas. Overall this is a strong attack on the already ailing Victorian home building industry. The shrinkage of this industry will flow into other sectors of the economy, destroying many jobs. This will trigger many more cuts in other areas to balance future budgets.

This action also shows that the Baillieu government has no jobs plan. Overall Victorians are confused about what the Baillieu government stands for. The Victorian unemployment rate is around 5.5 per cent, and unfortunately it is still climbing. Working people are losing their jobs on a daily basis, and on top of this situation the Baillieu government is planning to axe 4200 public service jobs, thereby breaking an election promise. Victoria has shed more jobs than any other state, and it has gone from being the second-fastest growing economy in 2010–11 to lagging behind the pack.

Last year spending by foreign students fell by \$1 billion. This is a time when government needs to provide vital financial oxygen to the economy through budget measures or otherwise, but since December it has cut \$1 billion from this year's infrastructure spending. Over the forward estimates, infrastructure spending is forecast to decline as a percentage of gross state product. Net infrastructure spending is down by 42 per cent over three years. That is why the member for Frankston believes that only certified practising accountants are able to deliver good budgets. Maybe his idea of a budget is an income and expenditure account that arrives at a positive balance. Since nobody has repudiated his comments in the last budget debate I believe those views sit comfortably within the Liberal Party's view of the world.

I am sure some will argue that \$670 million will be well spent on a prison to lock up more and more kids going astray without having had the opportunity to get further education when the TAFE system closes its doors to them due to cutbacks of nearly \$300 million. It is worth noting that in the USA at one stage there was more youth from minority communities such as Hispanics, African Americans, Latinos and others in prisons than in colleges. It seems that this right-wing conservative government is keen to follow a similar path in Victoria.

The government has also pinched \$400 million from the water authorities. In total an extraordinary \$8.9 billion worth of cuts and revenue measures will take effect over the next four years. This government's commitment to remain in surplus regardless of other considerations will result in further economic contraction. There is no gain. Under the circumstances the most direct way for the government to assist local manufacturers is through its procurement decisions, yet the most the Baillieu government is willing to promise is only that it will push to buy locally built rolling stock. Victorians would prefer the government to make a firm decision to procure locally for public projects. The government's political goal is to build the capacity to invest in and provide better services in the future. We are seeing predictions of revenue being down by more than \$2 billion a year.

When the Victorian Treasurer announced public sector job cuts in December, slashing 3800 positions, he indicated that they would all be achieved through voluntary redundancies and suggested there were no further cuts planned. When he announced a further 600 public sector job cuts he revealed that government departments can apply for non-voluntary redundancies; therefore there will be non-voluntary redundancies — mass sacking. What that means is that 4200 jobs are being shed from the public sector while 900 people a week are losing their jobs.

The pain will not be limited to the bureaucracy. Fees for a range of offences, such as speeding and swearing, will be raised by 15 per cent, reaping an extra \$296 million over the next four years. This does not sit very well with the government's hollow cost of living rhetoric. The first home bonus will not be renewed when it expires in June, saving about \$163 million next financial year, slightly more than the expected budget surplus. Victoria's home building industry, which has been leading the nation in the last few years, will suffer badly from this decision. This will aggravate the loss of GST and stamp duty revenue and will not help to achieve future budget surpluses. This is a wrong, dumb policy.

The Treasurer says that by making public servants redundant the government would seek to end duplication between state and commonwealth government departments. The concentration would be on service delivery rather than back office jobs. The Treasurer has failed to specify these duplications. Which back office jobs is he talking about cutting? The government also plans to raid its publicly owned businesses to squeeze out \$844 million in dividend payments next financial year. This means less scope for future investment.

Locally we are not seeing a red cent for the much-needed extension of the Cranbourne line to the Cranbourne East railway station. Cranbourne is expected to have a population of more than 27 000 by 2021. Cranbourne East needs a station now more than at any time in its history. As part of its \$38 billion Victorian transport plan the previous Labor government committed \$200 million to construct Cranbourne station with two grade separators. While in opposition Inga Peulich, a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the Council, ran a petition requesting that Cranbourne East station be built before 2010. It is now mid-2012. Mrs Peulich is also reported in the *Cranbourne News* of 7 May 2009 as saying:

I consider anything less than the full funding of Cranbourne East railway station after so many election stunts and promises would be considered a failed state budget for Casey residents and it has turned out that way ...

... It should have been fast-tracked as a key infrastructure and public transport project.

Until the last state election, Mrs Peulich made a lot of calls for a Cranbourne East station, but she is deafeningly silent on this matter now.

There is not even a red cent for the completion of upgrades along Thompson Road. The Labor government invested over \$55 million to upgrade parts of the road, and this government should now duplicate the rest. Before the election Labor pledged \$6.6 million for the installation of traffic lights at the notorious Wedge Road and Frankston-Dandenong Road intersection in Carrum Downs in this term of government. That this government has walked away from fixing this notorious intersection is unfortunate.

I worked with VicRoads officials to get the upgrade of the notorious intersection of Thompson Road and Western Port Highway in Cranbourne West to the planning stage, but again this government has walked away from this much-needed upgrade. I refer to the complete rebuild of Seaford Park Primary School, a school the Minister for Education knows very well. It is a school he was planning to close down, but after public

pressure he backed down. This school needs rebuilding. We must not forget stage 3 of Cranbourne Secondary College. Labor funded \$8 million for stages 1 and 2, but the minister is going to back away — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Morris) — Order! The member's time has expired.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Frankston: conduct

Mr MERLINO (Monbulk) — My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer the minister to media reports on *ABC News* last night that the Speaker had already received evidence from the member for Frankston regarding the probe into potential criminal actions, and I ask: is it police investigatory practice to interview suspects before interviewing witnesses?

Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I thank the member for his question. The member, being a former Minister for Police, should properly know that operational issues are matters for the police.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, clearly if this is an operational matter for Victoria Police, this matter should be sent to Victoria Police. That is the key. The minister has made our case for us. Thank you, Minister!

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister had concluded his answer.

Geelong: jobs

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the house how the government's policies are delivering new jobs for Geelong?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the member for his question. What a fantastic job he does in the Geelong region. He is a long-time resident and generator of jobs in the Geelong region. We were very pleased in the recent budget to provide a record level of \$5.8 billion in state infrastructure spend. Geelong shares in those benefits. More than 300 direct construction jobs will be generated in Geelong from

infrastructure projects funded in last sitting week's state budget.

The budget that is currently before the house delivers more than \$100 million in new infrastructure funding for Geelong. That will fund important upgrades to health, education, transport and police facilities. We welcome those investments, including the more than \$90 million for the Geelong Hospital to generate more than 200 jobs and an extra 64 beds for cancer patients, people needing palliative care and older patients with complex needs. That has been very widely and warmly welcomed by those in the Geelong region.

There is more than \$13 million for a new 24-hour combined police and State Emergency Service station at Waurn Ponds. That will generate more than 40 jobs during construction. That has been warmly and widely welcomed in Geelong. There is more than \$8 million to progress the planning and establishment of the new train station at Grovedale, which will create more than 40 jobs during construction. Again, that has been warmly welcomed in Geelong and widely welcomed. There is more than \$8 million to redevelop facilities at Northern Bay P-12 College, including the Wexford Court and Peacock Avenue P-8 campuses. That will generate up to 20 jobs. There is \$2 million for critical capital works at the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, which will generate up to 8 full-time construction jobs. There is more than \$2 million to plan the Lara to Avalon rail link.

We are also supporting Geelong in other ways, including the direct election of its mayor, which is something that was not delivered by the previous government in 11 years. Again, it has been warmly and widely welcomed.

Mr Trezise interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Geelong

The SPEAKER — Order! I am on my feet. The member for Geelong is to leave the chamber for an hour under standing order 124. Members of the house should be aware that when I am on my feet, everybody will remain silent. I ask the house to come to order and to stay in order.

Honourable member for Geelong withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Geelong: jobs

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — People who care about Geelong would welcome these initiatives. In contrast, as the Treasurer pointed out only a few days ago, the federal Labor government has provided just \$210 million in new infrastructure funding for the entire state in the most recent federal budget.

We also welcome private investment in Geelong, and we were pleased to see today that Woolworths has announced a \$30 million purchase of 16 hectares in the Armstrong Creek activity centre. The Armstrong Creek development is an important development for Geelong; it is estimated it will generate in the longer term 1300 jobs for Geelong. That itself will obviously be very significant. We stand with the people of Geelong. We care about the people of Geelong. Those who do not care will whine, will whine, will whine. We will get on with the job.

Member for Frankston: conduct

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the probe he ordered into the member for Frankston's conduct, and I ask: is the Premier aware of any other investigations which are being carried out into the conduct of the member for Frankston?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the opposition leader for his question. I make the point, as I have made it many times, that claims were made in a newspaper article on Sunday. I do not have in my possession, nor does the government have in its possession, any of the details of those claims. The appropriate place for that to be examined is with the Department of Parliamentary Services, as you know, Speaker.

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked his question.

Mr Andrews interjected.

Mr BAILLIEU — If the Leader of the Opposition has any material he wishes to provide, he should provide it.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, can I put it to you that question time is not an opportunity for the Premier to talk about what I might or might not

have. The question was about whether the Premier was aware of other investigations, and that is what his answer should go to.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier answered the question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier and ministers are entitled to answer questions in the way they see fit as long as they are relevant to the question that was asked. The answer was relevant to the question that was asked.

Gas: regional and rural Victoria

Mr WELLER (Rodney) — My question is to the Deputy Premier, who is also the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. Can the minister advise the house of action the coalition government is taking to deliver natural gas to country communities across regional and rural Victoria?

Mr RYAN (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — I thank the member for his question and for the great work he is doing in his own electorate. A key part of the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund is the \$100 million being dedicated to the Energy for the Regions program. The intention behind this is to increase economic activity, reduce costs and increase quality of life for country communities by extending natural gas to those communities.

To date the government has employed the same system the former government did in 2003 and 2007 in terms of the extensions of natural gas supplies. Gas distributors were asked to bid to supply natural gas to specific communities across the state, and these bids were put through a very rigorous assessment process. As a result of this process, I am pleased to say that I was recently able to announce that both Huntly and Mildura are to be supplied with either gas, in the first instance, or increased gas, in the case of Mildura.

These are both exciting projects. In the case of Huntly it is a project costing \$4.5 million, and I can tell the people of Huntly they will have natural gas supplied to their town by mid-2014. It is a great thing for the people of Huntly, and needless to say they are very pleased. At Mildura there has historically been a supply problem in relation to natural gas in that during the winter period the gas distributor simply does not accept any new customers because the whole system runs at absolute capacity. What this project will mean is a 50 per cent increase in Envestra's ability to meet the

growing domestic and industrial demand for gas in Mildura.

These are two great announcements, and we are pleased to be able to make them, but that is only part of the story. The provision of natural gas and the extension of supply via the pipelines is the easy part. It is when it gets a bit more difficult that new and innovative programs need to be investigated. That is why under the former government promises made to places such as Wandong, Avoca and Terang were broken and why those places, which were to have been supplied with gas, do not have that gas to this day.

What we are doing — and what I have been able to announce recently — is that we are going to move on other elements that will enable us to have these promises kept. The first of those is that in the second half of this year we are going to offer a fixed subsidy or bounty to gas distribution businesses for the connection of towns using the conventional pipeline technology. Those who wish to bid into that system will be able to do so.

Then, later in the year, we are going to invite tenders for the provision of natural gas to target communities, using compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas technologies. These offer a lot of alternatives that are very exciting and offer great options for regional Victoria. For example, throughout Western Australia many towns are supplied by this system, and the Yulara resort in Alice Springs is supplied by this form of system. We are going to investigate the prospect of being able to do it here in Victoria. These are great initiatives.

The third element of what we are looking to do is to invite companies to tender for the town reticulation systems that are supplied by conventional natural gas, compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas alternatives. These are important developments, and I am very pleased to inform the house about them. The thing underpinning all of this, of course, is that we care. We in the coalition government really care about these towns, we want to look after their future and we will keep our promises because we, unlike those on the other side, do care about regional Victoria.

Member for Frankston: conduct

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Given the Premier's refusal in his last answer to indicate whether he is aware of any other investigations into the member for Frankston, I ask: does the Premier continue to have full confidence in the member for Frankston?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I answered this question earlier this week, and my views have not changed. Indeed the member for Frankston has been party to significant additional resources for the Frankston Hospital and significant additional resources for the police in Frankston. As I said, my views have not changed.

Drug and alcohol support services: funding

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Can the minister inform the house of successful action the government has taken to negotiate with the federal government to retain vital drug and alcohol support services in Victoria?

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Mental Health) — I thank the member for Evelyn for her question and for her very great interest in the mental health of her community and the Victorian community as a whole. Earlier this month the federal government announced funding for projects under the commonwealth's non-government organisation treatment grants program. While it was not immediately obvious, after some serious digging we identified that 19 Victorian agencies were actually missing out on funding for important programs that they were already running in this area.

We know things are very difficult in Canberra, and we know it is easy to get distracted, but this decision actually meant that nearly \$5 million of funding for drug and alcohol services was going to be cut from Victoria. This was across a whole range of areas, including residential, counselling, outreach, Koori, pharmacotherapy and family services — very significant services. Victoria was to receive only 13 per cent of the available funding, despite a historical allocation of around 20 per cent. It would have resulted in a significant reduction in treatment services and would have blown out waiting lists. We estimated that 50 workers would lose their jobs and that some services would have to close down, so it would have had a very significant impact.

To give you the face of that, for example, the member for Richmond would be very concerned that the Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association was losing its alcohol and drug counselling program. The member for Mildura would have been concerned that Sunraysia Community Health Services was going to lose its youth home-based withdrawal service. Very critically, the member for Preston would have been horrified that the Salvation Army was actually going to lose Bridge Haven, a 16-bed residential program for

women with alcohol and drug issues that had been funded and operating successfully since 1998.

Mr Merlino interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Monbulk is warned.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — I have got to say that Laurence Alvis, the CEO of Moreland Hall, put it exceptionally well. He said:

This is a tremendously disappointing outcome ...

...

... Little to no regard appears to have been given to the effectiveness of services ...

...

... The burden of these cuts will be borne most heavily by those who are most in need.

That is a very significant outcome.

I am, however, pleased to inform the house that as a result of the Victorian government's advocacy the federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, has reversed this decision. We wrote, we called, we put an incredibly strong case and we worked with the peak group, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, and as a result of our interventions 14 services that would have lost their funding will now be funded for an additional three years.

We understand that the total funding coming to Victoria has now been restored to approximately 20 per cent. However, it is important to note that we continue to remain below our fair share of approximately 25 per cent, which is a common occurrence, we find, when it comes to commonwealth funding for Victoria. Recent funding decisions, including this one, have shown that our high-quality services are penalised in the process of decision making at the federal level.

It is appropriate that Minister Butler has reversed his original position and agreed to extend many vital programs, and I give him credit for having done that. The Victorian government funds the majority of alcohol and drug treatment services, and the commonwealth's contribution is vitally important. We expect that to be at the very least maintained and in the future expanded to our fair share. The Victorian coalition government will continue to stand up for Victorians. We will continue to stand up for our fair share of funding and, importantly, we will continue to stand up for vulnerable Victorians who need vital

services to be delivered. That is exactly what we will continue to do.

Higher education: TAFE funding

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to reports that up to 2000 jobs may be lost, including potentially 600 in regional Victoria, as a result of the Premier’s TAFE funding cutbacks, and I ask: can the Premier confirm that these TAFE job losses will be in addition to his so-called sustainable government initiative, under which 4200 public sector workers are being sacked?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Just as you were pausing then, Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had cause to say over the table, ‘Let me guess: “I don’t accept the premise of the question”’. He is absolutely correct.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — If the Leader of the Opposition wants to answer his own questions, that will generate a different political paradigm — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the house to come to order. I am not going to tolerate the yelling across the chamber and across the table that is occurring.

Mr BAILLIEU — We have said on a number of occasions in the chamber here and indeed publicly that the vocational training system in Victoria has to change. It has to be put on a sustainable footing. That is because when the previous government changed the system just two or three years ago it left a cap on prices but no cap on subsidy. It opened the system up to market competition. That is not necessarily a bad thing, and indeed that model is to be rolled out around the nation, but it needs to be on a sustainable basis, and what we saw from the previous government was a budget for this year close to \$850 million or \$900 million and a blow-out to over \$1.3 billion. That is in the realm of a myki every year, and any responsible government would seek to do something about it.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, I put it to you that the Premier should responsibly answer the question: is it 4200 jobs to go or 6200 jobs to go? That is the question that ought to be answered.

The SPEAKER — Order! The answer that was being given was relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr BAILLIEU — Anyone who cared about the vocational training — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Altona are also on warnings. Once more and they are out.

Mr Foley interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Albert Park

The SPEAKER — Order! I am getting tired of the member for Albert Park’s remarks. He can take an hour out of the chamber now under standing order 124.

Honourable member for Albert Park withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Higher education: TAFE funding

Questions resumed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — We have said it before, and we will say it again: the vocational training system in Victoria has to be adjusted and put on a sustainable platform. There will be record levels of funding — —

Ms Thomson — On a point of order, Speaker, the question asked of the Premier was very straightforward and related to the reported job losses that would be occurring out of TAFE and whether they would be in addition to the 4200 already announced by the government. It was a straightforward question. It was not about TAFE and the way in which TAFE is — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The answer was relevant to the question that was asked. It may not have been the answer that the member was looking for, but it was relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr BAILLIEU — To put the vocational training system on a sustainable basis all providers will have to adjust — private providers, adult and community education providers and TAFE providers — and the

focus will be on quality trainers and quality training. As the Minister for Higher Education and Skills has said, as the government has said time and time again, we will be working with all the providers over the next few months to make sure they have plans in place to adjust appropriately to what is an essential measure to put vocational training on a sustainable basis. Anybody who cared about the system would understand that that is necessary and they would get behind these changes.

Environment: Yarra River wastewater agreement

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — My question is to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change. Can the minister inform the house how the coalition government is improving the health of the Yarra River and Port Phillip Bay?

Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for Mount Waverley for his question. He has previously described himself to me as a conservationist, and I thank him for his strong interest in the environment. I was very pleased last weekend to announce a historic agreement between the state government and Mobil Oil to stop the last industrial discharge of wastewater into the Yarra River. While Mobil Oil has had a licence to discharge wastewater into the Yarra River — some 2.5 megalitres a day — and has complied with the terms of that licence in the past, it has been clear that Victorians and Melburnians are increasingly not tolerant of that position.

This government is certainly listening to the people of Victoria, and in response to that community expectation this government has worked very closely with Mobil Oil, through the Environment Protection Authority, to negotiate a change to that arrangement. The arrangement we have will stop Mobil Oil from discharging that water into the Yarra River. It will make an enormous contribution to the overall improvement of the Yarra, which has iconic status for Victorians.

This is just another example of the sort of tangible work this government is doing in the environment portfolio. This new agreement will require Mobil to divert wastewater it now discharges into the Yarra at Spotswood into the sewer system by June of next year. I have to say that Mobil's commitment to this agreement is a great example of corporate citizenship, and I thank it for that. It should really be commended on taking that position. This is also evidence of the fact that when the government works closely with industry we can get some really good outcomes for the environment.

The community has welcomed this announcement. A number of conservation groups have said that this is great news for the Yarra. This agreement will make a great contribution to the work that is being done by the Baillieu government in formulating an action plan to ensure the future health of the river. That plan, among other things, will include opportunities to manage the threats to water quality by making sure we reduce litter and pollution entering the Yarra, and it will also support Victorians doing their bit to enhance the health of the Yarra. That is the position of this government. A big part of our direction is making sure that everyone takes ownership of the environment.

That position is supported by the various conservation groups, such as the Yarra Riverkeeper Association, which says on its website:

We may urge governments to do a better job. But a large measure of responsibility rests with the community.

I certainly support that, and that is the direction we are taking.

The plan will also address the issue of the large number of agencies that currently have responsibility for the health of the Yarra. Under the previous government there was a lot of confusion — a lot of gaps — about which agencies had responsibility for various aspects of the Yarra. There are a lot of agencies: the Environment Protection Authority, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority — a number of different organisations. What the plan will do is seek to clarify those roles and make sure that the community and indeed government are very clear on what role each of the agencies should have.

I must say that this government is very proud of the Yarra. This government supports the view of Melburnians that the Yarra is an iconic river, and we are certainly doing our bit to make sure that we reinvigorate a pride in the river and that we get the community all together to make sure we get better outcomes. Certainly those outcomes will mean a positive outcome for the bay as well. This government cares about the Yarra and cares about the health of the environment. If Labor really cared about the environment, if Labor really cared, it would get behind practical action instead of supporting environmental policies such as Labor's carbon tax, which will have no tangible outcomes.

Higher education: TAFE funding

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to media

comments made by Liberal MP Simon Ramsay regarding cuts to TAFE:

It is about time that the never-ending drip feed of cash into programs of suspect relevance was filtered or even turned off. Some providers won't like it, but the party is over. The waste must stop.

I ask: does the Premier support Mr Ramsay's description of University of Ballarat courses under threat because of his budget cuts — courses that include agriculture, automotive, business administration, finance and horticulture — as 'programs of suspect relevance' and a waste of money?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — Again the premise of the question is — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — I say it again, Speaker: vocational training in Victoria has been on an unsustainable basis, and we have to change it. I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition understood that if you have a blow-out in a program that was meant to cost \$850 million — —

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, the question related to whether the Premier supported Mr Ramsay's comments. It was not an opportunity for him to reflect upon me or anyone else on this side of the house or to recast the question or to debate the issue. Does the Premier support Mr Ramsay's description? It is simple: is it yes or no?

The SPEAKER — Order! The question related also to comments regarding TAFE. The Premier was speaking in regard to TAFE, and therefore the answer was relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr Andrews — On a further point of order, Speaker, I respect your ruling, but can you clarify: is it relevant and in order for the Premier to reflect upon the Leader of the Opposition or any other member on this side of the house in his attempts to answer a question? Am I a matter of government business? Is any member on this side a matter of government business? I reflect upon your rulings earlier in the week, Speaker, where I think it is fair to say you took a very narrow view of what was government business. I would seek for you to apply the same now.

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

Mr Andrews — So he can bag me, that is fine?

The SPEAKER — Order! No, I am not going to allow the Premier to 'bag' the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier was replying to a question that was asked.

Mr BAILLIEU — I thought for a moment there I was complimenting the Leader of the Opposition by saying I thought he would understand.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — Mr Speaker, I say again we are intent — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked his question twice so far; no more.

Mr BAILLIEU — I say again we are intent on making the Victorian vocational training system sustainable. I have been conscious this week of comments from a variety of people who have expressed publicly concerns about changes, and it is interesting when some of those comments do not necessarily reflect what has been said in other forums.

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Speaker, with regard to relevance, regardless of what other — —

Mr Wakeling interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Ferntree Gully went out yesterday; the way he is going he will be out again today.

Mr Nardella — The Premier is debating the question. What other people have commented on with regard to this particular matter is irrelevant. The question was specific with regard to comments of a particular member of the government, and I ask you to bring him back to that question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Mill Park, once more and you will be out. Take it as a warning.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, it has been ruled over a number of years in this house that the preamble and the total context are all parts of the question and are all to be considered when considering the relevance of the answer. The question was a very longwinded question covering a wide range of issues. It went to a range of subjects, it went to a range of institutions and it went to a range of comments. It is

absolutely relevant for the Premier to address aspects of that question as he addresses the question in total.

The issue is that the question was broad, therefore the answer can pick up aspects of that question because the preamble and all aspects of the question are parts of the question. That has been a consistent ruling from the Chair in this house, and I ask you to rule the point of order out of order.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Speaker, the preamble to this question referred directly and only to the comments of Simon Ramsay in a letter to the editor — considered comments of a government member in the upper house to a newspaper in a letter to the editor. The preamble referred only and directly to Simon Ramsay. It was a clear question: does the Premier support the comments of the member of his government or not?

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The answer was relevant to the question that was asked, which includes the preamble.

Mr BAILLIEU — Mr Ramsay supports the government's efforts to put the vocational training system on a sustainable basis. Indeed many other people, despite what they might say publicly, support the government's efforts to put the training system in Victoria on a sustainable basis.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — And the member across the way asked, 'Who'. Let me refer to some remarks which I understand the federal Labor minister — —

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is debating the question. Not only is he responding to interjections, which is disorderly, as you have ruled on many occasions, but quotes of other people — —

Mr Hodgett interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Kilsyth

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

Honourable member for Kilsyth withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Higher education: TAFE funding

Questions resumed.

Mr Nardella — Referring to the quotes of other people, when the quote was specific and the question was specific to a quote of a specific member of Parliament, is debating the question. I ask you to bring the Premier back to answering the question asked.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, every aspect and every word — —

Ms Barker interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Oakleigh.

Dr Napthine — The point of order is with regard to debating, and the debating depends on whether the comments being made by the Premier were relevant and a part of the contribution. Every aspect of the quote from Simon Ramsay and every other comment in the question is relevant. It is also relevant, and it is also important in the answer, and it is certainly not debating the answer to this question, for the Premier to refer to other sources of information that are relevant. Providing information that is consistent with the question is not debating the question.

Ms Thomson — On the point of order, Speaker, the point of order was about debating, not about relevance. The issue was that the Premier was debating the question. The question was quite specific. It related to Mr Ramsay's comments in relation to TAFE courses and to the TAFE courses that will affect the most vulnerable. The point of order was about debating the issue. It was not about the question of relevance, as the member for South-West Coast suggests.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — Mr Ramsay's letter demonstrates an understanding of the task ahead. Indeed since the budget was released we have ourselves drawn attention in the public arena to instances where training courses came with cash or iPads for students if they signed up and hundreds of dollars for sports groups if they signed up individuals. That is unsustainable, and others have said it is unsustainable.

Again I mention the federal Labor minister, Chris Evans, who I understand on 15 May 2012, at a conference of Universities Australia in Adelaide, said the Victorian government's decision in part reflects the budget considerations but also reflects that it had been in an unsustainable mode in terms of some of the training it was funding. He further said he had been urging the then government to cut back on that for the last year. This federal Labor minister said it was unsustainable. You know what else he said at the universities conference in Adelaide on 15 May? I understand he said that, to be fair, it was the fault of the previous Labor government.

Mornington pier: reconstruction project

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — My question is to the Minister for Ports. Can the Minister for Ports advise the house what action the government is taking to fix Mornington pier?

Dr NAPHTHINE (Minister for Ports) — I thank the member for Mornington and recognise his hardworking efforts to fix the problems of the Mornington pier. The Mornington pier is a local icon which provides vital protection for commercial fishing vessels, recreational boaters and yachts in the area. Mornington pier is also a key tourist attraction for Mornington and district, attracting over 2 million visitors per year.

I was pleased to be in Mornington last week with the hardworking local member to announce that the Baillieu coalition government would provide \$13 million to \$15 million to fully reconstruct Mornington pier and, in addition, to install essential protective wave screens along the full length of the pier. Mornington Yacht Club (MYC) wrote to me recently, on 17 May, saying the following:

MYC would like to commend your decision to fully complete repairs to Mornington pier, including all the necessary wave screens.

On behalf of MYC, Schnapper Point Angling Club, Davey's Bay YC, Mornington Chamber of Commerce, VMR —

Volunteer Marine Rescue —

Mornington rescue and Sailability Victoria we would like to extend our appreciation to your office.

...

For the many thousands of visitors and regular users of this precinct their ultimate safety, when this project is complete, will be a credit to your office.

It will also be a credit to the member for Mornington and his hard work.

This is another classic example of the Baillieu government fixing the problems it inherited from the former Labor government. Members may recall that in the lead-up to the 2006 election the then Labor government promised major works at the Mornington pier, but nothing was done. Then in 2010, in the lead-up to the last election, the Labor government renovated half a pier, leaving 70 metres of the pier completely untouched and in a dangerous state of disrepair. Indeed a section of the pier had to be removed so that people could not move from the refurbished section to the dangerous section of the pier.

Under Labor you got half a pier, but that half a pier might even disappear because Labor forgot to put in the wave screens, and without the wave screens the vessels were not protected. Not only that, the storms and the heavy seas were causing damage to the half of the pier Labor fixed up. It is an absolute disgrace. The Labor government spent money building half a pier and even forgot to protect that half a pier. Without those wave screens the heavy seas were causing damage to the half a pier that had been refurbished. Only the former government would be that incompetent, the Labor government that built a north-south pipeline to a full reservoir, the Labor government that designed a regional rail system without signals or trains — —

Ms Thomson — On a point of order, Speaker, I actually listened to the question that was asked of the minister, and there is no relevance in the last bit of the minister's answer to that question. I ask that he be brought back to answer the question that was asked.

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

Dr NAPHTHINE — Clearly the member for Mornington cares about his community. Clearly the member for Mornington listens to his community and works with the government to deliver on this important issue of fixing the whole Mornington pier and installing the safe wave screens that will protect the pier, protect the vessels that use it and protect the people who use it. If Labor members really cared about Victoria, they would go around the state and say they were sorry for what they did when they were in office.

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now debating the question. The question is not about us as an opposition or the Labor Party; it is about government business. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I uphold the point of order, and I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Dr NAPHTHINE — It would appear that some people on that side are very sensitive.

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Speaker, again the minister is debating the question. Regardless of what I am doing or the opposition is doing, it is irrelevant to government business. I ask you to again, as you did — and I appreciate that — bring him back to answering the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will remain in his seat. I am sure you will all be delighted to know that question time has concluded.

APPROPRIATION (2012/2013) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. I extend at the outset a hearty congratulations to the Treasurer and the leadership team within the coalition on handing down this budget — a \$155 million surplus in what are challenging and difficult economic times, as we all know. In particular we understand that there are substantial revenue write-downs in the forward estimates. They are affected by not only national but international influences as well.

In terms of revenue going forward — the forward estimates — we understand that GST and stamp duty will have been reduced to somewhere in the vicinity of \$7.6 billion over the four-year period. A key aspect of that is the economic downturn more broadly, but as has been raised many times in this house, another factor is that the GST return on revenue for Victoria has at the moment been reduced to 92 cents in the dollar.

As many other speakers on this side of the house have said in their contributions in response to the budget, the state of the economy going forward under Labor was simply unsustainable. To see that, one only has to consider that the revenue growth on average was 6.9 per cent while the expenditure growth on average was 7.3 per cent. Obviously there was a growing debt, so the Treasurer has sought to return the budget to a responsible fiscal situation, and he has delivered on that.

There have been many examples over a period of time of significant mismanagement of major projects. Cost blow-outs have occurred right across the board. You only have to look at systems such as myki, the smart meters, the gaming machine entitlements, the Wonthaggi desalination plant — close to \$2 million per day down the drain — the north-south pipeline —

Mr Noonan — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I seek to understand where the member for Morwell finds the gaming machine entitlements in the budget papers.

The SPEAKER — Order! The debate with regard to appropriations is for everyone; it is a wide-ranging debate. I do not want to have to stop the flow of the debate.

Mr NORTHE — I will go on to name some other projects of significance where Victorians are ashamed of the performance of the Labor government. The regional rail link project, the Melbourne Markets and the ICT projects that have blown out to the tune of \$1.3 billion, all of which have been well articulated by the Auditor-General. The list goes on and on.

With respect to the 2011–12 budget, the coalition government achieved savings in the vicinity of \$2.2 billion and constrained spending growth to 3.2 per cent on average over the forward estimates. In our first budget upon coming into government we were able to constrain spending, and that was really important. If spending growth had continued as it did under Labor, we would be facing an operating deficit of \$4 billion in this budget and in four years time net debt would have risen to \$60 billion. With this budget, expenditure growth has been reduced to 2.9 per cent, with revenue up by 4.4 per cent over the forward estimates. We have turned that around by ensuring that expenditure is less than revenue and by making sure that we are able to demonstrate surpluses going forward. The surplus the Treasurer has put forward in this budget is \$155 million, and that will rise to \$2.5 billion in 2015–16.

In the budget more broadly there is \$5.8 billion towards infrastructure spend. Unfortunately many of Victoria's projects are not supported by the federal government in its most recent budget. I guess it comes back to the fact that this government has a responsibility, much like you do if you are running a household or business. We are making sure that we are finding efficiencies and that we actually make a profit, or a surplus in this case.

Indeed it is important that we keep that AAA credit rating. There is no doubt about that. It is pleasing to see

that Standard and Poor's and Moody's have endorsed this budget by ensuring the AAA credit rating moves forward. It sends a very strong message to the business community that we have a government in place which in tough economic times is able to demonstrate that it can achieve a surplus.

In my role as the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business I will repeat some of the comments that have been made by the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) with respect to the budget handed down by the Treasurer. In part those comments say that:

Encouragingly, the budget is fiscally responsible with a forecast operating surplus of \$155 million for 2012–13 and surpluses in every year to 2015–16.

VECCI goes on to say:

Among the pluses for business is the 3 per cent reduction in WorkCover premiums that will benefit an estimated 59 000 Victorian employers.

That has been very well received across the board. VECCI states:

Also positive is that the budget acknowledges the need to support Victorian manufacturing and trade growth with a range of initiatives to improve access to government information, raise innovation and strengthen trade and investment ties.

Most importantly, the budget retains a key focus on infrastructure with much-needed funding for progression of the business case for the east–west link and planning and development of the Melbourne Metro rail project.

Those are just a few comments from VECCI in regard to the budget.

More broadly from the small business perspective, there is certainly plenty of support for small to medium enterprises in innovation. There is much money on the table, with vouchers that can be applied for by businesses with a value of between \$20 000 and \$50 000, with the idea of improving the capacity of business to innovate. There is \$50 million over four years for international engagement missions. We know how successful those missions of this government have been in the past, with trade missions to India, the Middle East and China. We have new business offices in Mumbai and Beijing. We expect that will bring an estimated benefit to somewhere around 2400 businesses in Victoria.

There is also \$6 million over four years for the small business success map, and that is really to assist growth-orientated businesses. There is \$6.1 million for the small business festival during the month of August,

which is very well supported. There is \$9 million over four years for a building innovative small manufacturers program. Again that will provide assistance to around 800 small businesses in the next financial year. There is also significant investment in tourism and other sectors. Again this sends a very strong message to the business community that Victoria's economy is doing well despite the difficult times.

I will relate some of the good outcomes for the Morwell electorate. The government has allocated \$100 000 to Barrier Breakers, which is a very important organisation for Morwell and indeed for the whole Gippsland community. Barrier Breakers is a mental health advocacy group that has sought support from our government to help with its administration and with representing people in the Gippsland community who have mental health issues. I am very pleased that \$100 000 has been allocated to Barrier Breakers to ensure that it is able to advocate on behalf of Gippsland people with mental health issues.

Also in the budget is funding for a multidisciplinary centre for my electorate. These centres have been very well received. There are some existing ones around the state, and certainly the Latrobe Valley looks forward to that being introduced. This is a co-location of a number of important services: Victoria Police; the sexual offences and child abuse team within Victoria Police, which is known as SOCA; child protection workers; and the Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA). All of these organisations get together and provide a holistic and integrated approach to support people who unfortunately have been the victims of sexual assault. We look forward to that coming to fruition. Indeed I take the liberty of thanking Fiona Boyle from the Gippsland CASA centre for her very hard work in concert with her team in making sure that this particular project comes to fruition. We thank the minister responsible for that. Whilst they may not seem sexy projects, I guess, these projects are absolutely vital and critical to our community.

Of course we also have the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, of which the Morwell electorate has been a great beneficiary. Within that, if you like, we have the Latrobe Valley Advantage Fund and a number of programs within that. The government has allocated \$10 million for Skilling the Valley. It has also allocated \$10 million for the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund. A number of local businesses have, in part, been beneficiaries of that \$10 million. There is \$1.5 million for GippsAero to improve its operations and expand them substantially, not only into national markets but also into international markets. Yesterday

the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry announced \$1.24 million for GippsAero for stage 2 of this major development through the Regional Aviation Fund.

There is also Hydro Australia, which as a result of being a beneficiary of this funding is able to expand its operations in the Latrobe Valley. That is a very important business. National Foods, of Lion Australia, has also been a beneficiary and is able to expand its operations in Latrobe Valley. These announcements were all made through this particular fund.

The reason we have this fund is because of the fact that we understand the Latrobe Valley. The Gippsland region will go through some extraordinarily difficult times. The answer as to why that is is that we are already feeling the pinch in some regards with respect to the federal government's carbon tax due on 1 July. It is fair to say that already we have businesses in our region that are suffering. If I can give an example of that, there are a number of power stations in the Latrobe Valley that have been earmarked through the Contract for Closure program. The simple fact is that many of these power generators are not undertaking long-term maintenance, which historically they have done, and unfortunately smaller businesses within the community which provide those services to those generators simply do not have the work. We are now working with a number of those businesses, and through the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund we have delivered some fantastic outcomes.

There is also the CarbonNet project, for which the state government has \$30 million on the table. This is supported by the federal government in this instance. That will be a terrific program. There is the Small Business Mentoring Service, a specialised part of which is helping Latrobe Valley businesses to transition through the carbon tax, work their way through those particular concerns and hopefully get over the next hurdle and make sure that they remain viable within our community.

Within the context of the budget there is obviously a number of line items that talk about specific projects for certain electorates, but there are also programs within the budget from which all our electorates and our communities will benefit. A number of commitments have been made in the last 12 months, and we look forward to many more being made in the next 12 months. A number of election commitments have already come to fruition through the budget and through some of the programs that have been offered, such as the Toongabbie town beautification project and

the Traralgon South lighting project from a safety perspective.

The Minister for Racing is in the house now. We have delivered an extra race meeting for the Latrobe Valley Racing Club. We have delivered a men's shed for the Boolarra community, which was very important. We have had an upgrade to the Traralgon tennis court surface; there are 24 courts in total. That was a massive investment. Next week we are implementing our night bus service in the Latrobe Valley, which is very important. This is on top of a \$2 million per annum investment increase in bus services across the Gippsland region. The Cowwarr and Glengarry halls have received funding. There is \$60 000 on the table to get the Morwell–Traralgon bike path study under way.

There are more police in the Latrobe Valley, and can I say they number in excess of 30. I can assure the house that the local police are extremely happy with that significant investment. That will continue to grow over time. There is massive investment in mental health. There has been \$3.2 million allocated to the Doorway program, a partnership between the Mental Illness Fellowship of Victoria, local real estate agents and Latrobe Regional Hospital, which supports people in the community. Unfortunately I do not have time to go through the myriad other benefits of this budget to my electorate, but I commend the Treasurer again for a wonderful budget on behalf of all Victorians.

Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North) — It is an honour to speak on what is a very ordinary budget. I guess seeing the Premier and the Minister for Roads last week digging a small hole pretty well sums it all up — a lot of spin. A little kid can put on a hard hat and dig a hole in the backyard, but that does not make it an actual, substantial project. What we saw last week was a little bit of colour and light but no actual funding for this supposedly grand project. I suspect that somehow or other the federal government will need to fund the project and it will be the federal government's fault if it is not funded.

I did quite a substantial analysis of the budget papers, looking particularly at road funding, and what it highlighted to me was the ordinary nature of what this government has contributed to road funding across the state. If you look at 2012 and 2013, the total estimated investment in road projects is something like \$4.6 billion, and that is a reasonable spend. Unfortunately only 10 per cent of those projects is actually being funded by this government. Out of the \$4.6 billion of money to be spent on roads, all this government could contribute this year and in the forward year is \$403 million in total. These projects, in

terms of the billions the government is supposedly spending, are very much about completing projects that the last government funded and contracted. In other words, this government is doing very little; it is very much the do-nothing government. I think there are 51 state-funded projects, of which 36 were funded in previous budgets by the Labor government and a very small number are being funded by this government.

I am looking at press releases from the Minister for Roads, and it is pretty tragic that this government continues to go around talking about the 'Funding boost for Melbourne's suburban road network'. Then there is the 'Have your say on Blackburn rail crossing removal' — well, we know about that. That will never happen because at the end of the day 'having a say' is not a project; it is just having a say on whether you want the rail crossing removed. That does not complete a project, it does not even start a project — in the same way that the east-west link project is not just putting on a hard hat and digging a small hole. Obviously the government is now a little concerned that the public image of the Premier and his ministers is that they are doing nothing, and the budget figures highlight that they are doing very little. It is a bit like the Geelong port proposal which was a big idea that came and disappeared within the space of a couple of months.

We have a press release from the Minister for Roads headed 'Coalition lays solid foundation for Victoria's roads'. He has used the figure of \$695 million, but if you look at the budget papers, you see that that figure is not borne out there. There is nothing like \$695 million; the minister is overquoting himself by about \$200 million.

One of the more amusing press release headlines reads 'Work begins on the Clyde Road upgrade'. This government has funded nothing to do with Clyde Road. I know very well where it is; it is in my backyard. All the minister has done is issue a press release. His contribution to road funding in Victoria is a big, whopping press release claiming credit for — I don't know — doing a press release. At the end of the day there is not a single dollar from the state government for this particular project.

It is a bit like in my backyard, the city of Casey. There was a big press release about all the marvellous things the government is doing with the duplication of the Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road, but the total allocated funding from the state government this year for roads in Casey is a big, whacking \$4.5 million. Under the previous government the contribution was averaged above \$40 million every year. What we have is \$4.5 million over two years, so we are getting an

average of \$2 million per year for the city of Casey. Hopefully by the end of the term of this government Casey might have had \$8 million spent on it. It is not very much to have \$8 million spent in total in one of the fastest growing places in Victoria, compared to the \$500 million it got in 10 years under Labor governments.

It appears that for a group of people who used to accuse the Brumby and Bracks governments of spin what we have in this budget is a whole lot of spin, a whole lot of contributions from previous Labor governments and a whole lot of contributions from the federal Labor government to rebuilding roads in the state, but very little from this government and very little for regional towns, as we are well aware. I saw an article recently in the *Yarram Standard* which highlighted the fact that this government is dropping speed limits because it is not keeping up with the need to upgrade roads. The heading of the article is 'Roads disaster: VicRoads speed limit cuts no fix'. In other words, to fix the problem they are deciding to reduce speed limits locally. The article states:

A well-placed insider told the *Standard* VicRoads has plans to reduce speed limits across the state because it does not have the money to maintain crumbling roads.

This is the party that supposedly has strong representation in regional towns. Unfortunately it does not look as if that strong representation is bringing dividends. When the Minister for Roads was asked about this situation the response was this:

Mr Mulder firstly wrongly assumed the information regarding VicRoads' decision to cut speed limits on dodgy roads had come from shadow roads minister Luke Donnellan, saying: 'Labor Party MP Luke Donnellan's claims around coalition government funding for road safety are wrong and he knows it.'

That is the only response we got. In other words, we have a situation where speed limits are being reduced and all the minister can say is, 'You're being a naughty boy; you're wrong'. Unfortunately that does not answer the question.

The *Yarram Standard* is very keen to get the actual funding figures, and the *Great Southern Star* in Leongatha has also sought funding figures from the minister in relation to maintenance but again it has got no answer. In an editorial headed 'Make roads spending public', the newspaper says:

The seemingly never-ending poor state of roads in South Gippsland and Bass Coast shires has now become a political hot potato.

The problem is it is so hot the minister will not go anywhere near it. He does not go there to visit, which is a bit disappointing from a minister who says he is doing the right thing.

I had an opportunity to pick up an article by Alex Sinnott in the Warrnambool *Standard* this week. It refers to rumours that VicRoads maintenance funding for the south-west coast is going backwards. In response the minister would not answer the question. The only response was — —

Dr Napthine interjected.

Mr DONNELLAN — It is good that we have the Minister for Ports at the table, because he might do a better job than the Minister for Roads.

The *Standard* reports that when it contacted the minister's office, it said the matter was in the hands of VicRoads. In other words the minister said, 'I am not going to answer it directly; I am just going to hide behind VicRoads'. A spokeswoman for the minister said this, that and the other — that is, that the government is injecting all this money — but at the end of the day there were no facts and figures on exactly what is going into the south-west coast. The article reports Mr VicRoads, William Tieppo, as saying the organisation's proposed road asset maintenance program for 2012–13 was not finalised.

In other words we had absolutely no answer, which is pretty disappointing, because we know what is going on in that region; we know what the Roads to Ruin people are saying — they are being gutted. We know that before the last election members of the coalition, including the minister at the table, made various promises to get these things fixed. Unfortunately these roads are treacherous.

We have ministers like the Minister for Roads — and to be fair to the Minister for Ports, he has not suggested this — one minute saying the reason the government cannot fix the roads is the basalt rock, the next minute that it is the wind farms and the next minute that it is the federal government. We had a reference to the carbon tax the other day — that it was related to bitumen and the carbon tax. So many answers have been given that, unfortunately, they are not believable.

We have to go back to the basic figures which look at the total expenditure on road funding in this state, the majority of which was funded by Labor. The legacy of the Baillieu government will be the completion of projects which we funded and began. That is all there is; there is very little this government has done in the roads area. I am talking about things like the statewide

cycling package, the Doncaster area rapid transport plan, stage 4B of the Geelong Ring Road, the M80 upgrade, the M80 upgrade again, the noise wall program, Peninsula Link, SmartBus and the traffic signal retrofit program, which were all funded by Labor.

You only have to look at the capital expenditure figures to see that the people of Victoria are being severely let down. Have a quick look at this year's new road funding. I thought this was hysterical, because the minister has been telling everybody what a marvellous job he has done — —

Mr Noonan — Drill holes!

Mr DONNELLAN — Drill holes — incy-wincy little drill holes that my son could have made in the backyard while wearing a hard hat. I could have done that shot; we could have done it together. It would have looked like a good shot; it would have looked like a lot of spin. Let us look at the minister's spin in his media releases headed 'Funding boost for Melbourne's suburban road network' — wacky do! — and 'Have your say on Blackburn rail crossing removal'.

If you look at how much new funding is provided in the budget, it is the wacky-do total of \$141 million this year. The coalition should be ashamed that it is spending so little on roads. The \$141 million in new roads funding in this budget will do absolutely nothing for Victoria. It is virtually scandalous that the Transport Accident Commission is putting in more than its fair share. I think it is putting in \$75 million for the safer road infrastructure program this year, nearly 50 per cent of what the state government is spending on roads. It is amazing.

The minister continues to be evasive when it comes to answering questions about what he will do across the regions. If you look at the figures for the south-west coast, you see that \$430 million will be spent over 10 years. The minister suggested that a couple of million dollars being spent here and there was the equivalent of what we spent. I think the government keeps mixing up the roads and bridges program with road safety and saying, 'That is our road safety program this year'.

It is interesting that the regional newspapers are starting to pick up on the spin of the government and the fact that there is not much more than spin, and there is very little substance. It is a bit like this sustainability term that keeps being applied to the TAFE sector. I have listened to the radio reports; it is not working very well. Sustainability means not running out. What people are

saying is that former Premier Kennett is back; the cuts are back, and regional towns are losing people. That is what they are saying. They are certainly not reporting that suddenly this is about sustainability. I encourage the Premier — someone who in opposition kept running around accusing everyone else of spin — to keep using the term, because it really sounds like spin.

At my TAFE, Chisholm, Labor built the trade training centre in Berwick with a couple of hundred million dollars, and now it has lost \$30 million in one blow. No-one can tell me that will not end up causing massive job losses. There will be a lack of training, and when the economy turns up again there will not be enough of a skill base. It is very short-term vision. You have to go back to the idea that somehow or other the east-west drill holes, incy-wincy holes, amount to a major project. It is not a major project, and I will bet my bottom dollar that it will not begin in this term of government and probably not in the next at the rate it is going. The way the government manages projects at the moment is just to dig a couple of holes and do some planning. All we hear about at the moment is planning money. The government is planning to do something, but unfortunately it has to do a little bit more than plan to do something; it has to actually do it. This government is not meeting the mark. It is not doing the job, and I think the public is catching up with it.

Mr WELLER (Rodney) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. As always, I will reflect on some of the contributions to the debate made by members on the other side.

An honourable member — Good contributions.

Mr WELLER — It would be taking it a bit far to say they were good contributions. The member for Narre Warren North spoke a lot about the state of our roads. What he neglected to tell the Parliament was that there had been 11 years of neglect of roads while members on his side of the house were in government. I admit that roads deteriorate, but they do not deteriorate overnight, and it is a well-known fact that there is a great backlog of road repairs because of those 11 years of neglect. The previous government got away with that because those 11 years were dry — in wet weather roads deteriorate fairly quickly.

What the member for Narre Warren North also neglected to admit was that one of our election commitments, and one we have delivered on, was that each of the 40 smaller rural shires would be given \$1 million a year towards road maintenance, and that continues. That is \$160 million over a four-year period,

yet here we have the member for Narre Warren North saying there is only \$141 million in the budget for roads. There is \$160 million in one program.

Mr Donnellan — Four years.

Mr WELLER — Over four years. The member for Narre Warren North also talked about this government delivering the programs of the previous government. Rather than being a wrecking-ball government, the commitment was made that anything that was in the 2010–11 budget, which the previous government brought down, would be honoured. The commitments that were in that budget have been honoured.

Mr Noonan — Everything?

Mr WELLER — If they were in the budget. That means we can manipulate only the forward spending for the two years out.

The member for Lara in his contribution to the debate spoke about a school in his electorate with a roof that is leaking. It was probably leaking in 2010, but did his government make a commitment in the 2010 budget to fix it? No. The member for Broadmeadows was one of the honest men on the other side. He admitted that there needs to be fiscal responsibility. He admitted that there was a mess and the Baillieu government was fixing the financial problems that were there.

An honourable member — He didn't say it was a mess.

Mr WELLER — He did indeed. I was sitting in the chair and listening at the time. What he understood was that in the forward projections for the next four years there will be \$7.6 billion less income than would have been expected because of the slowdown in the economy. This is because of the changes to the GST which brought back what Victoria is getting from 96 cents in the dollar to 92 cents in the dollar. There is also the reduction in stamp duty, so over the forward projections there is \$7.6 billion less in the budget.

What also needs to be remembered is that when you have those sorts of cuts in income you have to balance the books — there is no doubt about that — and you have to spend it on things that are priorities. That is why the money is still being spent on the Echuca hospital. In fact another 19 jobs have been created whilst the project is in the clear-up phase. There will be about 70 to 80 jobs in Echuca for tradesmen come this August-September when the clearing of the site is finished and building starts.

The Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project continues, and the Minister for Water should be congratulated in that he obtained — not \$1 billion, as the previous government kept promising and never delivering — a cheque for \$1.2 billion for Victoria so that the Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project could continue.

One of our other election commitments was 1700 extra police. That is in the budget — funded and continued. Those 1700 extra police represent 1700 extra jobs, I would imagine. There are also the 940 extra PSOs (protective services officers).

An honourable member — More jobs.

Mr WELLER — More jobs — another 940 jobs that were in the budget and are funded.

Mr Noonan — How many in Echuca?

Mr WELLER — I know it is wrong to respond to interjections, but when it comes to PSOs can I make it clear that PSOs work from 6.00 p.m. to midnight. The last train arrives at Echuca at 7.00 p.m., so PSOs are not needed.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLER — The train turns up at 7.00 p.m.

Mr Noonan — You are talking it up.

Mr WELLER — We have interjections from members on the other side who just do not understand how things work in this state. We also have a commitment for three new fire stations in my electorate — at Maroopna North West, Udera and Corop West. There is also some much-needed flood money, as the state has been flooded. In the town of Rochester we had those horrific floods at the start of 2011. Over the last 12 months about \$1.5 million has been put into the town to restore the library, the council offices and the hall. Then there is the caravan park and the recreation reserve. Might I say the fund is still there, and being a good local member I am seeking some more of that money. Time will tell.

We have also got Nathalia, Barmah and Licola, where the floods came this year. The government has been out there with its response: category C funding of \$25 000 for businesses that have been affected. That money has been there and will be there to support those businesses and households through their time of need.

What this government has been focused on is increasing the productivity of the state. I know

members on the other side of the house will not understand productivity, but we have invested \$60 million in the Department of Primary Industries to conduct research into increasing the productivity on farms.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLER — The member for Essendon and the member for Williamstown obviously do not understand that agriculture has been the big driver of rural economies in this state. Productivity in the dairy industry, which I know best, has risen by an average of 3 per cent a year since 1964. We have to continue those productivity increases, otherwise we will not be competitive in global markets. We will lose further jobs in regional areas, so it is important that we ensure the productivity of agricultural industries to keep driving jobs in our regional communities. The city of Melbourne benefits from the dynamic industries we have in our regional areas.

There has been a commitment for extra money for biosecurity. Members may ask why — —

Mr Noonan interjected.

Mr WELLER — I understand that the member for Williamstown would not understand, but biosecurity defends our markets. If we cannot prove that our goods are disease free, then we will not have access to markets around the world. We have to invest in biosecurity, and it makes a lot of sense.

Mr Madden interjected.

Mr WELLER — There is the sound of reason coming from the member for Essendon on the other side of the chamber. He agrees about biosecurity.

What also has to be understood is that we have continued to do all these things against the backdrop of the terrible position we were left with by the previous government. We had a regional rail blow-out, and we had to find the money for it — \$1 billion. Myki — there was a blow-out of \$350 million. Melbourne wholesale markets — another blow-out, \$200 million. HealthSMART — there was an \$80 million blow-out. You would have to say that the *Herald Sun* is not particularly favourable in giving the government a good run, but I have got an article from the *Herald Sun* of 18 May written by Lucie van den Berg.

Mr Noonan interjected.

Mr WELLER — If you would listen! The article says:

A bungled state hospitals IT scheme that has swallowed almost \$500 million is being dumped.

The amount spent on the doomed HealthSMART system — dubbed the myki of health — is equal to a year's income tax from about 37 000 battler families, or enough to pay for two Monash children's hospitals.

That is how much the former lot blew. The article then says:

The cost of establishing a working alternative could run to another \$300 million.

The IT system joins a string of waste-plagued state Labor projects, including the \$1.35 billion myki, the \$24 billion Wonthaggi desalination plant and the abandoned \$750 million north-south pipeline.

Confirming HealthSMART would be ditched, Health Minister David Davis said the government had been forced to go back to the drawing board.

When the scheme —

and this is typical of the previous government —

was launched nine years ago, it was to replace obsolete and outdated technology and revolutionise the health system, establishing electronic patient records, prescribing, test ordering and appointment management.

Instead it has been plagued by poor planning, massive cost blow-outs and operating issues.

The former Labor government had promised to deliver it to 10 health services by 2007.

But just four services have been delivered. That is typical of the previous mob. It could not manage money, and it could not deliver projects on time.

Despite all these problems and the previous government spending its money, it had an income rise of 6.9 per cent, but its spending rose by 7.3 per cent. Of course that is going to lead to problems. The public service grew at 5.3 per cent while the population grew at 2.5 per cent — of course we were going to end up with a mess.

But despite all these messes, the Regional Growth Fund continues to exist. It is a great driver of employment out in regional electorates. I will mention one of the programs that the Regional Growth Fund has funded in my electorate. Under the Putting Locals First program \$94 000 has been provided for bituminising the car park at the Kyabram parkland reserve. This is a multi-use reserve. It has a par-3 golf course where the par-3 state men's titles are held; the ladies' par-3 championships will be held there as well. Not only is there a golf course there —

Mr Madden — There's more?

Mr WELLER — There is more. The Rotary Club of Kyabram has its weekly meetings there. Landcare is based there. There is also a trotting track in the vicinity, so trotters are trained there as well. It has multipurpose functions, and quite often the great facility at the parkland is used for wakes; a lot of wakes are held there.

We have heard a lot from the opposition about funding for vocational training. We have to understand that when the former government brought in the system in 2008 it budgeted for costs for this year of \$900 million. What did it do? The costs blew out to \$1.3 billion. What did we do? We said, 'We will make it \$1.2 billion', which is \$300 million more than that mob was going to contribute to vocational training. We are spending \$300 million more a year on vocational training than the previous government budgeted for.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr WELLER — It has been said that it is unsustainable. We are not the only ones who have said this. Senator Chris Evans, the federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, has said that the system that was set up by the previous government was unsustainable and had to change — that is Labor admitting to that. In conclusion, may I say that the Treasurer, amidst all these hurdles and problems that were put in front of him, has done a wonderful job in defending Victoria's AAA rating.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — I often describe my electorate as a growing community that many young families move into to follow their dreams. They are good people who dream of getting a secure job, owning their own home and raising a family. They want to know that their children will have the best possible start in life, attend good schools, have quality options available to them in their senior secondary school years and have pathways to university, TAFE or employment. They also want to know that there is proper health care available should their family need it. While I call these 'dreams', they are actually pretty reasonable aspirations. This is exactly what I wanted for my family, and I can understand that the Narre Warren South families want it for theirs.

It is really sad that the Baillieu government's second budget has made this dream more difficult to achieve. In many ways this budget eliminates the dreams and aspirations of the families of my electorate. It has made it more difficult to get a job. Indeed, it cuts jobs. By cutting the first home bonus the government has made it more difficult for people to own their own home. It has made it more difficult to secure a good education

for your children by cutting the School Start bonus — how cruel is that? — and limiting options in higher education through the cutting of funding to TAFE. It does nothing to help families secure better health care, breaks the promise of new beds at Casey Hospital and further delays the opening of the much-needed Monash Children's hospital.

During the global financial crisis — one of the worst crises this state has ever faced — the former Labor government took action. We had a plan to create jobs, and we invested in job-creating infrastructure around the state. In the final two years of the Labor government we created nearly 200 000 new jobs. What a sad contrast it is to see today that since the Baillieu government's first budget over 41 000 jobs have been lost in Victoria. Eighteen months into its term and despite the current situation the government has no plan for jobs in Victoria. The former government used to talk about jobs and always making them a priority. We kept Victorians in jobs during the global financial crisis. During these tough economic times it is very sad to see the contrast with the Baillieu government, whose members are plainly sitting on their hands. Their approach has been to do nothing. As we saw in March, the unemployment rate has reached 5.8 per cent. Only Tasmania, that weeny state at the bottom of Australia, has a higher unemployment rate than Victoria's.

The situation is far worse in the south-eastern suburbs, where my electorate is. When the Baillieu government came to office the unemployment rate in the south-east was 6 per cent; however, the loss of around 5000 jobs has seen this rise to 8.3 per cent. What is Premier Baillieu's response to this jobs crisis in Victoria? It is to cut 4200 more jobs. Youth unemployment is also a major concern. My electorate is home to many young people, and I know that the parents in my electorate do not want their kids joining the dole queue. I am very concerned by the youth unemployment rate, which stands at 22.3 per cent. Look what the government has done in response. It has made savage cuts to TAFE and VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) that will ensure that the youth unemployment rate will continue to grow.

In this budget the Baillieu government has slashed \$290 million from the TAFE sector, cutting subsidies to 80 per cent of courses. We read in the papers — and we are hearing from students and staff at the TAFEs — that this will mean some TAFEs will probably not be able to remain open. Indeed in this house the Premier is not saying there will be no closures; he is walking away from that. He is leaving it open for TAFEs across Victoria to be closed down. This is a very sad situation for the many students in my electorate who are sent to

TAFEs — and the many families that send their kids to TAFEs — so they can get along in life, get a good education and make a pathway into university. Those students and families are seriously worried about these cuts.

Chisholm TAFE is in my electorate. When we were in government we expanded Berwick TAFE, which is having nearly one-third of its funding cut — around \$25 million. I note from the newspaper that the chief executive, Maria Peters, has been quoted as saying:

... given the magnitude of the cuts, it is more than possible there will be job losses and the likelihood that some of our current courses will not run.

There is the dreams of a generation being snuffed out by these massive cuts to TAFE. It is clear this is going to happen elsewhere. At Holmesglen TAFE the situation is equally distressing. It has warned that diploma fees will double next year, from \$2500 to \$5000, and that jobs will be lost. TAFE is a crucial pathway for disadvantaged students to use to progress to university or employment. It is very clear that the Baillieu government does not care and does not have a strategy to lower the youth unemployment rate. On the contrary, given what it is doing in the TAFE sector and what it did in last year's budget with VCAL, it appears it is intent on planning to extend the youth unemployment queues.

I would now like to speak on some schools in my electorate of Narre Warren South. Last year's budget provided funding for land acquisition for the new Casey central east primary school, a project first announced by Labor in 2010. The community was genuinely relieved that last year's budget provided the land, and we expected that this year's budget would provide funding for the construction of this much-needed new school. However, we were wrong. I thought government members would do the right thing here, but obviously they have decided they would rather spend money in other electorates, and certainly not in Labor-held electorates. I gather that only three schools are being built in Labor-held electorates. Unlike the situation in our term of government, during which we built nine schools in my electorate, we have been given no funding to build this new school in an area where it is much needed — Cranbourne North. This school is desperately needed because other schools in the area are at capacity. We knew it had to be built and we promised it at the last election. Whilst we were grateful to get the land in the last budget, kids cannot go to school in an empty paddock.

I also note that the local paper has been leading a campaign for the opening of the Officer special school,

which the Baillieu government promised to open in 2013. Sadly it appears that there is no funding in this budget for the opening of the school at an interim campus in 2013 as parents are requesting. They have made decisions and arrangements in their lives so that their kids can go to this new school in Officer. I think it will be a very good school, but these parents thought the government had told them that it would be open in 2013. They have asked for an interim campus to be opened in 2013. We did this when we were in power and Alkira Secondary College was not quite ready for the start of the school year — we opened an interim campus at Hillsmeade Primary School. However, the parents' pleas have gone unnoticed. It just shows you how uncaring this government is towards families in my local area that are really doing it tough.

I would like to move from schools to infrastructure. The Baillieu government's lack of investment in Victoria's infrastructure has sent the economy backwards. If you look at the new infrastructure projects in the budget, you will notice that they are on the never-never; the government is mainly funding business cases and planning. This has undeniably undermined confidence in the Victorian economy and has contributed to weakening the economy and massive job losses. To give you a bit of a hint, one of the things that could have been done to improve the health of Victorians and at the same time invest in infrastructure would have been for the government to have invested in public hospitals.

In Narre Warren South we have the Casey Hospital, which is waiting for its upgrade. We want the 100 new beds that were promised. That would have been a great local project that would have kept many local tradies in work. Of course we would have liked to have seen the government keep its promise to open the Monash Children's hospital in its first term in office, but it now appears that we will have to wait for the re-election of the Baillieu government before one kid in Narre Warren South is able to go to a children's hospital closer to home.

I would like to finish up by talking about the School Start bonus and the cuts to the education maintenance allowance. This is a really savage cut to families in my electorate. It is a huge impost on the family budget if you are trying to send children back to school, kit them out and give them access to all the fun and games offered by schools, such as camps and excursions. People really appreciated the School Start bonus. In fact, when surveyed people in my electorate said they would like it to be extended, not obliterated. Susan Magee of the Casey North Community Information and Support Service has written to me about this, saying:

Education costs are causing great financial stress to many families we work with. We have great concern for children that are unable to participate fully in their education programs because they do not have adequate resources or funding for activities such as camps and swimming classes.

Here we have family budgets under all sorts of stress, despite the member for Bentleigh saying there has been a reduction in the cost of living. The government has effectively doubled TAFE fees, it has cut jobs, it has increased car registration fees and it has cut the first home owner bonus. These are great imposts on the family budgets of the people of Narre Warren South.

I will finish up on what may be a lighter note but is actually a very important issue for the people of Narre Warren South. Having flushed down the toilet the previous government's commitment to upgrade Hallam station to premium status, which would have provided a fully manned station with security and toilets for commuters, we now know from the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings that this government is spending \$260 000 at each station on toilets for protective services officers. There is not one dollar in this budget for toilets at Hallam station for the commuters who are just holding on. This says everything about the government.

Victorians were looking for the government to really get its act together. It has got its training wheels off by now. We expected the government to kick-start the Victorian economy and create jobs in this state. Instead we have seen the complete opposite. We cannot even get a toilet out of it for Hallam station. This budget is full of excuses and spin. It is a budget based on an artificial surplus, which without creative accounting would not exist. It is a job-killing budget. It is a budget that makes getting your own home much harder. It is a budget that stymies opportunity. It is a budget that pushes our young people onto the dole queue. It is a budget without even one toilet for Hallam station. This budget deals Victorians a bad hand, especially with the lights going out in workplaces across the state.

This once progressive state, the place to be and a great place to live, work and raise a family, is sadly going backwards. The dreams and aspirations of the hardworking families of the Narre Warren South electorate are being snuffed out by this Liberal-Nationals government that just does not care.

Ms McLEISH (Seymour) — I am absolutely delighted to speak on the appropriation bill this afternoon. In short, I believe this bill represents a budget which is indicative of the times — and the times are indeed tough — but at the same time is an extremely fiscally strategic and responsible budget. It

will help provide effective government for all Victorians, as did our last budget. At the same time it will continue to facilitate the delivery of our pre-election commitments which were related to our vision, looking at fixing the problems that were created by the previous government and building the future.

I want to put a bit of context around the budget. I have said that times are tough. Yesterday we heard that for some time the United Kingdom has been heading into recession. There are a lot of problems in Greece and in Europe generally. The flow-on effects from those situations are something that we need to be very mindful of. Certainly the United States of America is struggling big time as well. We need to remember how tough it is in the global context and that there are flow-on effects from that. At the same time we know that we have a federal Labor government that, similarly to the former Victorian Labor government, really cannot manage the taxpayer dollar, and we have seen it remove a massive amount of our GST revenue. With the uncertainty created at the moment with the carbon tax, people in business do not know whether they are Arthur or Martha, and that puts people who are trying to employ others and to make a good living under a lot of pressure. They really do not know how that will play out.

We have certainly not had any support for Victoria from the Prime Minister, who is a Victorian. You would think that the Prime Minister might like to look after her own state, but instead we have seen a lot of withdrawals and no assistance with project funding, and when you look at the 90-something cents that we get back for every dollar that we contribute in GST perhaps that is not a very fair position.

The context of the budget also relates very much to the performance of the former government, which over 11 years time and again wasted money and in fact squandered billions. I will recap on some of the things it did. Time and again in this house we have heard — opposition members have forgotten it or if they have not forgotten it they are just hanging their heads so far in shame — about that \$2 billion that we have to pay per day for 28 years for that absolute white elephant desalination plant. We have not needed the water; we have put in a zero order. The north-south pipeline, which cost \$750 million, which is an absolute disgrace, goes to the Sugarloaf Reservoir, which is full. It was based on false economy in the first instance. Despite the protestations, that false economy won out and the former government pushed ahead and built it.

We have had ICT project blow-outs of some \$1.44 billion. I am talking about billions, not millions,

of dollars. With the fire sale, the gaming licences were undersold by \$3 billion. The Melbourne Markets had a disgraceful project management, being six years overdue and double the cost outlined in the original business case. The current minister responsible for them has had to pick up the pieces of that appalling project and almost start again to get it back on track.

Not only were there those absolutely blatant examples of squandering and wasteful projects, but the former government also had programs that were not sustainable. The former government continued to spend more than the revenue it was bringing in the door. Everybody knows that if you continue to do that for a long time you will go down the gurgler. You might get away with it for a little bit, but continuing to do that is not a good thing. We have had issues with social housing, where the Auditor-General has picked up a whole bunch of problems, including that the program was not well managed and that it is not sustainable. The current Minister for Housing has said that doing nothing is not an option. She has to start almost from scratch to work out what we can do to fix some of those problems. The TAFE sector was not on a sustainable path either.

There were other projects with issues. In public transport there was the regional rail link. It sounds good, but again the budget did not include funding for signals or trains. Members need to go back and look at those embarrassing decisions that members of the previous government made. They did not realise what they would mean. In his report on public transport the Auditor-General said that for the last decade the former government had not planned for growth. Hello! Melbourne had been growing like Topsy, and the way that the growth was managed was certainly like Topsy. The members of the former government had not planned public transport around that growth. It was almost as though it caught them by surprise. It was the same with social housing. It is an appalling record. We had schools that were run down and the maintenance budget for those schools was outrageous. The list of what had been upgraded and classified as an upgrade was almost fraudulent.

We have had all the challenges in very difficult times globally, with a federal Labor government that does not know how to manage the taxpayer dollar and with all of its blow-outs that have caused problems and the previous state government that wasted and squandered millions. Here we are with our second budget. We have delivered a budget that provides a balance between meeting metropolitan needs and regional needs. It has also done something that is very important: it has maintained our AAA rating. That helps with our

borrowing costs. We know that Standard and Poor's and Moody's were very quick to confirm that AAA rating and that had the previous government remained in office that probably would not have happened.

We will honour the budget, as we did last year, which is not what happened with each of the budgets of the 11 years of the Labor government. We can manage money. In fact, we ran the budget on budget. I know that it is hard to understand, because Labor governments continually live above their means. We have seen that in other states, in New South Wales and Queensland, with the difficulties they are finding themselves in now with their finances because they have lived above their means.

We will again be looking at delivering a surplus. I know that people have commented on that and asked why there is a need for a surplus. People really have to think about how we can provide for and invest in the future. The federal government has been very lucky that under former Prime Minister Howard and Treasurer Costello the previous federal government built a great surplus. It was spent in pretty well record time, but surpluses can be there for when times are tough so that we can fund some major projects or if something unexpected happens we are not digging ourselves further into debt.

I have mentioned also that the federal government is not contributing to major projects. The Regional Development Australia Fund bucket is empty and the federal government is not supporting the feasibility study into the east-west link, which is very important. Listening today I realise that many people on the other side do not really understand what a feasibility study is and why it is important to do one and not just launch into a project. We know how to manage projects and money. It is important to do the feasibility study up front because then your project management at the back end will be a lot more successful. Despite the rantings of members over there about the government not undertaking some of the so-called 'not projects', we are actually providing the backbone for a sustainable project in the future.

There are many positive aspects of this budget that I want to highlight. Some of the metropolitan ones include the removal of dangerous level crossings. There is a \$350 million investment in that. It is something that should have been done long ago because of the congestion in the city, with the railway lines and the roads intersecting and causing people to have to wait in their cars for umpteen minutes. We have a \$220 million investment in schools and \$64 million for schools in

urgent need of upgrades. There is \$199 million for hospital upgrades and \$172 million for rail track maintenance and for new carriages and rolling stock. It is so important that rail track maintenance be kept up because that adds — surprisingly, some people might think — to the timeliness of trains in getting to the end point by their not having to slow down when the track is inferior or when there are mud holes that slow them down.

We have further investments, in police, in business, in bushfires, in agriculture and in seniors.

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

POLICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

GAMBLING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (TRANSITION) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Minister for Gaming).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**MONETARY UNITS AMENDMENT BILL
2012**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of
Mr WELLS (Treasurer).**

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That this bill be now read a second time and a third time.

House divided on question:

Ayes, 44

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|---------------|------------------|
| Angus, Mr | Mulder, Mr |
| Asher, Ms | Naphine, Dr |
| Baillieu, Mr | Newton-Brown, Mr |
| Battin, Mr | Northe, Mr |
| Bauer, Mrs | O'Brien, Mr |
| Blackwood, Mr | Powell, Mrs |
| Bull, Mr | Ryall, Ms |
| Burgess, Mr | Ryan, Mr |
| Clark, Mr | Shaw, Mr |
| Crisp, Mr | Smith, Mr R. |
| Delahunty, Mr | Southwick, Mr |
| Dixon, Mr | Sykes, Dr |
| Fyffe, Mrs | Thompson, Mr |
| Gidley, Mr | Tilley, Mr |
| Hodgett, Mr | Victoria, Mrs |
| Katos, Mr | Wakeling, Mr |
| Kotsiras, Mr | Walsh, Mr |
| McCurdy, Mr | Watt, Mr |
| McIntosh, Mr | Weller, Mr |
| McLeish, Ms | Wells, Mr |
| Miller, Ms | Woodridge, Ms |
| Morris, Mr | Wreford, Ms |

Noes, 37

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| Andrews, Mr | Hutchins, Ms |
| Barker, Ms | Kairouz, Ms |
| Beattie, Ms | Knight, Ms |
| Brooks, Mr | Lim, Mr |
| Campbell, Ms | McGuire, Mr |
| Carroll, Mr | Madden, Mr |
| D'Ambrosio, Ms | Merlino, Mr |
| Donnellan, Mr | Nardella, Mr |
| Duncan, Ms | Neville, Ms |
| Edwards, Ms | Noonan, Mr |
| Eren, Mr | Pallas, Mr |
| Foley, Mr | Pandazopoulos, Mr |
| Graley, Ms | Perera, Mr |
| Halfpenny, Ms | Richardson, Ms |
| Helper, Mr | Scott, Mr |
| Hennessy, Ms | Thomson, Ms |
| Herbert, Mr | Trezise, Mr |
| Holding, Mr | Wynne, Mr |
| Howard, Mr | |

Question agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT
2012/2013) BILL 2012**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of
Mr WELLS (Treasurer).**

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES AND
SUPERANNUATION AMENDMENT
(SALARY RESTRAINT) BILL 2012**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of
Ms ASHER (Minister for Innovation, Services and
Small Business).**

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Bulleen: freeway link

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads. The specific action that I seek is for him to write to local

councils in the north-east of Melbourne outlining the government's process for the planning and evaluation of a freeway link between the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough and the Eastern Freeway at Bulleen. I raise this today more on behalf of another member of this house who has raised this issue a number of times in this chamber — someone who is very concerned about this particular link. This member has condemned previous local members for supporting this road link between Greensborough and Bulleen. Back in 2008 the member said:

... all the residents along Bulleen Road object and are opposed to a freeway link along Bulleen Road.

He advised that residents were opposed to the link. That particular member further said in this house:

I would have thought a better public transport system would be preferable to a road link ...

In 2010, only weeks before the last state election, the same member called on the Labor government to come clean on its plans for a freeway link. Even though the government had been quite open in consulting with the public, the member was concerned about the impact it would have on local schools, sporting clubs, the community and the environment, and said that, most importantly, there must be a proper consultation process. That person said:

Let me make it clear that I will not support an above-ground freeway link between the Eastern Freeway and Banyule Flats under any circumstances, and I will not support a freeway through environmentally sensitive areas.

I have been waiting since the last state election for that person to pop up and raise their concerns, but we have not heard from that particular member for some time. Of course I am talking about the member for Bulleen.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BROOKS — He has popped into the house. He would have been a little bit concerned, as I was, to read in the *Heidelberg Leader* last week the following:

Roads minister Terry Mulder said the north-east link was still being considered ...

I would have thought, given the concerns the member for Bulleen has expressed about that particular road link and freeway through his electorate, that he would have raised this issue in the house for the benefit of his constituents. But he has been surprisingly silent on this particular matter.

The *Manningham Leader* of 18 December 2008 contains a very good quote from the member for Bulleen. It states:

Bulleen state Liberal MP Nicholas Kotsiras said the plan — that is, the road link —

reminded him of the *Wizard of Oz*. 'Residents are being asked to follow a yellow brick road to nowhere', he said.

I suggest to the member for Bulleen that he not be the Cowardly Lion but that he stand up for his area, as he did in opposition, now that he is in government.

Benambra electorate: sports facilities

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and I am glad to see that he is here in the chamber. The action I seek from the minister is for him to again come up to the north-east of Victoria to the electorate of Benambra —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr TILLEY — It is a great area, is it not? On this occasion I seek that the minister meet with and speak to many of the sporting groups that make up the very fabric of regional sport participation in the electorate of Benambra. As we know, sport is a large part of rural and country life, and the electorate of Benambra is home to many sporting groups, including football — the three codes, which I would like to talk about; netball; hockey; soccer — that other code; swimming; basketball — and the list goes on.

Mr Delahunty — You haven't got time to do them all.

Mr TILLEY — No, there is not enough time to talk about our great sport participation. In particular Mr Pedro Afonso and Mr Simon Barlow from the Twin City Wanderers Football Club, which is a soccer club, would relish the opportunity to talk with the minister about their vision for the future of the world game, soccer, in the Wodonga area and their vision to create a rural centre of excellence for the world game.

Sport is a particular way of life for us up in the north-east, particularly in the electorate of Benambra. The relatively temperate weather conditions allow us to play sports year round, and our children enjoy the ability to participate in a variety of sports. I look forward to again hosting the minister in the Benambra electorate and introducing him to some of the committed sporting club representatives who continually and tirelessly volunteer to give so much of their time to their chosen sports. This is all about getting more people more active more often.

Mr Delahunty interjected.

Mr TILLEY — Yes. Look at the clock — I have another minute. Talking about sport, there is the Ovens and Murray Hall of Fame annual event. We are seeing some great achievements coming from our football teams, and the girls continue to participate in the netball. There are also those other legitimate sporting pursuits, including shooting and hunting, which are a strong and vibrant part of our way of life in north-eastern Victoria. The area also accommodates the world game, soccer, which is really growing. Particularly in the early years with the Snowy hydro project we saw a great influence from our multicultural people who are accustomed to country and rural life. They heightened awareness of the world game, soccer, and we are seeing some great competition going on there. What they really need for the future are world-class grounds for a sport that is second to none. We see a strong emphasis on the Australian Rules code, but I strongly support our soccer codes growing into the future with the growth of regional Victoria.

St Kilda pier: reconstruction

Mr FOLEY (Albert Park) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Ports. It is most certainly not for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, for, as we learned in question time today, it is the Minister for Ports who is actually responsible for piers in Port Phillip Bay. The specific action I seek from the Minister for Ports is that he come with me to St Kilda pier with a view to learning how he can, through his newly established Local Ports Critical Infrastructure Fund, seek to fund the wave attenuator screens on the proposed St Kilda pier reconstruction project — like he has just announced with the pier at Mornington.

This would allow the St Kilda safe harbour project to proceed and with it achieve the primary job of making safe the most visited pier on Port Phillip Bay, which has more than 4 million visits per annum. It would allow the secondary benefit of providing greater opportunities for swimmers, fishers and public boating. That this would allow the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to proceed with its private berth expansion would be a consequential but not unimportant policy outcome — an outcome that club has long sought. I make this request against the somewhat disturbing background that suggests the government has dumped this proposal and instead decided to put its scarce funds into alternative measures that will not provide any public benefit but will deliver a private gain to the members of the RMYS.

We know this because the very helpful member for Caulfield, who I know is here today, outlined in a

media release recently that the Liberal government will invest in the rebuilding of the St Kilda pier as part of the minister's new fund. The trouble is that the member for Caulfield got it wrong. There is, it seems, no funding at all in the budget for the rebuilding of the St Kilda pier. This is clear in Parks Victoria's public statements to the City of Port Phillip in April this year when an application from the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron for a new and extended breakwater wall was put to the council for approval. There was an application from the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron, which is a fine and longstanding club operating from the St Kilda foreshore, for the construction of a significant breakwater wall to extend beyond the end of the pier and down in a southerly direction so as to break the swells from storms from that direction, thereby allowing the club to go ahead with its project of expanding the private marina.

What was surprising about the member for Caulfield's announcement was that he had essentially hit the nail on the head: there was money going into a project at St Kilda, but it was for the benefit of the members of the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. It was going to the construction of a wall that would have no public benefit and would certainly not put a single new dollar into the St Kilda pier. Let us be clear: the member for Caulfield and the Minister for Ports' Local Ports Critical Infrastructure Fund will contribute to a wall that will allow for the expansion of a private marina for RMYS members but not contribute one dollar to the new pier.

Tourism: Murray Valley electorate

Mr McCURDY (Murray Valley) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The action I seek is that the minister support my electorate by providing funds to market some events to be held in the Sun Country on the Murray region over the next 12 months. I have spoken in this chamber many times, particularly in this and the last sitting period, about the floods that have hit our region and how we need to market our events wherever we possibly can to get visitors back to the region. It is a delicate balance between letting people know about the tragedies that have taken place with the floods and promoting it as a tourism area and getting the tourists back to our communities. Sun Country on the Murray takes in Yarrawonga, Mulwala, Cobram, Barooga, Numurkah and even Nathalia and Barmah in the seat of Rodney. It takes in the Murray, Ovens and Goulburn rivers and also Lake Mulwala.

The first event I would like some assistance with is the Numurkah Foodbowl Festival, which is a weekend that

celebrates the dedication and passion of local producers and chefs as they come together to showcase food and wine from the Numurkah region. There are many activities, including producers markets, food fairs and a progressive dinner.

The second festival we would like supported is the Yarrowonga-Mulwala multisport festival. This will be the first year of this event, which will be held on the Yarrowonga foreshore. The multisport festival is a two-day event incorporating three triathlons of different distances. The flagship event is the Olympic distance triathlon. There are also the sprint and dash events. The multisport festival will be held in October.

Another inaugural event will be the quadrathlon, which is the first of its kind in the Murray River region. The quadrathlon is a combination of a 3.5-kilometre swim, a 20.5-kilometre run, an 80-kilometre bike ride and then a 26-kilometre paddle, which is quite an event. It begins in Lake Mulwala and then runs down through Yarrowonga. The cyclists then ride to Cobram and finish with a paddle down the Murray River to Tocumwal.

Finally, there is the Yarrowonga-Mulwala Splash 'n' Dash, which is a terrific event that I have been to on many occasions. This year 840 patrons attended this event.

I ask that the minister support these requests so that these events can be successfully marketed, which will ensure that the greatest number of people are aware of them and encouraged to attend. This support will significantly help my electorate to recover and move on from the devastation of the floods and will also promote the wonderful Murray Valley region.

Rail: infrastructure projects

Ms RICHARDSON (Northcote) — The matter I raise is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it concerns promises that were made prior to the last election to build or upgrade a raft of stations right across the network. The action that I seek is for the minister to commence construction and end his fixation with further studies and delays.

In the case of the Caroline Springs station, the money for the building of the station is already in the budget. We know this because Labor put it there. It was part of Labor's growth areas station program that four new outer suburban stations were to be built as part of a \$188 million program. Fortunately for Cardinia, Lynbrook and Williams Landing, these stations were all commenced before the minister could get his slippers

little mitts on them. However, in the case of Caroline Springs the funds have been held over, and despite residents' concerns about this and demands that action be taken, nothing has been commenced.

In fact an *Age* story highlighted the minister's incompetence over Caroline Springs recently, and it prompted a member of the community to make this observation:

... Ted's transport priority is to fix the gate at the rail crossing at New Street and Beach Road. Go figure!

Go figure indeed, because of course New Street, Brighton, is a level crossing that is 223rd on the list of most dangerous crossings in the state. The government is proceeding with that, but it is not getting on with the promises it made to build new stations in the outer corridor.

It gets worse when you consider that study money has been allocated only for stations at Southland, Grovedale, Ballan, Epson, Eaglehawk, Ringwood and Balaclava. There is a long list of stations waiting for any construction to commence, but I will focus on Grovedale station, which the Premier made reference to in question time today. He spoke about it as a great job creator. This project was allocated \$1 million last year for studies and another \$8.4 million this year, yet not one construction worker has been seen on site. That is because the minister has still failed to allocate a single cent for construction. A word of advice to the Premier: unless you are talking about consultancy jobs that the minister is perfectly adept at providing, it is perhaps wiser to stay away from any suggestion that the Minister for Public Transport can build anything other than a reputation as a muppet.

What about Southland station, the one that the Liberals were going to build for \$13 million? The minister has again just provided study money — not a single cent for construction. In every case the budget papers also reveal that the time lines for completion of these projects have been pushed out. When the Premier said this is a safe and responsible budget, clearly what he meant in reference to the Minister for Public Transport was that it is a safe bet that no new station will be built by this minister.

Hospitals: personal care suites

Mrs BAUER (Carrum) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. The action I seek is for the minister to examine the possibility of incorporating personal care suites in hospitals. Recently I met with one of my constituents, Shirley Sloan, who made me aware of the need for such facilities. Shirley

has a teenage son with a disability, and she expressed to me the difficulty experienced by carers when there is a need to change wheelchair-bound children and adults. Shirley regularly needs to spend a number of hours at hospital with her son for specialist appointments. If he needs to use the bathroom, she is often required to drive home, where she has all the necessary equipment to manage him safely, only to return to hospital for further appointments throughout the day.

We have terrific facilities in hospitals for new parents and their babies, such as changing facilities. However, when a carer needs to change a teenager or an adult this cannot be achieved without the use of specialised equipment such as ceiling hoists, height-adjustable tables or change benches, plus a toilet and basin in each room. Such rooms would make life so much easier for both carers and their clients.

I congratulate the government on incorporating a similar room at the new award-winning Royal Children's Hospital, and I request that the Minister for Health examine the possibility of incorporating such change rooms in all new hospital builds.

Roads: city of Wyndham

Mr EREN (Lara) — I wish to raise an urgent matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads. The action I seek from the minister is that he invest in arterial roads in the Wyndham Vale area, part of my electorate, to alleviate the traffic congestion that my constituents come across on a daily basis. I ask the minister to ensure that my constituents have adequate road infrastructure to meet their needs so they are not stuck in traffic for most of their journeys. Whether it is going to work, dropping off their kids at school or just going about their everyday lives, they constantly come across traffic congestion, which is so bad at the moment that it is gridlock any time between 6.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m.

This congestion also has an impact on the mainstream traffic for commuters from Geelong. I left from Geelong at about 5.45 a.m. the other morning only to be stopped around the Altona area by the car park that the Princes Freeway now is. The government needs to understand that the city of Wyndham is one of the fastest growing municipalities in not only the state but the nation, and it is very disappointing that this government did not provide any funding to the City of Wyndham for arterial roads or upgrades in the 2012–13 budget handed down earlier this month.

The pace of growth in the outer suburbs, including those in the city of Wyndham, means schools, bus services and upgraded arterial roads need to be

maintained each and every year without fail. This government is showing contempt for the residents of Wyndham Vale and the local council by completely ignoring their pleas for help.

A public rally was held recently which was attended by a fair few people, and rightfully so. A petition was launched. I assume there will be thousands of people from the western suburbs, including from my electorate, who will sign this petition to beg and plead with the minister and the government to make sure that they make appropriate investments — not on a political basis but on a needs basis. It is not all right for the Minister for Planning to go out there, tick off on developments and open up more development lots without investing in infrastructure.

I urge the state government to support the city of Wyndham with the infrastructure it needs and deserves as the fastest growing municipality in the state and indeed the nation. The action I seek from the minister is to invest in arterial roads in the Wyndham Vale area.

Bay Road, Sandringham: traffic management

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The specific action I seek is that he attend a site meeting in Bay Road, Sandringham, to observe the installation of traffic remediation measures at two locations: the first at the junction of Fernhill Road and Bay Road and the second adjacent to a school crossing in a road proximate to Copley Engineering and Sandringham East Primary School.

Over a number of years requests have been made on a repeated basis by members of the local school community at Sandringham East Primary School for traffic remediation measures, such as a 40-kilometre-per-hour sign in Bay Road that might stem the speed of traffic in that precinct. There is an existing school crossing and a 60-kilometre-per-hour speed limit which operates at that particular section of Bay Road. However, there have been reported instances of trucks and cars going through the crossing, giving rise to potential risk to young children crossing the road with their parents.

A number of years ago, during the time of the former Labor government, a request was made to see whether the speed could be reduced at that section of Bay Road to assist schoolchildren who were crossing there. Regrettably those requests fell on deaf ears, and nothing was done. There was a technical reason: Sandringham East Primary School only joined Bay Road by way of an easement beside a factory, and therefore by virtue of

departmental land not abutting Bay Road it was not possible to impose a reduced speed limit for that section.

I contacted the Minister for Public Transport recently to bring to his attention the representations of the Sandringham East Primary School community, keen-minded parents and strong community advocates. What has the minister done? He has introduced a reform to enable a 40-kilometre-per-hour speed limit to be applied in that section of road to the great delight of the local community.

What I would like him to do is visit the site once the 40-kilometre-per-hour speed limit has been introduced, noting that with the increased urban density that is taking place in Melbourne, there have been myriad requests throughout my electorate for road remediation measures to enable senior citizens, schoolchildren and foreshore users to cross roads in the face of increasing volumes of traffic. There are myriad issues in my electorate, but the one matter that I want the minister to evaluate — besides cycling issues, public transport issues on the railways and other local issues — is these two sites in Bay Road, where he can observe the good works that have been undertaken.

Buses: outer suburbs

Ms HUTCHINS (Keilor) — I wish to raise a matter with the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is that he commit to real and substantial increases in bus services and bus routes in the outer suburbs of Melbourne in the next budget, since he failed to provide a cent for residents in the fastest growing region of Melbourne in the 2012 budget.

This lack of new funding comes despite both the huge projected population growth in the outer suburbs of Melbourne and increased bus patronage, and it is yet another example of the Baillieu government turning its back on the people of the outer suburbs. Melbourne is booming at no faster rate than in Melbourne's outer west, where we are experiencing some of the greatest population growth in Australia. Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for 2009–10 demonstrate that the shire of Melton and the city of Wyndham are at the top of the list of the fastest growing local government areas in the nation. The outer western region is expected to accommodate 25 per cent of the projected metropolitan population growth over the next 25 years.

I have to declare here in the house today that I have a deep obsession with and love for buses. I love buses, because they are not only safe but also reliable. They

also reduce road congestion, are better for public health and improve the lives of many people who are at risk of social exclusion. I am sad to say, though, that I think the Minister for Public Transport does not share my passion. No, he does not feel the same way. He does not even flirt with buses, as you can see if you have a look at the way he has responded in the budget. He has no time for buses, and I have rarely heard him say a good word about the need to extend bus routes into the outer suburbs.

Community organisation LeadWest describes inadequate transport infrastructure as the greatest threat to the region's economy. Bus services and routes in particular are extremely important to Melbourne's growth and to the mobility of families in the outer regions. The government's own budget papers reveal that metropolitan bus patronage grew by a massive 16.2 per cent over the last 12 months, with further growth of 6 per cent predicted over the next year. The combination of staggeringly large population growth in the outer suburbs, particularly in the outer west, and increased patronage of bus services shows the real need for commitment to buses and bus services across those suburbs. The public transport minister recently declared that he had put public transport back to where it should be after only 11 months — —

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

Prahran electorate: elite athlete funding

Mr NEWTON-BROWN (Prahran) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. The action I seek is that he consider some of my local constituents for elite athlete travel grants. Victoria's elite athletes can face many challenges throughout their sporting careers, especially when travel is a requirement to qualify in various events both within Australia and overseas. Funding is available under the election commitments of the coalition government for grants of up to \$2000 to be provided to elite athletes to assist with costs of travel. To be eligible, applicants must be elite athletes, Victorian residents, members of a state sporting organisation and must be travelling to compete at a national championship or international event. A few of my constituents are elite athletes. I seek that the minister consider the following people in the course of considering who will be the worthy recipients of these grants.

The first elite athlete I refer to the minister for consideration is Evelyn Halls. She is probably Australia's best fencer. She has won a total of eight

world cup medals and she achieved a world ranking of 11 in April this year. She also works as a solicitor. She seeks funding to travel to the Asian Fencing Championships in Japan. Maylin Chuah seeks to travel to the world ultimate championships. I was introduced to this obscure frisbee game by Matthew Barrett, another accomplished Melbourne sportsman in this discipline. It is perhaps the only game that does not have an umpire. It is a self-regulated game. Imagine that, Speaker — if we were self-regulated here, you would be out of a job! This is a game where sportspeople are very sporting in that they do not require an umpire. Maylin Chuah seeks to travel to Japan to compete in the world ultimate championships.

Catherine McArthur is a junior canoeing champion, and she is a member of the under-23 Australian canoe sprint team. She has achieved a top-10 finish in both the K1 and K2 at the marathon junior world championships. She assists junior athletes in school programs and within Victoria, and she attends Melbourne University, where she has received an elite athlete sport scholarship. She seeks funding to assist with a trip to the Penrith selections. Trudy Scott is an accomplished sportsperson in archery. She won a world indoor bare-bow competition in an international event in 2010. She is a member of the Sherbrooke Archery Club, and she seeks funding to assist her to travel to the World Field Archery Championships. The final sportsperson is Benjamin Stokes, who is a gridiron player. He plays with the Monash University Warriors, and he seeks funding to assist with travel in relation to the Victorian state gridiron team. I ask the minister to consider all these worthy local constituents in the consideration of the elite athlete travel grants.

The SPEAKER — Order! I would call the member for Ivanhoe next, but he is with his wife celebrating the birth of their baby daughter this afternoon.

Responses

Ms ASHER (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — The member for Murray Valley has asked me to consider funding for his electorate. He spoke about the Sun Country region. He referred to Yarrowonga, Cobram, Numurkah and a range of events for which he is seeking funding. He specifically mentioned the 2012 Numurkah Foodbowl Festival, which is to be held on 20 and 21 October 2012; the 2012 Murray Quadrathlon, which is to be held on 15 and 16 December 2012; the 2012 Yarrowonga Mulwala Multisport Festival in October 2012; and the 2013 Yarrowonga Mulwala Splash 'n' Dash, which is to be held on 16 and 17 March 2013.

The member for Murray Valley, as all members would be aware, is a forceful advocate for the tourism benefits of his electorate. He is well aware of what a good visitor spend can do to advantage his electorate. The examples that he has provided to the Parliament today are small events, but if there is a multiplicity of smaller events, there will be in aggregate good economic value for country regions, in particular the electorate of Murray Valley. Tourism is a key economic driver, and I am sure all members of this Parliament understand that point.

I am pleased to advise the member for Murray Valley that the two events in Yarrowonga will receive \$5500 under the Country Victoria Events program that I announced last night — that is, \$3000 for the inaugural Yarrowonga Mulwala Multisport Festival and \$2500 for the Yarrowonga Mulwala Splash 'n' Dash event. I announced in the Parliament last night a whole range of small grants to promote visitation to regional areas. This is part of that tranche of funding that I announced in part last night. I am also pleased to announce today funding of \$17 500 from the flood recovery program. Of that amount, \$11 500 will help support the tourism marketing for the other two events mentioned by the member for Murray Valley — that is, \$6000 for the Numurkah Foodbowl Festival and \$5000 for the Murray Quadrathlon. The remaining \$6000 will be provided to two events in the Grampians region, and both events have been very strongly supported by the member for Lowan. There is \$4000 for the annual arts festival in Horsham, which will run from 1 June to 11 June, and \$2000 for the 2012 Dunkeld Adventure, an outdoor physical endurance challenge running from 8 to 11 June.

Supporting these events is part of the coalition government's ongoing commitment to supporting townships affected by the 2011 flood events. It is very important that organisers of these regional events continue to receive government support for the marketing of their events to visitors, because in the end that is the tourism value. I am delighted to be able to respond positively to the member for Murray Valley.

Mr DELAHUNTY (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — Two members have raised matters with me tonight. Firstly, the member for Benambra raised the issue of support for coaches, officials and managers of local sporting clubs in his electorate, particularly the very important soccer clubs. In his presentation tonight he spoke about the fact that a lot of the athletes in the area came out of the time when the Snowy River scheme was built. A lot of people with different cultural backgrounds moved into that area at that time, and that

flowed on into the soccer clubs. Those clubs need support for their activities.

I am pleased to inform the member for Benambra that I have recently approved the latest round of funding under the 2012 Country Action grants scheme (CAGS). Four clubs in the Benambra electorate have received funding under this program: the Twin City Wanderers soccer club will receive \$3300 for development of its strategic plan; the Wodonga Diamonds Football Club will receive \$3079 to continue its coach development and first-aid training; the Wodonga Hockey Club will receive \$5000 for its club administration project; and the Corryong Amateur Swimming Club will receive \$2620 for Austswim teacher of swimming and water safety qualification certificates. A total of 34 sporting clubs have received CAGS funding totalling \$132 657 in the latest round of funding. The grants go a long way towards helping sporting organisations increase their skills base and improve their administration and program delivery so they can provide even better sporting opportunities for their communities.

A recent VicHealth study has shown that cutting physical inactivity by 5 per cent would save 1000 lives nationally and result in 3000 fewer cases of illness each year. It is very important that we get our people fit and healthy. In Queen's Hall this week we ran science and health programs. The scientists I spoke to said that if we keep people fit and healthy, we will address a lot of the problems they are trying to solve. Supporting local organisations to operate more effectively is just one of the many ways the coalition government is ensuring that even more people are more active more often. I thank the member for Benambra for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents up there.

The member for Prahran raised the matter of support for elite-level athletes. I congratulate the member for Prahran. He is a very active member not only in the Parliament but also in his electorate. He is in constant contact with us as ministers in the chamber. He is doing a fantastic job, and he is a great member for Prahran.

As I have previously stated in this house, I have recently approved the first round of grants from the coalition's Elite Athlete Travel grants program. We took this to the election, and it was widely supported by the community. This program gives elite athletes the opportunity to take that next step. We already give Victalent grants to help people from regional areas attend programs in Melbourne, but this grant is to assist people to go to national or international events. In the first round this year we have allocated funding totalling just under half a million dollars to 349 Victorian athletes. The Elite Athlete Travel grants program will

assist a wide range of athletes to reach their potential by making it easier for them to travel to national and international competitions or training venues.

The member for Prahran will be pleased to learn that five athletes from his electorate have been awarded funding totalling over \$8000 for travel. I have a list of the recipients, and I know he has already mentioned some of these people, but I can tell him that Evelyn Halls will receive \$2000 to travel to and compete in the 2012 Asian Fencing Championships in Japan; Catherine McArthur — and I know he has spoken about this young lady — will receive \$2000 to travel to the National Sprint Kayak Championships and Olympic selection races in Penrith; and Trudy Scott will receive \$2000 to travel to and represent Australia at the 2012 World Archery Field Championships. The member for Prahran also spoke about Benjamin Stokes, a gridiron player with the Monash University Warriors. It is unbelievable. I support about 50 sports in Victoria — —

Dr Napthine interjected.

Mr DELAHUNTY — I am not sure what position he plays.

Dr Napthine — Is he a fullback or is he a linebacker?

Mr DELAHUNTY — He is a tough player, but I know he needs support. I am pleased to tell the member for Prahran that Ben will receive \$485 to assist in his travel. There is no doubt that these grants will remove some of the obstacles faced by our high-level athletes and make it easier for them to focus on representing and promoting Victoria and Australia. Our athletes deserve support so they can aspire to and achieve their potential across Australia and the world. Again, congratulations to the member for Prahran on his advocacy; he is doing a great job, and I am pleased to help some of the athletes in his electorate.

Dr NAPHTHINE (Minister for Ports) — I welcome the opportunity to respond to the member for Albert Park and talk about ports programs across the state. The member for Albert Park raised an issue concerning the St Kilda pier. The current St Kilda pier was built in 1971 and is 445 metres long and 6.7 metres wide. I am advised that there are about 8 million visitors a year to the St Kilda foreshore area, of whom about 2 million per year promenade along the St Kilda pier — the member for Albert Park says 4 million, and we will take that as tourist promotion for his area. There is an 800-berth marina there, and Parks Victoria is the manager of this asset.

The pier is described as being in very poor condition but, Speaker, as you would know, these things do not happen overnight, and indeed in 2006 vehicle loading on the pier was reduced significantly because of the condition of the pier. I would have thought the local member and the government of the day would have taken action to do something about it at the time, and under the Labor government in 2008 there was a St Kilda pier redevelopment master plan yet still no funding — zero funding — and no effective representation from the lazy, ineffective, uncaring member for Albert Park, who could not deliver on this important project in his local electorate. He would not listen; he did not care. He has known since he was elected to this house of issues to do with St Kilda pier, but the member for Albert Park is like an empty vessel — he makes a lot of noise but simply does not deliver.

Mr Brooks — On a point of order, Speaker, I do not think my colleague on this side of the house needs the protection of the Chair, but I am sure that somewhere in the standing orders there is a relevant section that prevents members from reflecting on other members of the house in that particular manner.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Foley — On the point of order, Speaker, as I am the member being reflected upon, I am more than happy for the Minister for Ports to continue to dig himself into a hole about St Kilda pier, as he appears intent on doing. I thank my colleague for his concern about my welfare, but on this particular matter I am happy for the minister to continue to take a very long walk off a very short pier.

The SPEAKER — Order! On that basis I do not uphold that point of order.

Dr NAPHTHINE — Once again we see that the opposition is full of division and cannot get its act together. Perhaps the member for Albert Park can explain to his constituents why his party, in government, allowed the cost of the Princes Pier project to blow out from \$14 million to \$34 million at a time when it could not find money for the St Kilda pier. Perhaps he could explain that to his constituents.

Mr Foley — On a point of order, Speaker, on that particular matter I will take umbrage, because, as I have pointed out on a number of occasions when the minister has brought this up in question time, the Minister for Ports continues to misrepresent that proposition. Princes Pier was a two-stage proposal —

The SPEAKER — Order!

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have turned the member's microphone off.

Mr Foley interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the member to resume his seat; I would hate to throw him out for an hour now. The minister was reflecting a little on the member for Albert Park.

Dr NAPHTHINE — I was reflecting on the fact that, in contrast to the lack of achievement from the member for Albert Park, we are fortunate on this side of the house that we have hardworking members of Parliament like the member for Caulfield, who raises these important issues; upper house members for Southern Metropolitan Region Andrea Coote, Georgie Crozier and David Davis, who raise these issues; and the member for Mornington, who raised concerns about his pier and the fact that the previous Labor government built half a pier that was going to disappear because it forgot to build the wave screens, and he got funding for that pier.

I am pleased to advise the house that the 2012–13 budget allocates \$23 million for critical local port infrastructure upgrades. Some of that money has been allocated for the critical works at Mornington because of the terrifically hard work of the member for Mornington. That was long overdue. Unfortunately when we came to government there was a huge black hole in infrastructure when it came to ports. The member for Bellarine talked about the Portarlington port. The former government did nothing in 11 years of government, yet she comes in here whingeing, carping and whining about it instead of having done something when she was a minister in the former government. We have allocated \$23 million for local ports infrastructure. I am advised that Parks Victoria has continued to work with the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron on these issues.

In response to the request by the member for Albert Park, I am more than happy to visit and look at the issues with my colleagues who well represent the area and have put forward these concerns. Perhaps the member for Albert Park can explain to me why in 11 years of Labor government, with a Deputy Premier as a member for Albert Park and with a high-profile member for Albert Park who was a senior adviser to the previous government, it could not deliver one dollar for this important project in his own backyard. As we promenade along the pier perhaps he could explain to me why his government could not find any money to

fix it and left it as another gaping infrastructure black hole that we have to fix in government. Fortunately we are tackling the Mornington pier issue. We have money in this budget for critical local port infrastructure.

I am happy to work with the member for Albert Park and visit the area so that he can explain how we can work together to deal with the appalling mess that his government left behind.

Mr KOTSIRAS (Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) — The member for Northcote raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and the action she seeks is for the minister to commence construction on a number of railway stations across Victoria. I will refer that matter to the minister for his attention and direct response.

The member for Carrum raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health, and the action she seeks is for the minister to investigate the possibility of incorporating personal care suites for people with disabilities in new hospital rebuilds. I will refer that matter to the minister.

The member for Lara raised a matter for the Minister for Roads, and the action he seeks is for the minister to invest in road infrastructure in Wyndham Vale. I will refer that matter to the minister for his attention and direct response.

The member for Sandringham raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action he seeks is for the minister to visit a site at Bay Road, Sandringham, and evaluate a number of local issues. I will refer that matter to the minister for his attention.

The member for Keilor raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and the action she seeks is for the minister to provide more bus services for the outer suburbs of Melbourne. I will refer that matter to the minister for his action.

I turn to the member for Bundoora. After 10 years of not raising this issue once in this house, he has finally found his voice. I will refer his matter to the Minister for Roads, but I have to tell the member that in 2000 there was a huge meeting of all residents. The former member for Ivanhoe was present at the meeting, and he said there would be no above-ground freeway link and he would resign if there was. I was also at that meeting, and I said I also would not support an above-ground freeway link. The current member for Ivanhoe is a coward — —

The SPEAKER — Order! It is unparliamentary to refer to a member in that way, particularly as he is a new dad.

Mr Brooks — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer to a 1997 ruling by Speaker Plowman in relation to the adjournment debate. I quote from *Rulings from the Chair*, under the heading, ‘Passing issue to minister responsible’:

If a minister is aware of the facts relating to a matter raised, it is better for the Parliament if he or she answers in full rather than simply passing it on to the minister concerned. If, however, the minister does not know the facts, he or she should not bluff his or her way through it but simply pass it on to the minister concerned.

Given that the Minister for Roads has not bothered to come into the chamber, I ask the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship to simply refer it on to him.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, the minister at the table has clearly shown that he does know the facts of the matter. In line with Speaker Plowman’s ruling I ask you to allow him to continue espousing the facts he knows on this issue to fully inform the member who raised the matter on the adjournment.

Mr Foley — On the point of order, Speaker, in his ruling Speaker Plowman was referring to the responsible minister for the portfolio, not to the ill-advised minister who is pretending he knows about this issue at the moment.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order, but I ask the minister to just tell the house what he knows and then refer the matter to the minister.

Mr KOTSIRAS — I would be more than happy to do so. For 12 years I have constantly said the residents do not support an above-ground freeway link. The current member for Ivanhoe has said at his branch meeting that he does not support it, yet he said at a community meeting that he does support it. He is the one who is being inconsistent; I have been consistent.

Mr Foley — On a point of order, Speaker, in line with your earlier suggestion to the minister, I ask you to ask the minister at the table to pass this matter on to the relevant minister and put us all out of our misery.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I remember the question asked, and I know there were some reflections made on the current member at the time. If the minister wishes to continue answering the question, I ask him to do so according to

what he knows and then look towards moving reasonably quickly to passing it on to the minister.

Mr KOTSIRAS — As I said, the member for Bundoora is ill informed. He has no concept and no idea of whether this link is going to take place. I have said since 2000 to residents, and he can check, that I do not support an above-ground freeway link. That is what we said. The member for Bundoora is wrong and is misleading the house. I said that in 2000, and I have said it again many times in this chamber since then. For the member for Bundoora to come into this chamber and say that I have said something else is false. It is wrong. I reiterate what I said in 2000 and have continued to say, I think, every year in the house. I asked the former Labor government to come clean and tell us what its plans were. Obviously the current member for Ivanhoe had two different plans — one for his branch meetings and one for the committee meetings. I have been consistent, and I will continue to be consistent. I will refer this matter to the Minister for Roads for his attention and direct response.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am sure we are all very pleased about that. I would now like to declare the house adjourned, and we will meet again soon.

House adjourned 4.59 p.m. until Tuesday, 5 June.

