

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 22 May 2012

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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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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Tuesday, 22 May 2012

The SPEAKER (Hon. Ken Smith) took the chair at 2.04 p.m. and read the prayer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before we commence today I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery of some visitors from Ballarat: Cr Mark Harris, the mayor of the Ballarat City Council; Mr Anthony Schinck, the chief executive officer of the Ballarat City Council; Professor David Battersby, the vice-chancellor of the University of Ballarat; and Mr Colin Marshall, the director of campus life at the University of Ballarat. We welcome you gentlemen here today, and we are looking forward to our parliamentary sitting in Ballarat in September.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

Member for Melbourne

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise the house that on 7 May 2012 I received the resignation of the member for Melbourne. It is my intention to issue a writ for a by-election to be held on Saturday, 21 July 2012.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Frederick James Granter

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Frederick James Granter and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Council for Bendigo Province from 1964 to 1976 and for Central Highlands Province from 1976 to 1988 and minister of the Crown from 1973 to 1982.

Frederick James Granter, always known to everyone as Jock, was born on 6 March 1921 at Gardenvale. He died on 14 May 2012. Jock Granter lived a magnificent life. He was a wonderful man and was very much loved. He was educated at Gardenvale Central School and Caulfield Grammar School. On finishing school he became a bank officer and was employed at the bank until 1954. However, his work, like that of so many others of his generation, was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. He enlisted in the 2nd/164th Australian General Transport Company of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in 1941 and served

until April 1946, being discharged with the rank of corporal. In 1949 Jock married Helena Ferrier Thomas, always known as Ena, and they were happily married for over 62 years. She survives him, and we offer our sincere condolences to her today.

In 1954 Jock started farming at Heathcote. He was active in his local community. He played football, both for Wimmera and Heathcote, and he was also a very keen tennis player. Jock Granter was also, to use a phrase befitting him, a gentleman of the turf. He served as president and long-time committee member of the Bendigo Jockey Club and was made a life member. Last Thursday the Jock Granter Handicap was again run at the Bendigo races. He was a trustee of both the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve and Bendigo Racecourse.

Apart from his sporting interests, Jock was an active member of the Heathcote Rural Fire Brigade for many, many years. In 1984 he was awarded the National Medal with clasp for his dedicated service as a volunteer firefighter. He was president and a committee member of the Heathcote Agricultural Society. In the field of health, Jock Granter was a member of the Heathcote Hospital board and a member of the Mount Alvernia hospital committee. The local hospital board placed a notice in the *Bendigo Advertiser* this week to mourn the passing of its life governor. He was secretary of the Heathcote RSL, and it was fitting that his state funeral yesterday was held at the RSL hall, given his association with and work for the league spanning more than 60 years.

Jock Granter entered Parliament in 1964 as the Legislative Council member for Bendigo, defeating the sitting member, Arthur Smith, who had held the seat for the previous 12 years. Jock's achievements had statewide significance, because, as Lindsay Thompson later wrote in his autobiography *I Remember*, Jock Granter's winning the seat gave the government a majority in the Legislative Council for the very first time. He was returned at each subsequent election, and he continued when the electoral boundaries were changed at the 1976 election as an MLC for Central Highlands Province. In 1970 Jock was appointed Government Whip in the Legislative Council. He continued as whip until 1973, when Dick Hamer asked him to join the ministry. He was appointed Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Forests, and he held those portfolios until June 1981.

Jock Granter was a dynamic water minister. He oversaw the construction of the Thomson River dam, a most important initiative to provide water security to the greater Melbourne area, with the Thomson

Reservoir being the largest of all Melbourne's water storages. When it came on line in 1984 it more than doubled Melbourne's water storage capacity. Without Jock Granter, Melbourne's water storages would be to this day in strife. I will not go on, but Jock Granter regarded recent initiatives in the water supply area with curiosity, to say the least.

In 1981 the new Premier, Lindsay Thompson, asked Jock to take on the important police and emergency services portfolio. Jock lamented giving up the water supply portfolio, but given his long experience with the rural fire brigade, the new portfolio was a very good fit, and he was highly respected as the ministerial head of the Country Fire Authority. The year 1982 saw the election of the Cain government. Jock continued as a member of the Council until 1988, when he retired. His last 10 years in Parliament were characterised by the very tight numbers in the upper house in that period, and he admitted that this delayed the timing of his retirement.

Jock Granter was well regarded in this Parliament across the political spectrum. He was a grassroots politician in the very best sense — close to his local community and actively involved in many of its activities. He was especially attentive to young members and took an interest in their progress, whether or not they were in his own party. In 2009 the F. J. Granter Scholarship was established in his honour. It provides an annual award for an essay promoting liberty, freedom, enterprise and community service on a topic chosen by a local committee. All schoolchildren living in the Bendigo federal electorate are eligible to apply, and I had the pleasure of presenting the first award some years ago.

Jock Granter was the last surviving member of the committee which acquired the Sun Loong dragon for Bendigo. I understand Sun Loong is the longest imperial dragon in the world, extending to some 100 metres. Jock's relationship with the Chinese community in Bendigo has remained very strong. He insisted on watching the Sun Loong dragon in the Easter festival parade only a month ago, accompanied by his wife.

Jock Granter was a gentleman parliamentarian who gave 24 years service to the Parliament and people of Victoria and especially to his local community. He was widely well regarded, much loved and deeply respected for always being a local. For Jock Granter, even as a minister, politics was always local. He relished every opportunity to connect, and he was always selfless in his pursuits. As Daryl McClure, a former Liberal member of Parliament, said, 'You wouldn't meet a

better bloke'. We honour his service to our state and our nation today. We extend our sympathies at this sad time to Ena and their extended family. Vale Jock Granter, a great Victorian.

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — On behalf of the Victorian parliamentary Labor Party I join with the Premier in noting the sad passing of Frederick James 'Jock' Granter and offer our condolences to his widow, Helena, and to other family members, close friends and former colleagues — those he touched in such a powerful way. As the Premier has noted, Jock Granter was someone who made a tremendous contribution in public life, both as a member of Parliament in the other place and as a minister in former governments. Towards the end of his remarks the Premier touched upon Jock Granter's greatest contribution — that is, being someone who was always very local, someone who understood his local community and was passionate about improving the lot of those who were not just his constituents but his neighbours. They were people who shared his concerns, people who had shared life experiences, just as he did in those local communities.

As the Premier has noted, Frederick James 'Jock' Granter was born in Gardenvale, Victoria, to Donald and Marion, was educated at Gardenvale Central School and went on to study at Caulfield Grammar. He was a keen sportsman; he played football in the Wimmera league and for Heathcote. As the Premier has mentioned, he started his working life as a bank officer before serving his nation and freedom in the Australian Imperial Force from 1941 to 1946. The *McIvor Times* of 31 March 1982 noted that it was his time as a bank officer that ignited a passion for and interest in politics through his staunch opposition to the proposition from the then national Labor Party government of a policy of bank nationalisation.

Jock Granter was first elected to a Legislative Council seat in June 1964 and, as the Premier has noted, he served with distinction, with a great work ethic and with hard work for 24 years, holding portfolios in water supply and forests as the Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Forests, and later serving as the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Mr Granter reportedly had a fundamental rule, according to the *McIvor Times* of 31 March 1982, being to 'never make a promise you can't keep' — sound advice then and sound advice even now.

As the Premier noted, Mr Granter's tenure as water minister was a very important period in the history of our state. It included the establishment of the Thomson Dam, and he was involved in the construction of Lake

Eppalock. These significant pieces of infrastructure are testament to Jock Granter's service and his leadership and in many respects serve as a legacy for him.

Jock Granter's community involvement extended beyond politics to serving as the secretary of the Heathcote RSL and the Heathcote fire brigade and on the boards of many different community organisations — all worthy causes, whether it be the board of the Heathcote hospital, as president of the Bendigo Jockey Club or as trustee of the Victorian Amateur Turf Club. His involvement went far beyond his paid service or his formal responsibilities as a member of Parliament and a minister. Mr Granter has been remembered by those who knew him well, those who knew him best, as a mild-mannered and self-effacing man who wanted the best for his community. I think all of us could aspire to having those comments passed about us. He did genuinely want the best for his community, and he went about delivering that.

The parliamentary library has collected and made available lots of different clippings. It is important to note that at one point during his tenure as Minister of Water Supply, in February 1976, it seemed that Victoria Police — and he would later serve as Minister for Police and Emergency Services — needed to be called in to provide protection for him and one of his parliamentary colleagues. Even though he was announcing the opening of a new piece of infrastructure and the end of water restrictions for Maldon, it seemed that water policy was contentious then and is contentious still. That is an important matter to note in the history of these things.

Jock Granter was a true country gentleman and someone who served his community, this Parliament, this state and our nation with great distinction. I again extend the condolences of each and every member of the parliamentary Labor Party to his family, his friends and former colleagues, those who were so close to him. It was a life well lived and one that he and his family can be very proud of.

Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other members in this motion of condolence to mark the passing of Frederick James 'Jock' Granter. Mr Granter died on 14 May 2012. He gave 24 years of faithful service to this Parliament. During that time he was, amongst other roles, the Minister of Water Supply and the Minister of Forests, and later the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

He was elected to Parliament in 1964 and came here on the back of extensive community involvement. He was a member of the RSL, the fire brigade at Heathcote, the Heathcote Agricultural Society, the Bendigo Jockey Club, the Lions club, the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society, the Heathcote hospital board and the Mount Alvernia Hospital board in Bendigo, and he was a trustee of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. He was a sportsman of some note — he played football in the Wimmera Football League and in Heathcote, and as the material demonstrates he was also a very keen tennis player.

He came to the Parliament with a background in banking and, as the Leader of the Opposition has observed, he forwent that career when he joined the Australian Imperial Force in 1941, where he remained until 1946. He then came to Heathcote as a sheep farmer. He was very actively involved with his community and was broadly regarded throughout the whole of his life, including his time in Parliament, as being a man of the people. It is also especially interesting to note that he was a great mentor to new members who came into this place, irrespective of the party they served.

He was instrumental in the construction of the Thomson Dam and the Lake Eppalock storage, and of all endeavours in which he was involved there is surely no greater legacy for the state of Victoria and its people than the development of those two great initiatives. He had an absolutely passionate commitment to his work, to the Parliament and very particularly to his family. He was widely respected throughout the community and also across the Parliament — and that itself is testament to the man who was Frederick James 'Jock' Granter. The condolences of the Parliament are extended to his wife, Helena.

Dr NAPTHINE (Minister for Ports) — Frederick James Granter was known throughout his long and distinguished life as Jock. He was born on 6 March 1921 — a birthday he shares with me.

An honourable member interjected.

Dr NAPTHINE — Not the same year, no. He was married for over 62 years to Helena, who is better known as Ena. Jock was correctly described as a gentleman, in the truest sense of the word. Indeed the *Telegraph* of Thursday, 23 March 1982, says:

People who are close to Jock Granter describe him as an honest, kindly man who is ever ready to listen and offer common-sense advice.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, and this article also says:

His fundamental rule is 'Never make a promise you can't keep'.

Jock was a person who kept his promises and served his community well. He served the Victorian Parliament for over 24 years: from 1964 to 1976 as the upper house member for Bendigo Province and, following the redistribution, as the upper house member for Central Highlands Province from 1976 to 1988. He served as Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Forests from 1973 to 1981 and as Minister for Police and Emergency Services from 1981 to 1982, and prior to that he served as the Government Whip in the Legislative Council from 1970 to 1973.

As the Premier has said, the highlight of Jock's ministerial career was his significant leadership and oversight of the building of the Thomson Dam. The dam had been proposed on a number of occasions — in the late 1960s and again in the early 1970s — but it was not an easy task to deliver this major piece of water infrastructure. It needed Jock's leadership, direction and common sense to commence the project in 1976. Indeed at the time it was said that it was a project that would drought proof Melbourne. It has certainly made a significant difference to the water supply and the security of the water supply in Melbourne in the decades since its construction. Due to his friendliness and his ability to listen, Jock was able to sit down, listen to and talk with the conservationists who were concerned about the proposal to build the Thomson Dam. He was also able to work with the many farmers in that area who were concerned about the Thomson Dam and the impact on water supplies in Gippsland. The construction and success of the Thomson Dam is an outstanding legacy of the work of Jock Granter.

Throughout his life Jock served the community of Heathcote, and other members have spoken about his commitment to community and local activities. He was involved in just about every organisation going in Heathcote, including the RSL, the fire brigade and the agricultural society. He was actively involved in Heathcote hospital, and I met him in that capacity. The Heathcote hospital is now known as McIvor Health and Community Services. Jock did a great job working with the Heathcote hospital and the Heathcote community during times of significant change and in particular when working with Marie Tehan, the then health minister. I was parliamentary secretary at the time.

There were significant changes in country health services as they dealt with the introduction of casemix funding and the changing needs of their communities

due to the greater involvement of preventive health services and a broader range of services other than the traditional bed-based services, which were often centralised to larger hospitals. Jock did a great job with the local health service and community as they changed and adapted to provide health services that better suited the community needs.

Jock, as other speakers have said, was also an avid racegoer. He was avidly involved in the racing industry, and he was a member of the Bendigo Jockey Club for almost 40 years and president of the club for eight years. He was a trustee of the Bendigo Racecourse reserve for over 50 years and served as a trustee of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. He was a great supporter of jumps racing and raced many successful jumping horses. Jock had winners at Caulfield, Flemington, Sandown and racecourses throughout Victoria. Among his highlights in recent times he had a horse that finished second in the Bagot Handicap at Flemington and won the Avoca Cup. That horse, Tiffany's Best, was a great one that raced under Jock's name.

I am told that Jock attended every Bendigo Cup meeting up until three years ago, when his wife was unable to accompany him. Jock was also an innovator in racing and helped form a sister association between the Bendigo Jockey Club and the Penang Turf Club which continues today. At his funeral yesterday there were flowers from the president and members of the Penang Turf Club.

Jock was one of the leaders in understanding the benefits of broadening the reach of Victorian racing into Asia. During his term as president of the Bendigo Jockey Club it became the first country racing club to provide \$100 000 in prize money to a country cup. This year the legacy is continued, with the government, Racing Victoria and the club announcing a \$1 million Golden Mile race day for 2013. This shows the strength of the Bendigo Jockey Club, which was built on a lot of the hard work of Jock and his fellow committee members. Last Thursday the club recognised the passing of Jock with the naming of race 9 as the Jock Granter Showcase over 1000 metres — probably better known to Jock as a 5-furlong sprint.

While an MP Jock was also one of the leaders in understanding how best to serve his community. He was probably one of the first MPs anywhere in Victoria, let alone Australia, to stand in front of the Seymour post office to hear firsthand from his constituents, respond to their needs and take away the issues that they raised with him. He had a great interest and involvement with local agricultural shows, and on

many a Saturday afternoon Jock and Ena would attend the local show in his vast electorate. He had a particularly great interest in the horse events and the equestrian activities.

Four years ago, as the Premier said, the F. J. Granter Scholarship was created to honour his service to the community. This scholarship is open to secondary school students in central Victoria to submit essays on topics based on the value of community, enterprise and service.

For all those footy fans, one of Jock's failings was that he was an avid Collingwood supporter. Jock's work ethic and humility was an inspiration to a number of young MPs. He was a true gentleman, a local hero and somebody who made a huge difference to his community's electorate. Only yesterday I was talking to Mark Birrell, who commented that when he was a young 25-year-old MP he shared a room with Jock, who was a great inspiration and mentor to him and many other young and aspiring MPs.

Jock Granter served his country, his Parliament and his community with absolute distinction as a true gentleman and a servant of the community. I wish to convey my sympathy to his wife and to the extended Granter family.

Mr WELLER (Rodney) — I wish to join the previous speakers and offer my condolences to the Granter family and the Heathcote community following the loss of the Honourable Frederick James 'Jock' Granter. Jock was a community person who was involved right throughout the community. He was a member of the rural fire brigade, a member of the Victorian Farmers Union and a member of the Heathcote Lions Club. He was on the Heathcote hospital board — indeed, he was a life governor of that board. He was a member of the Heathcote agricultural society. He played football and tennis for Heathcote with pride.

The loss of such an important community and political figure has been deeply felt in Heathcote, Victorian state politics and right across the wider state. Jock was first elected as a member of the Legislative Council for Bendigo Province in June 1964. In his inaugural speech to Parliament in July of that year Jock commented on the honour bestowed on him as a member of Parliament and acknowledged the people of the province he had the privilege of representing. In his inaugural speech he also spoke passionately about state legislation to encourage people to move to country areas, and as he did throughout his personal and professional life, he spoke about the advantages and benefits of country

living and the importance of the improvement of country towns and their amenity.

Jock's passion for improving the standard of living for people in rural and regional Victoria stayed with him his entire life, and even in his retirement he championed one of Heathcote's greatest infrastructural ambitions — the connection of natural gas to the town. I had the pleasure of working closely with Jock on this important Heathcote-based community issue and first sat down with him at his home in 2009 to discuss the way forward. It was a longstanding community campaign to secure natural gas for the region, and Jock was the driver behind the natural gas extension that saw Heathcote named for connection. This was a win for the Heathcote community, and at the time Jock was pleased with the progress. He was passionate about this project and spoke about the major benefits it would bring to the townspeople, the hospital, the businesses and industry in Heathcote.

Jock was a member of the Heathcote community for more than 66 years and was one of the area's greatest philanthropists, contributing to many worthy causes and local charities. One of Jock's greatest beneficiaries was the Heathcote hospital, where he had also served as a board member and where he was a life governor. Jock was also a board member at the Bendigo Jockey Club. He was involved in many local projects, including the construction of Lake Eppalock in the early 1960s. The passion he had for important projects in his community, including Lake Eppalock, remained strong and was evident in my most recent dealings with him.

Last year Jock contacted my electorate office to notify me that a significant plaque at Lake Eppalock was missing. This plaque commemorated the opening of the pump station and the switching on of the water supply to Heathcote. Some significant work was required in replacing the plaque, and in particular a lot of research was done to find the original wording on the plaque. My office was assisted by staff at Coliban Water, who discovered meeting notes from the Heathcote Waterworks Trust minute book dated January 1980 to 1981. Minutes taken of a meeting in 1981 detailed the words on the plaque, and we were able to return the plaque to its rightful place. Whilst we were keen to have Jock take part in the opening of the replacement plaque, he was unable to attend. However, he was very grateful that we were able to replace the plaque that signified this important event for Heathcote and the surrounding district.

Colleagues of Jock's political era have commented about his decorated 24-year service to the people of Victoria and how Jock's door was always open to his

constituents. He was always ready, willing and able to help. Many colleagues, past and present, would agree that he was respected greatly by all who knew him. Jock's dedication to the Heathcote region was matched by a commitment and determination to get things done, and his support for local initiatives and ideas, core community organisations and people was second to none.

The values that Jock cherished in his personal and political life were demonstrated through his service in the army during World War II and through the many community-oriented projects he championed for the Heathcote region. Jock will be missed across many aspects of local and state politics. He held the following positions: he was a member of the Legislative Council for Bendigo Province from June 1964 to March 1976, Government Whip from 1970 to 1973, a member for Central Highlands Province from April 1976 to August 1988, Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Forests from June 1973 to June 1981, and Minister for Police and Emergency Services from June 1981 to April 1982.

The Heathcote community will miss Jock, and I will be forever grateful for the help and support he extended to me as the local member. I extend my condolences to Jock's wife, Helena, and to his extended family. As we mourn his passing may they find comfort in his strong legacy. His passion for and strong commitment to every cause he supported and position he held are fine examples for future generations to follow.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — It is a privilege to be able to make a contribution to debate on the condolence motion for Frederick Granter. I first met Jock in the late 1970s when he became a member for Central Highlands Province in the Legislative Council. I was living at Yarra Junction, and he was our upper house member until his retirement in 1988. Despite being a minister and holding two critical portfolios, Jock always enjoyed participating in the local sphere and attending various functions. I remember on one occasion listening to him and Bill Borthwick speak. What a formidable duo they were. They were passionate about their electorates and about Victoria. Jock was a tireless local member who stayed on top of all the local issues.

A long-time local resident, June Delbridge, said to me yesterday that Jock always had time to listen and was always approachable. He was never in too much of a hurry, and when he met someone again he would remember them and what their issue was. When you read through the many tributes to Jock the words most frequently used are 'a great mate', 'a true friend' and 'a gentleman'. Another long-time local said that you

wouldn't find a better bloke. Wouldn't we all be delighted if words like that were used about us at some time in the future? In my eyes Jock was a genuine person in all respects. He was a man who was happy in his own skin and who treated everyone with courtesy and respect.

Geoff Craige, who replaced Jock as a member for Central Highlands Province, said when paying tribute at the state funeral in Heathcote that Jock had a natural affinity with people and was greatly respected by all who knew him, that his door was always open, that he was always willing and ready to help and that despite his workload as minister he represented the community with passion. Jock Granter was a man who believed in getting involved and making a difference, and that has already been highlighted by previous speakers. He was involved in many organisations whilst a member of Parliament and continued with his good works long after his political career ended. Jock Granter was one of nature's gentlemen and a local legend who made a huge difference in the lives of many people. We were fortunate indeed to have a man such as Jock Granter as a long-serving member of the Victorian Parliament.

There is a poem called *The Dash*, which refers to the dash between the year that a person is born and the year when that person dies in the details engraved on tombstones. The poem refers to what is important: not the number of years between the dates but how that period represented by the dash was lived. Jock Granter lived his dash — his 91 years — in an exemplary manner and to the full. My condolences to his wife, Ena, and to his family.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — Jock Granter had been the president of the Liberal Country Party in the Sandringham electorate area of Highett between 1948 and 1954, and he subsequently moved to Heathcote to take up a role as a merino farmer on his own land-holding. Before then he had served with the Australian Army between 1941 and 1946 and was employed as a bank officer. He brought to his role in Heathcote a number of personal attributes and skills, including an innate decency and a preparedness to listen to people. Those members in this place who had served during the wartime years understood what it was like to be part of large bureaucracies; they understood also the need to exercise initiative and to seize opportunity.

It was an Ancient Greek poet, Alcaeus, who remarked that it was not houses finely built, nor stone walls well laid, nor dockyards nor canals that make a city, but rather how men — and I would add women — use their opportunity. Throughout Jock's parliamentary life and

community life in the Heathcote region he exercised every opportunity that was available to bring forward a range of projects through wise counsel, forward planning, consultation and engagement with members of the local community.

Already on the *Hansard* record for today will be the myriad organisations with which Jock was involved. There would not have been a night in a week, generally, when he was not quietly attending to the roles and responsibilities associated with various board meetings and groups. That is something we as members of Parliament understand — the role of committee service and engagement. To Jock Granter it was equally as important to return every telephone call made to his office as it was to fulfil a political promise he had made.

Comments have been made about the role of philanthropy. There have been a number of occasions in the local Heathcote community where worthy bequests and grants were made. There have also been other bequests made on Jock Granter's behalf that have not made it into the public domain. He and his wife did not have children; that then became an opportunity to contribute to organisations in different ways through time and resources.

Another local aspect is that one of the precursor councils to the City of Bayside, in which the suburb of Sandringham is located, had Don Granter as mayor on a couple of occasions in the 1940s. Don was Jock's father, and from him Jock gained an understanding of community service and community engagement, with which he later became involved.

In conclusion, I emphasise that Jock had an understanding of what we all aspire to do — that is, to do what we say in public life.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Frederick James Granter, the house now adjourns until 3.43 p.m. today.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 2.43 p.m.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 3.43 p.m.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Frankston: conduct

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Given that the Speaker himself does not have the power to compel a member of Parliament, an individual or a company to respond to any questions or to produce any documentation, why did the Premier refer the conduct of the member for Frankston to the Speaker and not to Victoria Police?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, in the first instance when any matter of entitlements is questioned, that matter is taken to the Department of Parliamentary Services because Parliamentary Services, through the Speaker, has responsibility for the administration and rule setting around entitlements. It is Parliamentary Services that retains the information, it is Parliamentary Services that sets the rules and it is Parliamentary Services that is responsible for the administration of those rules. That is the appropriate place to locate any such claims, and that is precisely what has happened in the past. When matters of entitlement have been raised they have been raised with Parliamentary Services.

East–west link: funding

Mrs VICTORIA (Bayswater) — My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the house how the government is supporting the planning and development of the east–west link, and is he aware of any alternative views?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — The government was pleased to include \$15 million in the budget for the preliminary work — the geotechnical and other planning work — to progress the business case for the east–west link project. Last week I was very pleased to join the Minister for Public Transport, who is also the Minister for Roads, to begin the first geotechnical work for the east–west link.

The levels of congestion in Melbourne are, I think, well known to most Melburnians. We see them on the roads on a daily basis, and they are a source of considerable frustration to motorists. They are a product of the failure to invest over the 11 years of the previous government. Even the Leader of the Opposition agrees with that, because he announced that he acknowledged that Labor could not keep up. The Labor government stopped work on the planning for the east–west link and instead sat on its hands.

The coalition government has put the east–west link back on the agenda. The government has reviewed and enhanced the east–west link project to connect the Eastern Freeway to CityLink, to connect CityLink to the port of Melbourne as well as to make the connection between the port and the Western Ring Road. That improved east–west link will provide a critical alternative to the M1. The east–west link will transform the way people move around our city. Melbourne needs a second crossing, and it needs that relief from congestion.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says it all. The geotechnical work that began last week is one small step on that way. We sought a modest \$30 million contribution from the commonwealth. That was denied, and instead of funding the development of this project the federal Labor government saw fit to fund more than \$200 million to ease congestion in Adelaide. Victorians are paying their fair share of taxes, state and federal budgets are facing significant financial constraints, but in challenging times the Victorian coalition government has committed more than a record \$5 billion for infrastructure this year. Planning for the east–west link is part of that infrastructure investment, and it is a critical part.

Business agrees that the east–west link is a top priority, Victorians stuck in congestion agree, Sir Rod Eddington agrees, the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry agrees, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria agrees — even union leader Cesar Melhem agrees that the east–west link has to happen. There are some who oppose the east–west link, including the Greens and the federal member for Melbourne. There are others who support the east–west link, including a number of members of this house such as the members for Tarneit, Williamstown, Melton, Altona, Kororoit, Keilor and Footscray, all of whom said on the record just in April, ‘Melbourne’s west must be better connected with the rest of the city’.

There is somebody else who opposes the east–west link — he does not get it; if he really cared, he would support the work that has been done and support the commonwealth providing additional funds, but he does not care and he describes this as a hoax — and that is the Leader of the Opposition.

Member for Frankston: conduct

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

weekend media coverage in relation to the conduct of the member for Frankston, and I ask: has the Premier been advised of any other inappropriate behaviour by the member for Frankston not yet publicly reported, and if so, what is the nature of that inappropriate behaviour?

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not believe the question relates to government administration.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is the leader of the government. The member for Frankston, the last time I looked, was a member of this government. The Premier himself has ordered a probe into the conduct of the member for Frankston. That is what he said on Sunday. The conduct of the member for Frankston and advice this Premier may have received from his office and colleagues are directly relevant to his leadership of the state and his leadership of the government.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not believe it is a matter of government administration.

Rail: protective services officers

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — My question without notice is directed to the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Can the minister update the house on the progress of the government’s commitment to improve public transport safety, and is he aware of any alternative policies?

Mr RYAN (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I thank the member for Sandringham for his very timely and appropriate question. Our coalition government is employing record numbers of front-line Victorian police and Victoria Police protective services officers (PSOs) to build these important front-line services and make Victorians safer in their homes, in the community and particularly on the public transport system. Central to our policy is the recruitment of the 940 PSOs for the railway stations in the metropolitan area and major regional centres by November 2014.

In the recent state budget, as all members know, the government committed to \$21.7 million to upgrade 66 rail stations to support the PSOs and another \$56.4 million to upgrade police stations for the deployment of both the 940 PSOs and 1700 additional police officers. The recruiting of those PSOs at the same time as the 1700 additional police represents the largest recruitment exercise ever undertaken in the history of Victoria Police. It is a record — an absolute record.

This is a new role for PSOs. It requires a workforce to be designed, recruited and trained from scratch, and we

are busily getting about it. There are more than 1000 people in the entrance exam phase and more than 400 have successfully completed the entrance examination. The first of these new PSOs, I am pleased and proud to say, commenced work on 22 February 2012. The second squad was deployed just last week. The PSOs are now employed at Flinders Street, at Southern Cross and at Footscray stations from 6.00 p.m. until the last train every day of the week. It is truly a record.

The public has enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the PSOs and the great work they are doing. They are already making a huge improvement to public safety by engaging with members of the public in relation to their particular travel activities and being helpful and friendly to them as well as moving on those other elements of society who might be gathered at railway stations intent on causing trouble.

The PSOs are doing a great job. They are also working very hard to break the culture of antisocial behaviour. They have successfully arrested persons against whom warrants have been issued, and they have issued a number of infringement notices. Victoria Police has progressively continued the rollout of the PSOs at train stations across the network, and as I said, with funding now approved for the 66 stations where these facilities will be built, we will see much more of this happening over the course of these coming weeks, months and years.

I note there was reference to alternative policies. I am pleased to be able to say that different points of view have been expressed about this great policy by different people. There was commentary, for example, where a commentator said, 'Protective services officers cannot be deployed to most local stations because the Baillieu government has failed to develop the details of the policy and invest in crucial facilities, such as toilets and detention centres'. That is what this authority said. It then said, 'When will the Baillieu government start upgrading stations so that PSOs can begin duty in the areas where most commuters actually get off trains after dark?'. Who said that? It was of course the member for Altona, barracking for the PSOs like so many of her colleagues over there. They know it is a great policy, and they know we are going to deliver it.

Member for Frankston: conduct

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I ask: does the Premier have full confidence in the member for Frankston?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — The member for Frankston has delivered substantial additional resources to the Frankston Hospital and more than 40 additional police into the Frankston area. The member for Frankston is a committed local member. I have full confidence in all members of our team. I have full confidence that the government is delivering in — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

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

Mr BAILLIEU — I have full confidence in all members of our team. The coalition government is producing the results in Frankston that the previous government did not produce, and the member for Frankston is a key part of that.

Building industry: code of practice guidelines

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — My question is to the Minister for Finance. Can the minister update the house on government initiatives to improve compliance with workplace laws and promote productivity, and is he aware of any alternative views?

Mr CLARK (Minister for Finance) — I thank the honourable member for his question. I am pleased to be able to inform him and the house that the government is making good progress in implementing its policy to introduce new guidelines for the building and construction industry. The house will recall that the government announced these guidelines on 3 April. As I have previously outlined, all firms that tender for Victorian government work from 1 July will have to comply with conditions which include prohibiting sham contracting and arrangements to avoid legal obligations, prohibiting coercion or pressure to make over-award payments, requiring firms to take action against unlawful industrial action and requiring firms to uphold freedom of association and the right to join or not to join a union.

These initiatives are vital to promote law-abiding and productive workplaces and help to avoid the massive cost blow-outs on Victorian major projects which will be one of the enduring legacies of the previous government. I can inform the house that the director of the construction code compliance unit, Mr Nigel Hadgkiss, is maintaining steady progress in gearing up for the commencement of these guidelines in full from 1 July, with the strong support of the building and construction industry. I would have thought it was self-evident — but perhaps it is not so for some — that

the building industry is one where strong laws and proper enforcement are particularly vital. Without them the return to the bad old days of disputes, disruption and coercion, which Victoria has experienced in the past, will continue.

There is no better authority for the need for strong enforcement in the building and construction industry than the former commonwealth minister for industrial relations, Ms Julia Gillard, who said in a media release on 3 April 2009:

The Rudd government has no tolerance for conduct which breaks the law whether it be unlawful industrial action or underpayment of employees.

It is the intention of the Rudd Labor government to always have a tough cop on the beat in the building and construction industry.

To make sure there was no doubt in the matter, the same former minister for industrial relations said in a speech on 3 June 2009 to the Australian Council of Trade Unions congress:

Like me, I am sure you were appalled to read of dangerous car chases across Melbourne city involving carloads of balaclava-wearing people, criminal damage to vehicles resulting in arrests, threats of physical violence and intimidation of individuals, including damage to a private residence.

...

Balaclavas, violence and intimidation must be unreservedly condemned as wrong by every unionist, every ALP member, every decent Australian.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, only this government and this minister would be lecturing people on the misuse of cars today of all days.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order.

Mr CLARK — The tragedy is that unfortunately the commonwealth government and now Prime Minister Gillard have abandoned those words.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Altona!

Mr CLARK — They have abandoned their commitment to a tough cop on the beat. They are scrapping the Australian building and construction commission. They have neutered the Fair Work inspectorate. That is why there is a pressing need for the Victorian government to step into the breach.

More recently alternative views have been put forward. Over the weekend the argument was put that these new guidelines and the construction code compliance unit should be abolished. It was alleged it was a cost-saving measure — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! Cut it out! That is enough!

Mr CLARK — I would have thought the one true legacy of the previous government was the explosion of costs — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to desist from any further interjections made in the way he is making them.

Mr CLARK — One need only look at the record of the previous government: the West Gate Bridge, the Melbourne Market relocation, Southern Cross station, the national gallery, and the list goes on.

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister has had 3½ minutes to answer his question. He is clearly going down the path of attacking the policies of the previous government and the opposition, and I ask that you bring him back to order.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, I ask you to rule the point of order out of order. Clearly the Minister for Finance is giving examples of where there has been absolutely inappropriate behaviour on building and construction sites to the cost of Victorian taxpayers, causing blow-outs in projects and involving complete and utter mismanagement under the Labor government. I thought it was very relevant to the question asked of the minister, and that is why I think — —

The SPEAKER — Order! I have heard enough on the point of order.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Speaker, the only inappropriate behaviour this government — —

The SPEAKER — Order! I have turned off the member's microphone. The member was not raising a point of order. I do not uphold the point of order.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Speaker, is it your ruling from the chair that someone standing on their feet attempting to make a point of order can have their microphone turned off before they even make their point of order? With the greatest of respect, Chair, I ask you to reconsider. How could anyone have faith in the independence of the Chair when — —

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the member for Yan Yean to resume her seat. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr CLARK — If anything would guarantee a return to the bad old days of cost blow-outs and disruption on building sites in Victoria, it would be the scrapping of these guidelines. If those who want these guidelines scrapped really cared, they would not be putting thousands of jobs at risk. If they really cared, they would not be threatening to make new roads, hospitals and schools unaffordable. If they really cared, they would not be opening the way to a regime of balaclavas and thuggery at Victorian workplaces. If they really cared — —

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

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the loss of 49 000 full-time jobs since he took office, the loss of a further 500 Qantas jobs yesterday and the uncertain best future of maintenance operations at Avalon, and I ask: when will the Premier start to do his job and develop a jobs plan for all Victorians?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question about Qantas. The Qantas heavy maintenance facilities have been an important part of Qantas's operations, and in recent years they have operated out of three sites: Brisbane, Melbourne and Avalon. Arising from the changes in maintenance profiles for aeroplanes, just as maintenance profiles have changed for contemporary cars, new aircraft require less maintenance. Qantas therefore has a different maintenance load; I have made that point in here before. Qantas announced that it was seeking to consolidate its heavy maintenance facilities. It made that announcement earlier this year, and we have been working with Qantas and stakeholders to make a case for those maintenance facilities to be located in Victoria.

The maintenance facilities in Brisbane were the result of a bidding process undertaken more than 10 years

ago. The then Victorian government bid for those facilities to be located in Victoria. That was a good thing, but unfortunately it was unsuccessful. Former Premier Steve Bracks is reported in an Australian Associated Press news item of 31 January 2001 to have said in response to the Qantas decision to base its heavy maintenance operations in Queensland:

I congratulate Queensland Premier Peter Beattie for securing these jobs for Australia ...

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The members for Monbulk and Altona, that is enough.

Mr BAILLIEU — Steve Bracks welcomed the move by Qantas to set up the heavy maintenance facilities in Brisbane. Since then there has been a substantial investment in Brisbane.

When Qantas made the announcement earlier this year that it sought to consolidate, we were facing the prospect of losing the heavy maintenance facilities at Melbourne and at Avalon. We have worked hard and consistently with Qantas and with the stakeholders. Of course we are disappointed that the heavy maintenance facilities at Melbourne Airport will not continue on, but those at Avalon will continue. I make the point, as Qantas CEO Alan Joyce said yesterday, that the Victorian government could not have done more.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the house to come to order.

Mr BAILLIEU — Our efforts have been critical to ensuring that Avalon remains as a heavy maintenance facility. Qantas has said that it wants to work with the stakeholders and with the Victorian government to secure additional work for Avalon. That is what we want. Some people do not want that. If those people really cared, they would get behind our effort to secure jobs at Avalon. They have not done that; they have stood and waited and looked for failure. They do not care. They want to talk the economy down, talk Qantas down, talk Avalon down and talk Melbourne Airport down. We will not do that.

Budget: responsible management

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer inform the house of the implications of recent budgets for the challenges facing the Victorian economy?

Mr WELLS (Treasurer) — Three weeks ago I brought down the 2012–13 Victorian budget. It was a tough but responsible budget. Since then three more budgets have been brought down across the country. Tasmania brought down its budget, which had to address the issue of falling GST revenue. Tasmania lost \$118 million in GST revenue, and since the midyear financial report there has effectively been a 6.5 per cent decrease in GST revenue for 2012–13. As a result of that, Tasmania is in deficit by \$283 million, which is equivalent to about 6 per cent of revenue.

The Western Australian budget recorded a modest surplus of \$196 million, despite falling GST. So the Western Australian economy is strong, but its forecast surplus of 4.6 per cent of revenue by 2015–16 is exactly the same as Victoria's. In other words, Victoria's fiscal position over the forward estimates period will be the strongest in the country in absolute terms and equal to Western Australia's as a percentage of revenue. This shows that the strict financial discipline we have placed on government will impact strongly on the economy. However, we need to continue to work hard to address the economic challenges ahead.

Of course another budget was handed down, and that was the commonwealth budget. In total, national GST collection has been written down by \$11.7 billion over four years. This comes on top of previous write-downs in GST. In total, Victoria lost \$6.1 billion in GST over four years. A lot of that is attributed to the slowing down of the economy, but the other part of it is the unfair share that Victoria receives of GST payments. Facing those pressures and the share of GST being cut makes it very difficult to put the budget together, but we have done it, and we have done it responsibly. In addition to that, we have the problem of the federal government failing to provide money for important national partnership programs.

On top of all that, there was no new funding for vitally important infrastructure projects. There was no funding for the east–west project, which is something state Labor opposed. Is it not interesting that the request we made was for \$30 million for planning but the federal government could find \$36 million to advertise the carbon tax? Where are the priorities? Is it spending \$30 million on planning for the east–west link or \$36 million on advertising the carbon tax and how that will impact on Victorian families and on manufacturing?

It is now time for state Labor to stand up and support the government on the east–west link. It is important for state Labor to get behind us to ensure a fair share of GST — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Nardella — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is debating the question. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question on government business.

Dr Napthine — On the point of order, Speaker, when we were in opposition government ministers continually called for the opposition to support their position — —

The SPEAKER — Order! What is your point of order?

Dr Napthine — I am responding to the point of order. I am commenting on it.

The SPEAKER — Order! What is your point of order?

Dr Napthine — No, I am speaking on his point of order. I am not raising a point of order; I am speaking to the point of order.

The SPEAKER — Order! Go on.

Dr Napthine — I am saying that the point of order should be ruled out of order on the basis that the history of this house is that former Labor ministers regularly called on the then Liberal-Nationals opposition to support their position. I think it is legitimate to call for bipartisan support to get better federal funding for the east–west link and to get better federal funding for the port of Hastings and other major projects. That is what the Treasurer is talking about.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have heard enough on the point of order. I do not uphold the point of order, but I do ask the Treasurer to come back to answering the question.

Mr WELLS — I will conclude on this point: I thank the member for Morwell for asking the question, because the impact of the carbon tax on his electorate of Morwell is going to be significant, and it is time that state Labor stood up and backed the government in regards to its opposition to the carbon tax.

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the loss of 500 Qantas jobs announced yesterday, and I refer the Premier to just a few sitting weeks ago when Qantas workers were in the gallery of this chamber and I asked the Premier whether he would meet with those Qantas workers. My question to the Premier today is:

what does he say to those Qantas workers? What does he say to explain the fact that he has so badly failed them?

Mr BAILLIEU (Premier) — I say to them that they have a Leader of the Opposition who does not care — does not care about Qantas, does not care about Avalon, does not care about these maintenance jobs — —

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, the question is not an opportunity for the Premier to hurl abuse in a — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — The question is clearly an opportunity, and indeed the Premier is required to confine his answer to government business. I might just say to the Premier that I had the courage to go and look them in the eye yesterday. We did not see the Premier out at Tullamarine yesterday. This answer ought to be in relation to government business. He would not meet with them — —

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr BAILLIEU — As I said in the earlier answer, we have worked hard to secure heavy maintenance facilities in Victoria. We, like I am sure many Victorians, are disappointed that the heavy maintenance facilities at Melbourne will go. That is a product of a shrinking maintenance load and the fact that more than 10 years ago Queensland won a bidding contest to have the heavy maintenance facilities located in Brisbane.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — As I said in the previous answer, Qantas has indicated that we could not have done more as a government, and we will work with Qantas and with the unions and with the employees to ensure that with their very good qualifications — and their work is recognised by Qantas as world-class work; no-one is questioning that — they have every opportunity to find additional employment.

There will be some additional jobs in line maintenance at Tullamarine. Qantas is making jobs available in Brisbane — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BAILLIEU — We understand that this is a painful process and a painful outcome for those employees and their families, and we are committed to working with Qantas and the stakeholders to do what we can to assist them. More than that, we are committed to doing whatever we can to see that we get additional work at Avalon.

On 31 August last year someone said to Jon Faine on radio, ‘I don’t want to be ceaselessly negative, I don’t want to run around trashing the place’.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was very simple. It was: what would the Premier say to these workers? Is the Premier seriously suggesting that bagging me is what he would say to these 500 — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member’s microphone is off. He has not raised a point of order.

Mr Andrews — My microphone is off, so it is a bit hard to, isn’t it?

The SPEAKER — Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Andrews — Thank you, Speaker. The answer is not relevant to the question. The Premier is debating the issue. The Premier should answer the question: what would he say to these workers. That is what he was asked.

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

Mr BAILLIEU — Let me make it clear again to the Leader of the Opposition: I say to those workers — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr BAILLIEU — I say to the Leader of the Opposition again: the work that we have done has been critical to securing the heavy maintenance facility at Avalon where it otherwise might have all gone to Brisbane. Unlike the previous government when the bid was lost, we are not saying other than that we are disappointed that the heavy maintenance facilities at Melbourne will not stay. The previous government, of which many of these MPs were members, actually congratulated the Queensland government and welcomed those jobs going to Brisbane. The previous government welcomed it!

We have secured the retention of Avalon as a heavy maintenance facility, and we will continue to work with the stakeholders to secure additional work for Avalon. We will not be ceaselessly negative, and we will not run around trashing the place; nor will we be talking down Qantas, the workers or the facilities at Avalon and Melbourne — unlike some. Whether they want to self-describe themselves as ceaselessly negative, that is up to them; we will not be doing that. We will work with the stakeholders to get the best possible result. I am pleased that Avalon will continue as a heavy maintenance facility. I suspect the Leader of the Opposition is disappointed in that.

Tourism: myki visitor pack

Ms WREFORD (Mordialloc) — My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. How is the government making it easier for visitors to Victoria to use our public transport system?

Ms ASHER (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — I thank the member for Mordialloc for her question and congratulate her on her very deep interest in tourism. I was delighted to join with the Minister for Public Transport yesterday to launch the myki visitor pack for the state of Victoria. As all members of this house would know, Victoria is a great place to visit, and it is now going to be much easier for tourists to get around Melbourne. The pack that was launched yesterday by me and the Minister for Public Transport will cost \$14 for the non-concessional pack. The pack will hold a myki card with \$8 of credit for a zone 1 day trip, a map and 15 discount vouchers to various tourist attractions. It will all be in a wallet designed by Mark Knight. It is one of his special pieces, akin to the wraparounds he does from time to time for the *Herald Sun*.

The tourism industry had a number of requests to government in relation to this particular tourism product. The first request the tourism industry had was to introduce a short-term card, and again the government has delivered on that request.

The second request the tourism industry had was for a wide distribution network, and again the government has delivered on that. So far there are 300 distributors, including the airport, hotels and visitor information centres. Indeed more businesses can apply to distribute that if they wish.

The third request the tourism industry made to government was that it wanted the product to be at no cost to business. That is a completely reasonable request, because if somebody at a check-in experience

has to explain the public transport system to a tourist and take 15 minutes, that is an unnecessary impost on the business. There will now be a 5 per cent commission to businesses for selling the myki pack. Again the government has delivered on that very important request from the tourism sector. On top of this the tourism industry of its own volition contributed a range of discount vouchers. If a tourist took up every single opportunity provided by these discount vouchers, they would save almost \$140. There are a range of attractions in that myki visitor pack.

What has been the reaction from the tourism industry to this announcement yesterday? The Tourism and Transport Forum, in a press release entitled ‘Myki will open doors for tourists’ praised this particular initiative. The press release states:

This will encourage more visitors to use Melbourne’s public transport network by making it simpler — rather than stressful.

The press release goes on to say:

We look forward to the rollout of the myki visitor packs from 1 July and to other states considering implementing similar products in the future.

Likewise the Victorian Tourism Industry Council issued a press release saying ‘Tourist myki launch a plus for industry’. I thank in particular VTIC and Destination Melbourne for their work in putting this pack together. I also want to thank the Minister for Public Transport for listening to the tourism industry.

I make the point that the tourism industry was delighted to participate in putting this visitor pack together. The industry was delighted that its views were listened to and delighted that businesses are going to participate in it and not find it burdensome. I can say that if the Labor Party really cared about the \$15.2 billion tourism industry, it would not have left this mess for the coalition government to fix up. But we have fixed it up, and yet again we have delivered for tourism.

Mr Andrews — On a point of order, Speaker — these are serious matters — in relation to the investigation you are conducting regarding the member who has been previously mentioned, I wonder if you might take on notice and provide for the benefit of all members further details in relation to that investigation, including the steps that you are taking and the nature of that investigation, such as when it will conclude, what protection will be provided to whistleblowers and whether you will make the interim and final findings public — questions of that nature. There are many others, and whilst you may not be too keen to explore

them now, I ask you to provide perhaps to honourable members at your earliest convenience a — —

The SPEAKER — Order! Let me say that this is not really a time to raise — —

Mr Andrews — Speaker, I am trying to be as straight as I can; I have not even named the relevant member.

The SPEAKER — Order! I understand that. If you have questions for me, or you have issues to raise with me, see me in my chambers.

Mr Andrews — Speaker, I — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Andrews — I still have the call. I am being as straight as I can.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am not here to be questioned.

Mr Andrews — Speaker, I choose not to raise these matters privately in your chambers. I think these matters need to be ventilated for the benefit of the media and all Victorians.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Andrews — All Victorians! All Victorians ought to get answers to these questions, not just me in your chambers.

The SPEAKER — Order! If you want to get some answers to questions — and you are questioning me here in the chamber, which is not allowed for a start — and you would like to come to my chambers and speak to me, I will consider what you are putting to me.

Mr Andrews — On a further point of order, Speaker, is it your ruling that you will not entertain a point of order on any matter where a member seeks some clarification? I did not name the member in question. To be fair, I did not name the member in question — I am trying to do it as straight as I can; these are important matters — and I asked you to take it on notice and to come back to the chamber. Is it your position that you will no longer entertain requests of that nature?

The SPEAKER — Order! I suggest you come and see me in chambers.

Mr Andrews — Privately?

The SPEAKER — Order! Privately in chambers.

HEALTH (COMMONWEALTH STATE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2012

Introduction and first reading

Dr NAPTHINE (Minister for Ports) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to provide for the implementation of the national health reform agreement and for other purposes.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — I ask if the minister could provide a brief explanation to the house regarding the bill.

Dr NAPTHINE (Minister for Ports) — Speaker, you may recall that under the previous Labor government the then Labor Premier and the then — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is giving an explanation that he was asked for.

Dr NAPTHINE (Minister for Ports) — Speaker, you will recall that under the previous Labor government the then Labor Premier — —

Ms Hennessy — On a point of order, Speaker, it appears that, in exercising the authority that you enjoy under the standing orders, members of the government have been given particular leniency today in respect of their attacks on the opposition. The minister was asked to provide a brief explanation of the bill. He immediately moved into an attack on the previous government. We ask you to refer him back to provide us with the technical detail requested.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister was not attacking the opposition. The minister was asked for an explanation. I do not uphold the point of order.

Dr NAPTHINE (Minister for Ports) — As I was explaining, under the previous Labor government the then Labor Premier and the then Labor Minister for Health were involved in discussions with the then federal government with regard to so-called national health reform. Under the previous Labor government the then Labor Premier and the then Labor Minister for Health fundamentally sold out Victoria's patients — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will resume his seat.

Motion agreed to.**Read first time.**

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Consumer Affairs.

Mr Helper — On a point of order, Speaker, my point of order refers to the failure of the minister to give a brief explanation of the bill and his incapacity to do so without resorting to political flurry. It is a reasonable expectation of those on this side of the chamber that a bill be explained, albeit briefly, upon its introduction. I would ask you to get the minister to produce a brief explanation of the bill.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am sorry. We have moved on. I sat the minister down, and I called the Minister for Consumer Affairs.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Introduction and first reading

Mr O'BRIEN (Minister for Consumer Affairs) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to make further provision for matters relating to bonds and duty provisions and for other purposes.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) — I request that the minister provide a brief explanation of the bill, and hopefully we will get one.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house will come to order. The minister will answer what was put to him.

Mr O'BRIEN (Minister for Consumer Affairs) — This bill will improve the protections for tenants over what was available under the previous Labor government in a number of ways. We will strengthen the rights of tenants in relation to clarifying when a notice to vacate or notice of intention to vacate may be given. This bill will prohibit a landlord or agent from requesting or obtaining a tenant's signature to a bond claim form unless the bond repayment amount has first been entered on the form. It will extend the duty of a landlord to lodge bonds with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority, facilitate the substitution of private payments of a bond with a bond loan provided by the director of housing and will enable unclaimed bond

moneys provided by the Department of Housing and held by the RTBA to be repaid to DOH.

Motion agreed to.**Read first time.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL) AMENDMENT BILL 2012

Introduction and first reading

Mrs POWELL (Minister for Local Government) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Local Government (Brimbank City Council) Act 2009 and for other purposes.

Read first time.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr ANDREWS (Leader of the Opposition) — I desire to move, by leave:

That this house requires the member for Frankston to make a statement to the house immediately for a period not exceeding 30 minutes — —

The SPEAKER — Order! Leave is refused.

Notice of motion given.**Mr ANDREWS giving notice of motion:**

The SPEAKER — Order! I am trying to find out whether this has actually been tabled.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! As members will be aware, they have to lodge notices with the Clerk before the issues are raised. It is not something new; it is not something that I thought of. This is what it is. The member will have to do it tomorrow.

Further notices of motion given.**Mr FOLEY having given notice of motion:**

The SPEAKER — Order! Under the ruling that I gave last sitting week, notices of motion are to have no more than 50 words. Let me repeat that again: no more than 50 words. That is for everyone in the house to understand.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Foley — That was approved by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER — Order! It was not approved by me, and it is not 50 words.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am sorry; it is more than 50 words.

Mr Foley — No, it is not.

The SPEAKER — Order! We will move on.

Further notices of motion given.

Mr PALLAS having given notice of motion:

The SPEAKER — Order! I again remind members that notices of motion in excess of 50 words will not be heard.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion: removal

The SPEAKER — Order! Notices of motion 13 to 30 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 8.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Buses: Mount Cooper

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The residents of Bundoora draw to the attention of the house that the Baillieu government's termination of the 563 bus service will severely impact the residents of Bundoora by eliminating Mount Cooper's only bus service.

We note that this decision will reduce residents' access to local facilities including local schools, shopping centres and universities.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria immediately reinstate the 563 bus service as a matter of priority.

By Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) (199 signatures).

Public transport: fare zoning

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house:

the fact that other than the abolition of zone 3 in 2007, the metropolitan public transport fare zoning system has

not been comprehensively reviewed since the introduction of Met tickets; and

that the current zoning system lacks relevance, has a number of inconsistencies and encourages residents to use private transport rather than public transport, thus increasing our carbon footprint and road congestion/maintenance costs.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

call upon the government to urgently hold a public inquiry into the zoning system of the metropolitan public transport fare zoning system with a particular emphasis placed on an extension to the existing zone 1 boundary.

By Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) (878 signatures).

Department of Primary Industries: Ouyen office

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of the Victorian Mallee draws to the attention of the house:

the announcement on Tuesday, 8 May 2012 of the closure of several Department of Primary Industries offices in rural Victoria which will have a significant detrimental impact on the Victorian agriculture industry and the communities in which these offices are located.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

reverse the decision to close the Ouyen DPI office which will impact on DPI staff, other tenants of the office and the community who utilise the facility and the services provided.

We also urge you to commit to supporting the Victorian agriculture industry and the rural communities affected by this decision by continuing to have staff based in rural Victoria at small offices.

By Mr CRISP (Mildura) (355 signatures).

Planning: Waverley Park amendment

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the attempt by property developer the Mirvac Group to use Victorian planning laws as a means of avoiding their contractual and moral obligations to residents and homeowners of Waverley Park in Mulgrave, Victoria.

Mirvac are proposing an amendment to the 2002 planning permit under which they developed the Waverley Park estate. If the amendment is approved, the provisions of clause 50 of the permit will be set aside, and the high-voltage electricity transmission lines that were previously required to be placed underground would be permitted to remain above ground.

If Mirvac succeeds with their proposal, this would constitute a staggering break of faith with the Waverley Park community.

Not only would Mirvac be breaching their legal obligations under at least 600 individual contracts of sale, but they would also be exposing residents and others who use the proposed parkland facilities to possible health risks associated with overhead high-voltage powerlines. Also, in all likelihood, Mirvac would also be causing significant financial loss to many homeowners in the form of reduced property value.

Your petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the planning minister to not allow the planning laws of Victoria to be used by Mirvac to renege on their contractual and moral obligations to Waverley Park residents and homeowners. We ask that you do not approve Mirvac's proposed amendment to the 2002 planning permit.

By Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave) (831 signatures).

Tabled.

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

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Pascoe Vale be considered next day on motion of Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale).

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I desire to move:

That the petition tabled in the member for Mildura's name be made an order of the day on the next day of sitting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Mildura is in fact in the house, and if he wished to have the motion put through tomorrow, it would be up to him to make that decision, not the member for Ivanhoe.

Ms Campbell — On a point of order, Speaker, the ruling you have just made is in contradiction of previous rulings. Historically members of this house have been able to ask that the house take into consideration on the next day of sitting a petition tabled in somebody else's name. That has gone on for decades.

The SPEAKER — Order! The advice I have is that if a member is in the house, the determination as to whether it should be brought forward the next day is up to them.

Ms Campbell — On the point of order, Speaker, could that advice be provided? The member for South-West Coast used to do this constantly when he was in opposition and we were sitting in this house.

The SPEAKER — Order! The advice I have is that when a member whose petition it is is in the house, somebody else cannot move that type of a motion.

Ms Campbell — Could I have that written advice, Speaker?

The SPEAKER — Order! We will look for the advice and give it to the member. She often quotes the rulings of the house, so it may be something that she should look at.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Greenfields mineral exploration and project development in Victoria

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) presented report, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence.

Tabled.

Ordered that report and appendices be printed.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 8

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 8 of 2012* on:

Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012
Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012
Duties Amendment (Landholder) Bill 2012
Education Legislation Amendment (VET Sector, Universities and Other Matters) Bill 2012
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment (Examinations) Bill 2012
Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012
National Energy Retail Law (Victoria) Bill 2012
Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Amendment (Salary Restraint) Bill 2012
Police and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
Road Safety Amendment Bill 2012
State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2012

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be printed.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Order under s 17B granting a licence over Bannockburn Bushland Reserve

Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978 — Summary of Primary Returns April 2012 and Summary of Variations notified between 8 December 2011 and 21 May 2012 — Ordered to be printed

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of approval of amendments to the following Planning Schemes:

Ballarat — C155
 Bass Coast — C127
 Baw Baw — C81
 Boroondara — C143
 Campaspe — C73
 Glen Eira — C91
 Glenelg — C63
 Greater Dandenong — C165
 Macedon Ranges — C86
 Manningham — C83
 Melbourne — C124
 Mitchell — C54
 Moira — C50
 Murrindindi — C39
 Nillumbik — C58 (Part 3)
 Port Phillip — C80, C91
 South Gippsland — C62
 Stonnington — C156
 Warrnambool — C72
 Whittlesea — C118
 Wodonga — C100
 Yarra Ranges — C121

State Services Authority — Report 2010–11 on the State of the Public Sector in Victoria

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Accident Towing Services Act 2007 — SR 29
City of Melbourne Act 2001 — SR 30
County Court Act 1958 — SR 31
Criminal Procedure Act 2009 — SR 31

Local Government Act 1989 — SR 30

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 29, 31

Documents under s 16B in relation to an exemption from section 65A(1) of the *Road Safety Act 1986* for persons participating in the Australian National Circle Work Championships at Pakenham Racecourse.

Water Act 1989 — Abolition of Apsley, Neuarpuur and Teloepa Downs Groundwater Supply Protection Areas and Kaniva Water Supply Protection Area Order 2012.

The following proclamations fixing operative dates were tabled by the Clerk in accordance with an order of the house dated 8 February 2011:

Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2011 — Parts 1 and 4 — 8 May 2012; remaining provisions — 28 May 2012 (*Gazette S151, 8 May 2012*)

Control of Weapons and Firearms Acts Amendment Act 2012 — Whole Act — 16 May 2012 (*Gazette S157, 15 May 2012*)

Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2012 — Whole Act — 1 May 2012 (*Gazette S140, 1 May 2012*)

Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2011 — Section 3 — 1 May 2012 (*Gazette S140, 1 May 2012*)

Legal Profession and Public Notaries Amendment Act 2012 — Whole Act — 2 May 2012 (*Gazette S140, 1 May 2012*).

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent to:

8 May

Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Bill 2011
Disability Amendment Bill 2012
Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
Land (Revocation of Reservations) Bill 2012
Royal Women's Hospital Land Bill 2012.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

Duties Amendment (Landholder) Bill 2012
Police and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
Road Safety Amendment Bill 2012
State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2012.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Mr McINTOSH (Minister for Corrections) — I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 4.00 p.m. on Thursday, 24 May 2012:

Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012

Gambling Legislation Amendment (Transition) Bill 2012

Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012

Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Amendment (Salary Restraint) Bill 2012

Police and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

To support this motion I indicate to the house that obviously a substantial amount of the time of the house will also be taken up with debating the budget, which the government intends to start straight after members statements today. Tomorrow the government will bring on the other bills on the program and continue on Thursday. I imagine that debate on a few of those bills will be reasonably short, and certainly ample time will be given for members to make their contributions on some of the larger bills.

I also indicate that debate on the budget will continue through part of Thursday, and we will go to the adjournment debate at 4.00 p.m. after the government business program is completed. I indicate to the house that it is the government's intention that we will continue to debate the budget next sitting week. I have already given notice to many parties about this, but I will put it formally.

The government's intention in the next sitting week is to sit for an extended period of time on both Tuesday and Wednesday — until 12.00 a.m. That notice is provided to enable the Parliament to make appropriate arrangements with all staff and to let all members know that we will be sitting late on those two occasions. That necessitates a government business program that will have to continue in the next sitting week, but it will also give ample opportunity for most members to make their contributions to the debate in relation to the budget. With those few words I commend the motion to the house.

Ms HENNESSY (Altona) — I rise to indicate the opposition's opposition to the government business

program. Here we are yet again. We maintain our opposition to the use of Wednesday afternoons for second-reading speeches. We think that is not a productive use of parliamentary time. Again we are concerned that the use of Wednesday afternoons for second-reading speeches is motivated by a desire to leave early on Thursday. We do not believe that is an appropriate use of time. This is a government that has the numbers and the capability to set the government business program.

I have an additional ground for our opposition to the government business program this week. Earlier today we saw the Leader of the Opposition seek leave to move a motion in respect of requiring the member for Frankston to come into this house and provide an explanation in relation to various allegations that have been the subject of media reports in recent days. Leave was denied by this government — —

Mr McIntosh — On a point of order, Speaker, this is not an opportunity to adumbrate a motion or otherwise. This is the government business program. It is a very narrow debate. I ask you to bring the member back to the debate, which is about the government business program.

The SPEAKER — Order! I uphold the point of order.

Ms HENNESSY — Really, when we talk about the government business program we are talking about what are the government's priorities. Given that a number of people — particularly, for example, the constituents of the state seat of Frankston — may have a number of questions — —

Mr McIntosh — On a point of order, Speaker, this is a very narrow debate. It is the government business program. It is not an opportunity to take a cheap shot across the table.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the member for Altona to get back to debating the motion before the house, or I will sit her down.

Ms HENNESSY — Indeed the government business program goes to issues of scrutiny. It is very interesting that this government thinks, for example, that bills like the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012 are more important to the people who live in the south-eastern suburbs than having explanations around issues of public integrity. On that basis — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Altona will resume her seat.

Mr HODGETT (Kilsyth) — The Leader of the House has again proposed a solid business program for the sitting week, with the bulk of debating time being allocated to the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012, otherwise known as the budget bill. Of course this bill will not go to the 4.00 p.m. guillotine on Thursday as we want to provide an opportunity for all members of the house who wish to make a contribution to this bill to do so. As the Leader of the House has indicated, there are plans to sit late in the next sitting week to allow everyone to make a contribution on the budget bill, and although that is foreshadowed, I would encourage all members of the house to take the opportunity to debate that bill this sitting week so we do not have everyone wanting to speak in the final sitting week available to consider the budget bill.

The other five bills on the program, the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012, the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Transition) Bill 2012, the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012, which is a very important bill, the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Amendment (Salary Restraint) Bill 2012 and the Police and Emergency Management Legislation Bill 2012, will go to the 4.00 p.m. guillotine on Thursday, 24 May. The program being put forward will allow adequate scrutiny of and debate on these bills, and I commend the motion to the house.

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) — I rise to oppose the government business program. When you look at the five bills listed on this business program, it may appear to be a small number of bills, but the fact is this provides this house with a significant opportunity to debate at length the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012. This bill requires a considerable amount of discussion in this house this week. The media has provided this house with significant documentation in relation to the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill and matters relevant to it, and it is extremely important that every single person in this house is given an opportunity to speak for the full period of time in relation to matters such as the provision by the Parliament of our cars and our electorate offices, and the provision by the Parliament of those who check who are the nominated drivers on our — —

The SPEAKER — Order! This is a narrow motion that is before the house, and the member for Pascoe Vale is getting well off the track. I ask the member to come back to debating the motion before the house.

Ms CAMPBELL — I am speaking — —

The SPEAKER — You were not; you were getting far off the track of the motion before the house.

Ms CAMPBELL — The most important bill listed on this government business program is the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012, followed by the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Transition) Bill 2012, the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012, the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Amendment (Salary Restraint) Bill 2012 and the Police and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. They provide this house with a significant portion of meat for us to discuss and, from the opposition's perspective, we do not want to have any of our time devoted to second-reading speeches on Wednesday afternoon. The government business program requires this side of the house to have every single opportunity, and Wednesday afternoon is not being provided to us in its fullest sense.

In relation to the police and emergency management legislation bill and the parliamentary salaries and superannuation amendment bill, there are significant issues in those two bills alone that would require each and every member of this house to speak. I am sure there has been much discussion outside this house in relation to at least the last one of the two bills that I have mentioned.

Speaker, I am sure you are listening to absolutely everything that I and others in this house say and giving us your full attention, and we appreciate that. We want this house to give its full attention to a fulsome debate in relation to the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill and matters associated with it and the other bills listed.

I oppose the government business program. Members of this house should have every opportunity to discuss the bills before us and not have time taken up so that those who have a long period of travel can escape from this house — some of them might need to head down the Nepean Highway — by 4 o'clock. There are others who may wish to travel to, say, near the South Australian border, and we think they should travel home safely in their government cars.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member is getting off the track again.

Ms CAMPBELL — This government business program requires fulsome debate and should not be interrupted by second-reading speeches on Wednesday afternoon, but the government does not want the opposition scrutinising its bills because it has

something significant to hide in relation to the first bill in particular.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to support the government business program. There are five bills on the list: the Appropriation (Parliament 2012/2013) Bill 2012, the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Transition) Bill 2012, the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012, the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Amendment (Salary Restraint) Bill 2012 and the Police and Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. We all know we will also continue to debate, but not on the guillotine, the Appropriation (2012/13) Bill 2012.

It is heartening to hear from members of the opposition about their new-found enthusiasm for debate, because on many a previous afternoon or evening they were not so enthusiastic about debating bills. I look forward to their full participation in debate on these bills as a result of this reformation or meeting on the road to Damascus. Many members want to make significant contributions to the debate on the budget because there is a lot to be said on it, and all of it — from this side of the house — is worth saying. This is a sensible and appropriate budget, although it is tough and responsible. I look forward to that debate, and I look forward to seeing the opposition's new-found enthusiasm for debate.

Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North) — I rise to oppose the government business program. It is very much light on substance, big on relaxation. The fact that we continue to have second-reading speeches on Wednesdays and the curtailing of debate is quite concerning. Already today we have looked at instances of the government avoiding scrutiny, and it is continuing along that path.

On the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012, when the Treasurer was in opposition he was very much against automatic increases in fines and the like, but today we will have a shortened program of debate because on Wednesday we will again have second-reading speeches, and we will not get a full opportunity to debate the Monetary Units Amendment Bill 2012.

What is the purpose of having second-reading speeches on Wednesday apart from putting the opposition in a position where it cannot conduct enough scrutiny? It is so that those who wish to P-off quickly on a Thursday afternoon can get home early, which is simply not appropriate. If you have come in to Parliament, you are here to debate serious bills; you are not ready to go home on a Thursday afternoon. It is totally

inappropriate to have second-reading speeches on Wednesday to make life easy for people.

Most members came in here with a serious intent, but the government has decided that Wednesday is a day of relaxation and then on Thursday members will nick off quickly. That is simply not what I came into this Parliament for, and I do not think anyone else — I would hope — came into this Parliament to go home early. It is like leaving school early; you will not be nourished intellectually and you will end up doing a bad job.

There are many bills we should be debating fully, but there is no action with this government. It is light on movement; it just says, 'Relax, take it easy — no fuss'. It is like the numberplates, which I know is a matter not related to what we are discussing at the moment, but we are still waiting for the government's big message on numberplates. Again, we have been waiting forever.

Why should we take things easy? Why should we have relaxation Thursday and relaxation Wednesday? It is simply inappropriate. We have come in here to work, to do our jobs. The punters expect us to behave appropriately and they expect bills to be scrutinised properly, not for us to have rest and recreation. We did not come in here to wine and dine; we did not come in here for relaxation; we did not come in here to nick off at 4 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon, maybe have a gin and tonic and go home. That is simply not appropriate. The government needs to give the opposition and everybody in this house more time to debate these bills, especially the Monetary Unit Amendment Bill 2012.

Considering the hypocrisy and rubbish we saw from the then opposition when the previous Labor government introduced inflation-adjusted rises in fines, we now have a government — —

Mr McIntosh — On a point of order, Speaker, it is a narrow debate. It is not about the merits of the bills or about the prowess or otherwise of the former government; it is about the government business program. I ask you to bring the member back to the debate about the government business program — a very narrow debate.

Ms Campbell — On the point of order, Speaker, I ask that you rule the previous point of order out of order because, as the member was outlining, the bills he mentioned require a significant amount of time for debate. That directly relates to the government business program.

The SPEAKER — Order! I uphold the point of order and ask the member for Narre Warren North to return to the motion before the house.

Mr DONNELLAN — I apologise, Speaker. In my enthusiasm to take up debate on these bills I obviously strayed, but I will stay on topic.

I guess the issue is that Wednesday should not be relaxation day and Thursday should not be go-home-from-school-early day. We are here to debate bills; we are not here to sit and relax. This is a totally inappropriate way to treat the Legislative Assembly. We are here to do work. As we have already seen today, the government continues its merry trend of avoiding scrutiny of its bills.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 44

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	Wooldridge, Ms
Morris, Mr	Wreford, Ms

Noes, 40

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

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Rail: Altona loop service

Ms HENNESSY (Altona) — I rise to acknowledge and congratulate members of the Altona Loop Group and members of the Altona community on last week's public meeting. I would also like to acknowledge and thank both Metro Trains Melbourne staff and Public Transport Victoria staff who attended. This was a meeting where local members of our community pleaded for solutions to the current crisis affecting passengers on the Altona loop. We heard many stories of the impact of the timetabling change at both a systemic and personal level.

A number of commitments were made by Mr Lezala and others to implement strategies to try to mitigate the harsh effects of the timetable changes. Some of these included to try to ensure that trains no longer leave prior to their scheduled departure time, to better sequence services to assist train connections, to use better announcements to assist passengers trying to navigate platforms and to continue to push the government to fund important projects that will address the services that the Altona community currently find almost unbearable. I reiterate: this community will hold the government, the bureaucratic departments and Metro accountable for the undertakings they gave in the course of this meeting.

Roads: western suburbs

Ms HENNESSY — I would also like to take this opportunity to implore the government to better invest in transport solutions for the west, noting again that there has been no significant commitment to or investment in arterial roads in this year's budget for the second year in respect of my electorate. Once the last of Labor's investments in roads projects, including the \$100 million worth of arterial road projects in the city of Wyndham, committed in the last four years of the previous government, have been completed, there will be nothing done.

Tourism: business events

Ms ASHER (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — Securing business events plays a very important role in Victoria's tourism industry. I am pleased to advise the house that Melbourne has recently been successful in its bids to host three additional international events: the 2013 Harvard World Model

United Nations conference, the joint world conference on social work, education and social development for the year 2014 and the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress for the year 2016. I hope members will be pleased to hear that, combined, these events will hopefully attract around 8700 delegates and generate \$39.7 million for the state economy.

The second item I want to draw to the house's attention is the International Congress and Convention Association's recent report entitled the *Country and City Ranking Report 2011*. Melbourne is ranked ahead of any other Australian city, at no. 31 in the world, for hosting conventions, and no. 9 in the Asia-Pacific region. This is a great achievement for Melbourne and a reflection of the city's premier business events offering. I would like to congratulate the whole range of people involved in that and again remind the house that the contribution to the Victorian economy of the convention business industry is \$1.2 billion and business events generate over 22 000 jobs in Victoria.

Steve Kyritsis

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Dandenong) — It was an honour to be in Queen's Hall on Friday to witness, as many members did, the launching of the new book by Steve Kyritsis, the president of the Hellenic sub-branch of the RSL and president of the Australian Hellenic Memorial. Steve has already written one book, which is entitled, *Greek-Australians in the Vietnam War*, and this is his second book about Greek-Australians in the armed forces in World War I and World War II.

It was great to see so many Greek-Australian veterans in the room. Steve has worked extensively as a volunteer, over a period of time, with archives, veterans affairs and the war memorial, researching and identifying the heritage of many Australians in the armed services. He has identified 80 Greek Australians who served in World War I, including 14 at Gallipoli, and over 2500 Greek Australians as part of the armed forces in World War II.

It was fantastic to see so many members. The book was launched by the member for Sandringham, who gave an exceptional speech about the joint Greek-Australian heritage that this book is all about. It is a history that recognises that this is a multicultural country. Given that, it is correct that people from all different sorts of cultures will serve their country, Australia. This has been proven in this book by Steve Kyritsis — I commend him for his work — as it has been proven by other immigrants who joined and served in the Australian armed forces.

Anzac Day: South Barwon electorate

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — On 25 April I had the pleasure of attending the 63rd Torquay RSL sub-branch Anzac Day dawn service and gunfire breakfast at Point Danger at Torquay. The Anzac Day speech by Mr Paul Copeland, OAM, who served in the Australian regular army for 20 years, was a poignant reflection of the sacrifices of our servicemen and women. I commend the Torquay RSL sub-branch president Kevin Eagan and members, along with Surf Coast shire, businesses and volunteers.

I also attended the Ocean Grove Barwon Heads RSL Anzac Day commemorative service. Congratulations go to president Keith Hankin and to all RSL committee members, local community groups and schools on their participation. In the week prior to Anzac Day the Ocean Grove Barwon Heads RSL was the recipient of \$5000 as part of the government's Restoring Community War Memorial Grants program.

Maroulis family

Mr KATOS — I would like to commend the efforts of the Maroulis family in raising funds and awareness regarding breast cancer in memory of Julia Maroulis. Julia passed away on Boxing Day last year, aged 34, of breast cancer. Julia was first diagnosed in February 2010 and battled her disease with courage and dignity. Julia's parents, Paul and Maria, her brother Spiro and sister-in-law Dimi, along with friends and family, raised over \$30 000 in this year's Mother's Day Classic held on Geelong's waterfront. I was pleased to assist in the fundraising. It is these sorts of efforts by the Maroulis family that are shining examples to the community.

Vision Australia: Geelong volunteers

Mr KATOS — On Friday, 18 May, I had the pleasure of attending Vision Australia Geelong's volunteer appreciation morning of celebration to present 32 volunteer pins. Without volunteers, Vision Australia would not be able to offer many of its services. Congratulations to volunteer Marion Duell, who received an award for 25 years of service.

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — The axing of 433 jobs in Qantas heavy maintenance at Tullamarine is further evidence of the Baillieu-Ryan regime's failure to deliver on its election-winning promises to fix the problems, build the future and govern for all. The

Premier promised Parliament on 1 May, just weeks ago:

We know what is required. We know what it takes to govern this state ... We will continue to work with Qantas and work with the stakeholders, and we will advance the case for Victoria getting the heavy maintenance facilities.

Rather than advancing, we are going backwards under this regime. Yesterday's failure fits the recurring pattern of the coalition's performance. It either delivers gestures lacking substance, is ideologically split and does not want to intervene, or, if it finally engages, fails to deliver.

This adds to the cruel blow delivered by the Baillieu-Ryan regime in funding cutbacks to TAFE, which will adversely affect the Kangan Institute, and axing the budget allocation for a vital government services building in Broadmeadows, whose construction would provide up to 800 much-needed jobs and a hub for commercial investment in the central activities district. The Baillieu-Ryan regime has delivered the reverse Robin Hood strategy in Broadmeadows — taking from those most in need and giving to those better off. The planning minister, Matthew Guy, has axed \$14.7 million from the electorate he represents, which on any measure of need and equity should receive it, and is planning to give it to other less deserving electorates.

These mean, short-sighted cuts show the coalition does not know or does not care about the consequences for communities or the detrimental impacts on vulnerable families. But they will be held to account, especially if the funding for Broadmeadows is reallocated to marginal seats such as Frankston.

Maccabi Victoria: volunteer awards

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — Volunteers are an integral part of our community and comprise some 1.5 million Victorians. Through their efforts they contribute some \$10 billion to our economy through volunteer hours and activities. It is fitting that on the last day of National Volunteer Week, Maccabi Victoria hosted its thankyou volunteer and achievement awards. I congratulate vice-president Joe Dorfman and the Maccabi board on running a great event. In particular I congratulate the following award winners, some of whom are also volunteers, on their great effort. They include David Chester from All Abilities; Braham Shnider, athletics; Barry Duke, basketball; Ashley Brugel, cricket junior; Paul Fink, cricket senior; Nick Orloff, cycling; Peter Kagan, football; David Zivin, football juniors; David Birnbaum, hockey; Helen Weiss, lawn bowls; Suzie Mordech, netball; Nathan

Gropman, snooker; Kevin Milstein, soccer junior; Jack Iglicki, squash; Clive Aaron, swimming; Adam Needleman, tennis; Kelly Gillis, ten pin bowling; Danny Shafar, Toastmasters; and Alon Pfau, water polo. Sporting club volunteers like those I have just mentioned make an enormous contribution, particularly to developing our youth. Congratulations to Maccabi Victoria for its great effort in running this event.

Melbourne Montessori School: teaching award

Mr SOUTHWICK — I would also like to congratulate the Melbourne Montessori School in Caulfield South on its contribution to teaching. In particular I congratulate Dianne Davis, a teacher at the school, who received a national excellence in teaching award last week. This award is terrific recognition of the great contribution the school makes.

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

The Nationals: performance

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — There is no doubt that The Nationals in regional Victoria are failing to live up to the hype and boastfulness they have exhibited since the last state election. 'We are The Nationals and we are the government' said The Nationals leader recently. Here is a reality check for The Nationals: the party makes up less than 10 per cent of the government and the truth is that its members are unable and/or unwilling to stand up for the regions and the very people they claim to represent in the face of a Liberal majority.

Nowhere is this more glaringly evident than in the recent budget, which cut funding for rural midwife consultants who train rural midwives to provide support to regional and rural mothers. Where were The Nationals members when this decision was made by the Liberals? There was also the scrapping of the \$204.6 million Future Farming strategy, which included the National Centre for Farmer Health, a broadbased program of specialised support for farmers and farming communities. There was also the cutting of \$9.4 million in funding for free financial counselling services in rural and regional areas. Again there was not a peep from The Nationals to fight to retain this service. There was the closure of seven regional Department of Primary Industries offices and the loss of regional jobs as a consequence, which was, deplorably, a decision of a Nationals minister. Worst of all there was the failure of the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, a Nationals minister, to hold his ground against the Liberals and oppose the decimation of the TAFE sector,

which will impact disproportionately on regional students.

I remind Nationals members of their party's acquiescence to former Liberal Premier Kennett, who treated the regions with disdain. I quote from an article by Farrah Tomazin in the *Saturday Age* newspaper, which says:

History shows that regional voters can be pretty unforgiving if you let them down.

Infrastructure: federal funding

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — Since the house last met the commonwealth has brought down a budget distinguished by a razor-thin surplus and the provision of absolutely nothing for Victoria. The commonwealth continues to tax Victorians and spend elsewhere. Labor talks big on infrastructure and delivers nothing. There was no mention of the east–west link, no mention of the Melbourne Metro project and no mention of the port of Hastings. Despite being home to a quarter of all Australians, Victoria received less funding than any other state — \$201 per capita. In contrast, New South Wales and South Australia received a third more, Tasmania almost a third more, Western Australia 30 per cent more and the resource-rich state of Queensland, 50 per cent more.

We are being short-changed by a short-sighted, poll-driven party, with no plans for the future beyond short-term survival. Modest investments of \$30 million in the east–west link, \$130 million in Melbourne Metro and \$120 million in the port of Hastings would have seen each of these important projects progress. Labor does not get it. It clearly does not care about infrastructure. If there were any doubt about that, the weekend announcement by the opposition of its intention to oppose the east–west link confirmed it. But of course we are back in familiar territory: when it comes to infrastructure, Labor is all talk, all plans, no funding and no delivery.

Qantas: maintenance jobs

Ms BEATTIE (Yuroke) — Today I rise to express my extreme disappointment at the Qantas decision yesterday to slash over 500 jobs in Victoria. Sadly we have known for some time now that these job losses were coming, but that is no consolation to the more than 500 Victorians who now find themselves on the scrap heap. Those Victorians now face a bleak and uncertain future; they have mortgages to pay, bills to meet and kids to feed and educate. As members will know, many of those who lost their jobs live in my electorate. They are now asking: what did the state

government do to protect their jobs and what did the Premier and the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry do to help?

It is now clear that yesterday's announcement is part of a far greater story. It is a story about a state going backwards and haemorrhaging jobs because this government fails to invest and fails to instil confidence in its economy. It is a story about a government on Mogadon; a lazy government that since coming into office has axed over 4200 public service jobs and seen 41 000 jobs disappear from the state. Once again the Premier has shown that he does not care about working people. The Leader of the Opposition was at the Qantas maintenance base yesterday consoling those who had lost their jobs. Workers appreciated this gesture but were asking, 'Why doesn't Ted care about us? Where is Ted?'. I am asking the same question. Where is the government while people are losing jobs?

Wild dogs: control

Mr BULL (Gippsland East) — I take this opportunity to condemn the federal government for rejecting Victoria's proposal to introduce aerial baiting to combat the massive wild dog problem in the east and north-east of the state. Fortunately the state government, under instruction from the Gippsland Wild Dog Management Group, will implement a large-scale ground baiting program. However, I encourage the federal government to try to better understand the hardship wild dogs cause in our rural sector and show some understanding of the need for control measures, including aerial baiting.

Mother's Day Classic: Bairnsdale

Mr BULL — Yet another fantastic community event has been held in East Gippsland. Bairnsdale Mother's Day Classic Committee members Gerry Ward and Suzanne Neumann, together with the many volunteers involved in the charity run, once again raised vital funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation and for breast cancer research. Despite the very cold conditions on the day, the classic attracted 400-plus entries. I congratulate everyone involved in the organisation of this year's event.

Patrick Elliott

Mr BULL — I wish to highlight the achievements of Maffra Secondary College year 12 student Patrick Elliott, who was selected from 2000 students across Australia to attend the National Youth Science Forum held earlier this year. Since then he has been announced as 1 of only 10 Australians invited to attend the London

International Youth Science Forum scheduled in August. It is extremely pleasing to see Patrick's hard work and effort in science studies combined with his obvious talent and interest in pursuing a science vocation being recognised in this way.

Electricity: feed-in tariff scheme

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) — The Baillieu government has broken a key election commitment for a gross feed-in tariff scheme for Victorian households and organisations that generate renewable power. At the last election the then Leader of the Opposition committed to a gross feed-in tariff scheme that would pay a premium rate to households, businesses, farms and community groups for all the energy they generated that was either used on site or fed into the energy grid. The government also said it would ask the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission to design a gross feed-in tariff scheme, yet the commission's report that was released last week by the Baillieu government did not include any design for a gross feed-in tariff scheme.

Instead, according to the recommendations in the report, households should negotiate for themselves an additional payment from electricity distribution businesses in recognition of the fact that distributed energy allows for a reduction in expenditure on network poles and wires. There is an admission in the report that household generated power relieves pressure on distribution businesses to increase the capacity of their networks and thereby puts downward pressure on electricity prices that are passed on to consumers. But the Premier has refused to require distributors to offer at least a minimum price.

Prior to the last election the then opposition leader made a commitment that if he were elected, he would implement a subsidy scheme to encourage Victorian households to invest in solar, wind and other low-emission power sources. When in opposition the present Minister for Energy and Resources stated on 24 November 2010:

We think there is a lot of interest in a gross feed-in-tariff as a way of boosting investment in renewables ...

This government has lost any credibility it may have had in supporting renewable energy, and has consigned thousands of clean energy jobs to the dustbin.

Chelsea Senior Citizens Club: refurbishment

Mrs BAUER (Carrum) — I am pleased to hear that work will soon begin on the refurbishment of the much loved and well utilised Chelsea Senior Citizens Club.

The works are expected to be completed by mid-November and will include a new kitchen, toilets and meeting rooms to accommodate multipurpose uses. The project is jointly funded through \$480 000 from the City of Kingston and \$180 000 from state government funding.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation: Aspendale facility

Mrs BAUER — It was a pleasure to have met with representatives of CSIRO in Aspendale recently to discuss the important work it does. Having an incredible research facility in the electorate of Carrum is exciting. I enjoyed meeting with dedicated staff, including marine and atmospheric research communications manager Simon Torok, deputy chief Helen Cleugh, Debbie Abbs from climate research and the State of the Climate 2012 project, Melita Keywood from air quality research and Paul Fraser, who gave me a tour of the air archive, the ice core extraction laboratory and the global atmospheric sampling laboratory.

Budget: GST revenue

Mrs BAUER — I commend the Premier and Treasurer for delivering their second coalition budget in what can only be described as challenging times. It is a responsible budget and has been delivered when Victoria has been short-changed by the federal government, which has cruelly cut billions in GST revenue that should have gone to Victorians, along with failing to provide support for infrastructure projects and major partnership programs.

Williamstown Cricket Ground: facility upgrade

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) — There are few prouder moments in politics than attending the opening of a local project that you have witnessed move from conceptual stages into construction and then finally on to completion. That moment for me arrived on Thursday, 10 May 2012, at the reopening of the upgraded Williamstown Cricket Ground and pavilion.

When I gave my inaugural speech to Parliament back in 2007 I committed to do everything possible to assist with the upgrade of this iconic ground. I did not have to wait long, as the 2008–09 Brumby Labor budget allocated \$10 million to boost facilities across eight Victorian Football League grounds, with Williamstown receiving the largest single contribution of \$3 million. Hobsons Bay City Council matched the state's \$3 million contribution, and there were also significant contributions from Williamstown Football Club, AFL

Victoria and Williamstown Cricket Club. As a result of this investment, Williamstown now has the best Victorian Football League facility in the state with a covered grandstand, 260-seat function room with panoramic views of the bay and new player facilities that the great Gerry Callahan could have only dreamed about during the hard days of amateur football.

Many have made wonderful contributions to this project but none have been greater than that of Williamstown president Trevor Monti and his general manager, Brendan Curry. I also acknowledge the project's architect, Serdar Baycan from Tectura; Hobsons Bay City Council, particularly ward councillors Angela Altair and Peter Hemphill; Hobsons Bay CEO Bill Jaboor; and Sandy Grant from Williamstown Cricket Club.

Hospitals: Mildura electorate

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — Health care and hospitals are major concerns for any community, Mildura being no exception. Mildura Base Hospital services a large area and works cooperatively with community health services, the private hospital, health professionals, multiple aged-care providers and others. Mildura is one of Victoria's most remote rural cities, making the hospital a vital provider for our community. Therefore whenever health services are being discussed you can always expect considerable interest from the general public. The provision of health services continues to change evermore rapidly, making it impossible to look forward through a rear-vision mirror.

To date I have worked for and achieved the provision of \$7 million in capital funding to enhance accident and emergency services and maternity and mental health services for Mildura Base Hospital. This funding will allow accident and emergency services to double its area and includes funding for an eight-bed short-stay unit. The short-stay unit will enable better management of patients waiting for test results or admission, who will have the comfort of a bed rather than a trolley. The investment in maternity services will allow for an additional birthing suite and cots to manage the demand caused by an increase in births and the closure of the maternity section at Mildura Private Hospital.

As we are all aware, the demands on mental health services have increased, and the investment in the construction of additional mental health facilities will allow for the consolidation of services and provide a healthy, quality and safer working environment. Whether the health service is privately or publicly run, my commitment is to a health service that meets the growing needs and complexity of the Mildura

electorate. I congratulate those in our community who continue to show an interest in health service provision and the future of health services.

Higher education: Auslan programs

Mr HERBERT (Eltham) — I rise to speak on a matter that I raised in this house in March. At the time I called on the Minister for Higher Education and Skills to reinstate his support for deaf students in Gippsland, as the announcement of the government's funding cuts at the end of last year led GippsTAFE to close its Auslan program for 2012. At the time I spoke of the absolutely inadequate response from the minister to my call; the response was to direct students in Gippsland to the Auslan course at Kangan Institute of TAFE in Richmond. Not content to scrap important regional provision for deaf students and the facilities they rely on, the minister seemed to think a satisfactory solution was to audaciously send them to Richmond every day to study. Now it appears students may not even have access to this option of last resort. As a response to the savage cuts to TAFEs in this year's budget, it now appears that the Auslan course offered at Kangan Institute may also be under threat.

I have just this morning received a petition from Deaf Australia that is circulating in an attempt to save what it says is the only course of its kind left in eastern Australia. Deaf Australia describes this course as playing a vital role in enriching the lives of deaf people. Deaf Access Victoria has also written to me to emphasise that increasing the number of Auslan interpreters is essential in breaking longstanding barriers to access and inclusion for the deaf community. For this reason I ask the minister not to abandon Victoria's deaf students. He should not do to deaf students what he has done to TAFE.

Glenburn: community facilities

Ms McLEISH (Seymour) — Today I want to acknowledge the community of Glenburn, which has had its share of ups and downs in recent years, with the drought, the \$750 million white elephant north-south pipeline and Black Saturday among the downs. I was thrilled to recently take part in what could almost be described as a community reopening, with the opening of the brand-new Glenburn hall, the refurbished community centre and the reserve project, each noteworthy in its own right. What was particularly good was to see how this one event managed to bring together so many in a community which has certainly seen a number of challenges in recent times. This made me very proud.

It was also pleasing to see long-time local identities involved in the openings. Con Hildebrand opened the hall and provided endless stories about the old hall. Doug Lawson, the original drummer in the locally famous and long-lived Glenburn band, opened the community centre. The community centre is in the former schoolhouse, built in 1902, which is culturally and historically significant. I want to also mention the role of the late Mal Ryan, who was instrumental in making sure that the old school — basically two rooms — remained in local hands. I was thrilled that on Anzac Day Mal's wife, Gina, was able to lay a wreath on my behalf at the Glenburn service at the Country Fire Authority premises, a service I attended later that morning. The reserve project was built by my good friend Brendan Digman who, significantly, also renovated our house just up the road.

Many deserve congratulations: Peter Williams, president of the Glenburn Hall and Progress Association; Angela Ryan, chair of the committee of management for the community centre; Iain McPherson; the Miller family; Tom Abbott-Smith; and all other volunteers for their tremendous efforts in what can be seen as a resurgence in the Glenburn community.

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

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea: Cranbourne

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — It was a privilege to be the guest of honour at last Saturday morning's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea event at Amstel Golf Club in Cranbourne. The event raised \$800 for the Cancer Council Victoria. I would like to congratulate Lyn Conlan and Jean Beechez for hosting the great morning tea. I also thank the following organisations that generously contributed towards the event: Amstel Golf Club in Cranbourne, the Good Guys, Trail and Track Cycles, the Cranbourne RSL, the Hampton Park Tavern, Coles in Hampton Park, the Kelly's hotel in Cranbourne and Strandbags in Cranbourne.

Unfortunately cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Victoria, killing around 10 000 men, women and children every year. The impact of that death toll is terrible. In my electorate of Cranbourne 1072 people were diagnosed with cancer between 2008 and 2011. That is why I was proud to be part of the previous Labor government, which took cancer matters seriously. We achieved a lot, including a \$1 billion joint investment with the federal government in the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. Other initiatives Labor delivered include new treatment facilities and public

radiotherapy facilities, advancing translational cancer research, tobacco control strategies, new digital technology for breast cancer, and the list goes on.

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

North-eastern Victoria: tourism events

Dr SYKES (Benalla) — There are many exciting events coming up in north-eastern Victoria, and I encourage all Victorians to come and enjoy them. Next weekend Myrtleford will host La Fiera, a festival which celebrates the area's rich local Italian heritage. On the Queen's Birthday weekend we will celebrate snow season openings at Falls Creek, Mount Hotham, Dinner Plain, Mount Buller, Mount Stirling and Lake Mountain. We also have many enjoyable activities in the low country, with wine and food events galore. These include a winery walkabout in the alpine valleys which will involve visits to Michelin Wines, Boynton's Feathertop Winery and Bogong Estate, while the Glenrowan wine region will feature local wines and foods and Ned Kelly history. Participating wineries include Morrisons, the Auldstone Cellars, Silent Range Estate and Booth's Taminick Cellars.

The Winton Motor Raceway will host round 2 of the Victorian motor championships. Gooramab will be home to an art show featuring the works of local artists including Louise Carlisle, Julie Stevens and Aaron Scotts. For those wanting to enjoy some physical exercise, we have a magnificent rail trail in the Ovens Valley and the new, 134-kilometre Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail. Alexandra will host a fantastic truck, ute and rod show. Other wineries worth visiting include Kinloch Wines and the Delatite Winery in the upper Goulburn region and many more in the Strathbogie and Nagambie wine regions, including the Fowles, Maygars Hill, Mitchelton and Tahbilk wineries.

Last but not least, the King Valley is open, featuring wineries such as King River Estate, Dal Zotto, Boggy Creek Vineyards, Pizzini, Gracebrook Vineyards and King Valley Cucina, which also hosts the King Valley Art Show. North-eastern Victoria is a truly great place to live, work and raise a family — see you there!

Cycling: infrastructure funding

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) — How can the Baillieu government be taken seriously when its latest budget car doors cyclists? Victorians whose form of transport is cycling received zero in the Victorian roads cycle program — zero from the Victorian budget for

cyclists. Motorists received funding, so why not cyclists? The Premier needs to wake up to the fact that not everyone has a chauffeur-driven vehicle. Perhaps if Parliament provided a tandem bike, the Premier's chauffeur could transport him on the transport mode of 2 per cent of the Victorian population!

In the 2006 census the mode share of bikes across Victoria was 1.3 per cent and 1.6 per cent in metropolitan Melbourne. In the five years preceding that census, cycling trips to work in Melbourne grew by the staggering figure of almost 43 per cent. Cycling mode share is higher in inner city municipalities — for example, it is 11 per cent in the city of Melbourne. Of course Moreland has a huge number of cyclists. Over 2500 cyclists use the Upfield shared pathway in Moreland, a part of the principal bike network, daily. Funding of \$1.2 million is needed to build that pathway's final link to the Western Ring Road and for it to trail on to Craigieburn. I implore the Premier to find \$900 000 to complete the Upfield shared pathway. As a sign of goodwill, Moreland council will provide \$300 000. The council has already funded the entire project planning and — —

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

Hastings community hub: upgrade

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — Last Wednesday I joined the federal Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, Simon Crean, and the Hastings community to celebrate the official opening of the \$3 million upgrade of the Hastings community hub. In representing the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development and as the local MP I was pleased to participate in the opening of a wonderful community project that will deliver great benefits for the people of Hastings. The new centre will benefit people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities and will be a hive of activity for people in the community looking to access recreational, social, educational and training programs. Funding for this project included \$729 000 from the Victorian government, \$2.1 million from the federal government and more than \$60 000 from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

Autism: awareness

Mr BURGESS — I was very grateful for the opportunity to attend an Asperger's and autism spectrum disorders information night in Langwarrin on Friday 4 May. The night was hosted by Kerry Young, and more than 360 people attended. Mrs Young's

10-year-old son, Ethan, was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in late 2011. There is no-one more deserving of our support than children and particularly children who have a disability or disadvantage. I thank God that Ethan is in a family whose members love him so much and are so committed to helping him be all he can be. It is incredibly important that all members of Parliament have a firm understanding of just what these conditions mean to the child or person struggling with them and importantly to the family doing all it can to support, teach and guide them.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Weller) — Order! The member's time has expired. The time set aside for members statements has concluded.

APPROPRIATION (2012/2013) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed from 3 May; motion of Mr WELLS (Treasurer).

Mr NOONAN (Williamstown) — It is my duty to give a response to the 2012–13 budget on behalf of the Williamstown electorate. What I would say from the outset is that to the untrained eye the budget papers can be somewhat intimidating. Endless figures, outputs and performance measures often mask a budget's true impacts, impacts which are often revealed in the days and weeks that follow. Despite inheriting one of the strongest sets of financial books in the country, the Treasurer has dedicated considerable energy to discrediting Labor's economic record in government. This of course is nothing more than political posturing designed to mask the Baillieu government's lack of leadership and vision. The Treasurer has arrived at a view that this state had to change course — and, in his words, it has. Every government has a right to change course; all members of this place would accept that. The question of how that change of course will impact on those in our community who rely most heavily on government to improve their opportunities to participate in life, both socially and economically, is most critical.

This budget, like every one before it, has a human face. Strip back all the facts and figures contained in the budget papers and what you are left with are real stories involving real people. Some of these stories deserve to be shared in the Parliament because they bring to life the real impacts associated with the government's decision to change course. I have selected three different examples involving young people that I think help to give a human face to this particular budget. The

first involves Luke Schroder, a young, high-functioning autistic student at Williamstown High School, who is currently enrolled in year 9. Luke commenced his year 9 studies earlier this year with the assistance of an integration aide for four days of the week. The aide assistance was funded in equal portions by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the school. Halfway through the first term Williamstown High School was forced to inform Luke and his family that it no longer had the surplus funds available to top up his aide funding.

Luke's mother, Raelene MacDonald, pleaded with the school to maintain his support — in fact, she was so desperate for her son that she offered to redraw on her mortgage to assist the school with the funding shortfall. When I spoke with staff at Williamstown High School about Luke's situation it became very clear that he deserved and needed to maintain his current level of support. This view is supported by a psychologist's report, which states that it would be unethical to send Luke to school without an integration aide. This was reaffirmed by the school's principal, Lisa Sperling, who was quoted in the *Maribyrnong Weekly* newspaper on 14 March 2012 as saying:

I really would like that we did have more support for Luke.

... What he does need is more one-on-one support in the classroom and we don't get funding for that.

I have the greatest respect for Lisa Sperling and Williamstown High School. I know it would have been very difficult for them to speak so publicly about Luke's situation because they pride themselves on prioritising the needs of their students above all else. At the end of last year Williamstown High School lost \$40 000 in VCAL (Victorian certificate of applied learning) coordination funding in the budget. While there is no direct link between Luke's situation and the loss of VCAL funding, it is absolutely clear that the school's budget is now being managed right down to the last cent, such that there are no surplus funds available to top up integration aide funding for people like Luke. There is no doubt in my mind that the callous VCAL cuts are now starting to hurt students like Luke.

This is a disgraceful situation. Luke now worries constantly about whether he will win or lose and asks daily what his family will do if the education department does not help him. His mother, Raelene, was quoted in my local paper on 25 April as saying:

I am going to fight to the end — this is all my son has.

Raelene and Luke will continue to receive my support in their fight for justice. Through no fault of his own,

Luke has become a victim of the Baillieu government's savage cuts to education. Luke is the human face of this budget. His story demonstrates what the government's decision to change course actually means.

Another group of young people in my community who will suffer as a result of the Baillieu government's decision to change course are those seeking to enter vocational training. The Treasurer has spoken endlessly about the importance of skills. It is one of the pillars in his four-pillar economic strategy. His budget speech even boldly declared that:

A key to increasing productivity and generating jobs is a skilled workforce.

This sounds good in theory. Why, then, did the budget contain the biggest one-off cut in funding to TAFE training in this state's history? I will wait to hear whether any government member defends this decision, because the minister certainly could not. Watching the minister defend himself and the government in his post-budget press conference after his 'throw in the towel' line was galling. There was a man who lost his integrity in less than 10 minutes. This budget will gut our TAFEs. Victoria University (VU) in Melbourne's west stands to lose about \$29 million in funding. This is the institution that nurtures the working kids of the west and offers them an opportunity to gain suitable skills to enter and maintain employment.

I return to the human face of this budget and refer to second-year boatbuilding apprentice Michael Soldatos of Penfold Marine in Williamstown. The course Michael is doing will close at the end of 2013, a victim of the Baillieu government's TAFE cuts. VU's program is the only TAFE-based, government-subsidised boatbuilding course in Victoria. Given that VU is the only TAFE in Victoria to offer this course, students are drawn from all over the state, including from the Mornington and Bellarine peninsulas, Gippsland, Echuca and the south-west coast region. The other unique aspect of this course is that it also draws a number of students from Tasmania.

Boatbuilding is a rare skill. Apprentices learn their craft under the watchful eye of highly experienced teachers and nurturing employers. What will become of boatbuilding in Victoria if there is nowhere in the state to send apprentices? I have raised these concerns on behalf of the boatbuilding industry and apprentices in the Parliament before and I have written to the minister, but the government has simply washed its hands of this problem.

To its credit, the Boating Industry Association of Victoria brokered a solution to transfer those students

and teaching staff from Victoria University to Gordon TAFE in Geelong. It approached the government and sought assistance to help facilitate this transfer, but again the government refused to assist. In a letter to the Minister for Higher Education and Skills dated 23 March 2012 Mr Clyde Batty, the general manager of the Boating Industry Association, wrote:

Please excuse the brashness of this letter, Minister, but unfortunately our manufacturing industry members are advising that the employment of new apprentices has ceased and that the 'laying off' of current first-year marine craft construction apprentices will begin shortly ...

And here are some comments from small business operators in the Williamstown electorate, as reported in the *Hobsons Bay Leader* newspaper of 6 December 2011:

Williamstown boat repairer Roger Penfold, from Penfold Marine, employs two Victoria University apprentices and said although boatbuilding was a small industry, apprentices were needed all over Victoria. Boatbuilder Greg Blunt said apprenticeships were the proper way for boatbuilders to learn their craft. 'It would be a disgrace if they let it go', he said.

Well, a disgrace this decision is. Young boatbuilding apprentices like Michael Soldatos might be among the last trained in Victoria for many years to come. As I understand it, boatbuilding apprentices will have to travel to Newcastle in New South Wales to receive their vocational training. Michael and other apprentices are the human face, once again, of this budget. Michael's situation is another demonstration of what the government's decision to 'change course' will actually mean.

The Treasurer promised to work with our TAFE institutes to help them adapt their business models and promote competition and choice. How does an institute like Victoria University adapt its business model when it suffers a \$29 million funding cut from the Baillieu government? There is really only one response: to cut staff and cut programs. That is the reality. That is what we are seeing with the boatbuilding program, and that is what we will see with many other programs that are offered in TAFE currently. Try explaining that to the hundreds of young people who will be denied an opportunity to pursue vocational training in the future. Stop for a moment and consider how many skilled trainers we will lose from our TAFE sector as part of this rationalisation program. Rather than investing in skills, the Baillieu government is dashing the hopes and aspirations of many thousands of young people who want what all of us in this Parliament have been afforded — that is, a chance to succeed.

That brings me to my last story about the impact of this budget, and it is a story about Jake Eldridge. Jake had

his story told in the *Age* newspaper on 24 April. The title of that article was 'On a path to prison, Jake, 16, found a bridge back to hope'. Jake's story recounts a life of petty crime and troublemaking which led him to be expelled in year 9. After falling in with the wrong crowd, he broke the law and landed in juvenile detention. This is where the real challenges for a young person like Jake actually start because, as statistics show, once a person has been in prison it is very hard to break the cycle of reoffending.

Of course the Baillieu government has made no apologies for its tough-on-crime approach. It expects to lock up more young offenders like Jake in the future. In fact the Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre will get 45 extra beds as part of a \$54.5 million state government commitment to the Victorian youth justice system.

Locking up young people like Jake should be a last resort. Fortunately Jake was referred to the YMCA's Bridge Project and now finds himself completing an apprenticeship at Essendon Ford. Jake was lucky. The Bridge Project was established in 2006 to help young people transition from custody into the community and to break the cycle of crime. I will disclose that I was the project's foundation chair and still maintain an active involvement in the YMCA's work.

The project assists young people with work readiness training, education and mentoring during their custodial sentence. Through the use of extensive community connections, it seeks to place youth offenders in secure employment after their sentences have been served. Against the odds, the Bridge Project has already developed an enviable record. In just five years it has delivered more than 1500 hours of education and training on site and placed 160 young people in work. Most critically it has also achieved a reduction in the reoffending rate to just 3 per cent of the young people placed in meaningful employment. This is a remarkable achievement and a credit to Sherilyn Hanson and her team.

In 2010 the Bridge Project was one of just five projects to be honoured with national crime and violence prevention awards. It was the only Victorian-based project to receive one of these prestigious awards that year. In April 2011 the Minister for Crime Prevention issued a media release stating:

This project is a great example of a program aimed at helping young Victorians trapped in the cycle of crime and its success can be measured by the fact it has reduced the rate of reoffending among participants to just 3 per cent ...

Until this budget the project had received very modest funding contribution from the state government and the previous state government to support its activities, but the Bridge Project has recently learnt that as a result of this budget it will have its funding halved. Rather than being able to place 24 young people in employment as it did last year, it will receive funding this year which will be enough to assist only 12 young people into employment.

This comes at a time when the juvenile prison system is being expanded. This is another disgraceful decision by the Baillieu government which has been hidden in the budget papers. The government's decision to 'change course' has completely disregarded the work of programs like the Bridge Project and will only consign more young people to a life of crime and misery. As I mentioned earlier, Jake Eldridge is lucky. He received support, but many who follow him simply will not because of the cuts contained in this budget.

Rather than indulge in one big collective backslapping exercise, the Baillieu government should stop and think about the young people I have chosen to include in my contribution: Luke Schroder, Michael Soldatos and Jake Eldridge. Each of these young people was supported by the previous state Labor government but has been abandoned by the Baillieu government. 'Changing course' might be this government's goal with this budget, but not having a destination makes the journey pretty pointless.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Mental Health) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. This is a budget that is very responsible in very difficult times. However, it sets us up for the future that we need, particularly in my portfolio areas regarding vulnerable young people and families. Tough decisions had to be made, and they have been made. We are facing declining revenue, huge GST write-downs and an unsustainable budget position left by the previous government. If we had simply carried on, this state would have been mired in debt and deficits for years to come. We are not prepared to deal with that; we had to put this state's budget on a sustainable footing. That is why decisions have been made and why the budget has been tough.

Ultimately we are defined by the choices we make, and when times are tough the choices that we make show where our priorities are. That is clear with this government. Although this is a tough budget, it invests significantly in vulnerable children and vulnerable families to get their lives back on track. That has been a clear priority of this government with this budget.

We know that the systems have failed vulnerable children and families for years. We have had Ombudsman's report after Ombudsman's report to show us that that is the case. We know that for years services were underresourced, complex and silo based. Labor clearly got it wrong when it was in government, and this government is reversing what we see as years of neglect of vulnerable children. When people finally did get into the system they found so hard to access, they found services were disjointed and not coordinated in terms of their range of needs. Some people had up to 10 to 15 case managers just to address the range of complexities their families faced.

We have a clear reform agenda right across my portfolio area of vulnerable children and families that is putting the families at the centre of decision making. We are knocking down Labor's bureaucratic barriers and looking to join up our response so that people can get the range of support and services they need. We call this Services Connect, and this is very significant in terms of the future reform of community services, mental health services and alcohol and drug services. In addition to having a comprehensive approach and a real reform strategy for the future, there are a number of areas where we are investing and thinking strategically about where we need to go.

Clearly this budget includes a comprehensive response to the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry. That whole-of-government response is investing right across the board in the changes that we need. We are also developing a whole-of-government alcohol and drug strategy. We have not had one for 15 years. Now we are looking at the whole system together and at how we can respond more effectively to prevent the misuse and abuse of alcohol and drugs and to respond effectively when it occurs. It has been 15 years since we have had a whole-of-government strategy, and now we have a new strategy on this.

We are reforming community-based mental health so that people can get help in their communities and in their homes rather than things escalating to the point that their only option is an inpatient service. We are developing an action plan to address violence against women and their children — once again, a whole-of-government response — and thinking strategically about how to make the best investment for the future to prevent violence. Obviously Victoria is preparing for an NDIS (national disability insurance scheme), and we are leading in terms of the national process and the thinking about how to make sure that becomes a reality. As part of this process we are restructuring the way the Department of Human Services operates and works to be able to respond to

these complexities that we see for the families and communities we work with.

This budget is targeted and is strategic. We are investing in these sorts of reform agendas to join up our response to vulnerable Victorians, to invest significantly in strategic improvement and to make sure that we support individuals, families and communities, who often have a range of complex and difficult needs.

I must start by talking about our work in child protection and family services. There is a \$336 million package across many departments for vulnerable children and their families. This continues our response to the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry and adds to the \$98 million we invested in the last budget. We will be establishing a new Children's Court in Broadmeadows with the leadership of the Attorney-General; we are reforming the child protection workforce; we are focusing on placement stability and a therapeutic approach for children in out-of-home care; we are focusing on connecting our service response; and we are making sure that we have the oversight of this through a commission for children and young people which is independent of government. These are very significant reforms, many of which have been called for for years but been ignored previously. Our reform agenda and the funding recognises that we need transformational change, and that is what we will be delivering.

I have to say that this approach has been supported by the regional director of Berry Street, who was reported by the *Latrobe Valley Express* as having said:

'We are really pleased. I couldn't believe it actually ... I would have been surprised if it was \$36 million, so \$336 million was beyond my wildest dreams'.

The Victorian Council of Social Service talked about it as including 'smart decisions to invest in proven programs' and to address and have a response for the future. That is what is needed in terms of the support we are providing.

The member for Williamstown talked about youth justice, and I am pleased he did. He talked about Jake being lucky. The fact is that under this government it is not a matter of whether you are lucky or not; we have put in place initiatives. We have put in place the first ever school in the Parkville youth justice precinct. This means young people in youth justice will go from getting possibly 1 or 2 hours of education each week to getting 25 hours or more of schooling in a school environment so they can actually learn to read and write and all of them can have hope for the future to get jobs, because they will have the skills. It is the difference

between being lucky and actually having a plan for our most vulnerable so that we can transform and change the outcomes for them in the future. We are investing strategically and systematically in the change that is needed rather than crossing our fingers and hoping that a small number will get a small amount of assistance and be the lucky ones. We will not take that — —

Mr Noonan interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Williamstown has had his chance.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — We will work differently. The fact is we need to invest in additional beds at Malmsbury because under the previous government — and it was clear in the Ombudsman's report — young people who were on remand and people who were sentenced were having to be co-located because of the lack of beds, and the previous government failed to do anything about it. We are making sure that we have the facilities to create a therapeutic environment to help these young people get their lives back on track, and that is what we will continue to do.

In alcohol and drugs we are putting one-third of the budget on a secure footing rather than continuing the year-to-year funding that was in place under the previous government. That was an important recommendation of and was highlighted in the Auditor-General's report. In disability we are leading the reform on an NDIS and helping the sector to be NDIS ready, investing in individual support packages and continuing to show the way in how we can have an individualised response, which means we are ready and are championing the reform that will come, and that needs to come, as part of an NDIS.

In women's affairs we are investing in regional coordinators to make sure that women and children who are experiencing family violence can get the range of supports and services they need to help them both deal with the issues of family violence and get their lives back on track. We are also dealing with issues such as serious sex offenders and putting in new centres for sexual assault.

We are investing more than ever before in concessions — \$647 million in concessions for pensioners and concession card holders. There are more people accessing these sorts of supports than ever before. If you look at the 2010–11 budget, you see that electricity concessions were budgeted at \$68 million. Two years later, in the 2012–13 budget, there is \$150 million for electricity concessions. That is the difference between a Labor government and a coalition

government that invests for vulnerable people, giving them the support they need. We recognise that cost of living pressures are very important and that we have to address them. I am proud of the contrast between what we have seen with Labor governments and what we see with the coalition government investing for the future.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about my electorate of Doncaster, because there are some significant investments for the future for people in Doncaster. The first one is the investment to begin the planning of the east–west link with the business case and preliminary planning to put this link in place. That will connect the Eastern Freeway to CityLink, connect CityLink to the port of Melbourne and connect the port of Melbourne to the Western Ring Road — very significant in terms of taking this issue forward.

This proposal, though, has been rejected by those opposite, which is absolutely unbelievable. They call it a hoax! In an article in the *Age* on 18 May Josh Gordon quoted what those opposite think of this:

Labor does not support ripping up half the inner city to simply move congestion from Hoddle to Nicholson and Lygon streets.

They reject the congestion that my constituents face every day and the massive decrease in speed on Hoddle Street; and we know those numbers have decreased massively even over the last two or three years because of the failure of the previous government to act on these issues.

Labor has also used this budget as an opportunity to have a go at the Doncaster rail study. I thought it was very interesting that Brian Tee, an opposition member for Eastern Metropolitan Region in the other place, said in the *Manningham Leader*:

I'm astounded they have dealt such a massive blow to public transport ... No Doncaster rail ... it's ridiculous.

This is a classic example: we are meant to fund the whole thing before we even have a planning study to work out where it goes. That may have been the approach of the previous government — act first, think later — but that is not the way this government approaches things. Another member for Eastern Metropolitan Region in the other place, Shaun Leane, said in Parliament on 3 May:

When you look at this week's budget and you look for the line item for Doncaster rail, you see there is nothing. There is donuts! There was a farcical feasibility study that went nowhere.

The fact is that the feasibility study is still under way. Phase 1 is not yet completed. Hundreds of people have

turned up to the consultation because they care about this issue. We have three options on the table that we are talking through in detail. Those opposite had 11 years to act on any one of these issues. They do not care about people in the eastern suburbs: they promised neither. They did not promise the east–west link and they did not promise any rail for Doncaster. This is in contrast to the coalition government — we are progressing with the planning in relation to this, and frankly we have to plan before we can build because we are not prepared to see the massive overruns that we would have from the other side in their poor planning in relation to major infrastructure projects.

I am also very pleased to say that we have fulfilled our election commitment to the Birralee Primary School with a \$3 million commitment to redevelop this important primary school. An article in the *Manningham Leader* on 2 May stated:

Birralee principal Ashley Ryan said he was thrilled by the news.

'Over the moon is an understatement', Mr Ryan said.

'It will totally transform the school and the learning and teaching experience for everyone'.

He went on in the *Melbourne Weekly Eastern* to say:

When I announced it, you should have heard the shouts of joy because we'd been campaigning for many years.

That is another commitment fulfilled by the coalition government but ignored by the Labor Party, because it just does not care about the people of Manningham, the people of Doncaster and the people in the eastern suburbs.

The fact is that we are investing strategically to support a broad-ranging agenda for the future. Very recently the Leader of the Opposition said that there were clear differences between the two major parties. Frankly, he was right. We are reforming and we are investing strategically to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians. On the other side they spent taxpayers' dollars on self-promotion, spin doctors and a dirt unit. They spent money on a desalination plant that is going to cost us \$2 million every single day for the next 27 years. They spent \$4 billion in project blow-outs. We all know about that sort of money wasting.

Labor makes its choices: spin, self-promotion and wasteful spending. On the other hand we also make our choices, but they are very different ones. We believe that no matter how difficult the financial context may be, the coalition government's clear priority is the protection of vulnerable children and families. We are

going to invest with them. We are going to reform for the future, think strategically and make sure that we have a very clear plan to deliver and improve the outcomes, improve the hopes and aspirations, and work with vulnerable families to address their range of issues.

I commend the Treasurer and the Premier on this important budget that delivers for vulnerable families and the people in Manningham the things that they need. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling the next speaker, I would like to acknowledge in our gallery here tonight the Honourable Marilyn Warren, Chief Justice of Victoria; the Honourable Justice Chris Maxwell, President of the Court of Appeal, and a large number of justices from the Supreme Court who are also here. We are pleased to have you here, and we hope you enjoy your time at Parliament tonight.

APPROPRIATION (2012/2013) BILL 2012

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr SCOTT (Preston) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. This is an important part of the parliamentary process. Having participated in over 50 hours of public hearings on the budget, which is often for the benefit of this debate, I am aware of the significance of the debate we are participating in. As in any budget, the devil is often in the detail. There is one aspect that is clear in this budget — that the fiddles are certainly in the detail. I draw the attention the house to the following comments in the *Australian Financial Review* on 14 May:

... Victoria will be hard to beat in the contest for this year's best numbers fiddle, as a closer look at the state's budget papers reveal.

What the *Australian Financial Review* was referring to was the revaluation of 'Fair value of assets received free of charge or for nominal consideration', which appears in budget paper no. 5, page 235, where the figure changes from \$1.1 million to \$129 million, which underpins the surplus in the year 2011–12. What this matter actually represents is a rejigging, a sleight of hand, involving the medical indemnity liabilities that have previously been held by the Department of Health.

These are being shifted to the insurance body, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority.

I note the Minister for Finance is present. In essence, this matter creates the surplus for 2011–12. However, what it does not create is a single dollar in actual cash to pay doctors, teachers or nurses. This is just one example of the sleight of hand and interesting accountancy practices that the budget contains and which improve the budget position.

Another fiddle I would like to draw to the attention of the house relates to transport. In the transport area money has previously been spent on maintenance of the transport network. A closer look at the budget papers seems to indicate that there has been a shift of this money from output initiatives, from the output funding which appears under the operating statement, to the area of asset initiatives. This is significant, because asset initiatives do not affect the surplus or deficit, which is held under the operating statement. I would be interested in a response on this from the relevant ministers, because this matter was raised at Public Accounts and Estimates Committee estimates hearings and it has an impact on the surplus for this year. It would be interesting to see how much money that was previously in output initiatives and covered under the operational statement has been shifted to asset initiatives and therefore taken off the books in terms of having a significant impact on the surplus or deficit.

Another aspect of the budget is the fire sale of land that is currently being undertaken. Land sales, which are listed at page 317 of budget paper 3, have jumped significantly in the last two years. In 2010–11 the figure was \$53.37 million and the expected outcome for 2011–12 is \$50 million, but the 2012–13 target is \$176 million, which is about 3.5 times the earlier figures. This government has undertaken a significant increase in land sales. While that does not affect the surplus or deficit, it does affect the money that is available for capital investment. You have to question the timing of making such a significant series of land sales, because the government itself is expecting the property market to improve significantly. If members refer to page 23 of budget paper 5 they will see there is an expected increase in land transfer duty of 6.6 per cent between 2012–13 and 2013–14, and in the next two years a 7.6 per cent increase and a 7.8 per cent increase respectively. The reason for that increase given elsewhere in the budget papers is expected improvement in the property market. What we have is a government which expects the property market to significantly improve but which is dumping vast tracts of land onto the market this year for its own budgetary

purposes. This is an issue that will be explored over the coming year, and it is one of significant concern.

Another significant issue is the increasing level of stamp duty to which I referred earlier. I have checked this figure, which averages over 7 per cent over the forward estimates period — an average of increases of 6.6 per cent, 7.6 per cent and 7.8 per cent — with people I know who deal with property and related issues and likely volumes, and they regard it as a very optimistic view. I suspect there will again be issues related to the amount of stamp duty that is available, because this is a very optimistic and rosy view of the Melbourne property market. But what would you expect when you have a government whose vision and underlying strategy are given by a Treasurer who believes that when you have the mining states doing well, Victoria does well?

The Treasurer did not say it once; he said it twice. The first was a slightly different quote, but the sentiment is exactly the same.

When the mining states do well, Victoria does well as a result of the mining states.

At the same time, if you actually read the budget papers, you see there is some lengthy discussion of the negative impact of the mining boom on the Victorian economy. Most significant economists in Australia — in fact I am not aware of any who disagree with this proposition, but I am sure there are some, it being an academic exercise — believe that the high Australian dollar is driven by the mining commodities boom. But it is not just my opinion. If you go to page 2, chapter 1, of budget paper 2, *2012–13 Strategy and Outlook*, you will see that it states:

A sustained high Australian dollar driven by the mineral commodities boom —

That is the mining states for those who do not know —

is affecting trade-exposed, price-sensitive Victorian industries such as manufacturing, education services and tourism.

We have a Treasurer who, when appearing before a parliamentary committee, lauds the positive impact of the mining states doing well but at the same time publishes budget papers that quite rightly point out the negative impact that this has on trade-exposed sectors of the economy. I implore the Treasurer to go to a manufacturing company or to the tourism industry and speak to the workers there about how the high dollar and the boom in the mining states is benefiting the Victorian economy. I think he would find that a very challenging experience. But again, what do you expect

when you are dealing with a government that has no plan whatsoever for employment in Victoria?

There is no jobs plan in this budget. In fact what amounts to a jobs target, as we know from last year's statements by the Treasurer to the house, are the employment projections contained within the budget. After the last budget, when it was pointed out there was no mention of jobs in his previous budget speech, the Treasurer appeared before this house and pointed to the Victorian economic projections which appear in budget paper 2 as the employment target of this government. But when you look to the 2012–13 Victorian economic projections, which the Treasurer last year identified as the employment target, you see that the figure for employment growth is zero — 0.00 or three zeros in a row. The forecast for this year, 2012–13, is 0.25 per cent. If you look at the population for the same period, you see it is expected to increase by 1.6 per cent.

This is a government that is predicting failure. It is predicting employment growth of 7000 jobs, as the Treasurer stated to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. That is the estimate and it is in fact the jobs plan. If you look at how the government is seeking to implement a jobs plan in Victoria, the only discernible jobs plan that I can find is to sack 4200 public servants. The plan is to sack people. This is a government that believes that the best way to create employment is to sack people from their jobs — to sack public servants and throw them on the scrap heap. That is what we get for a jobs plan.

As I said, in this place the Treasurer himself identified those particular statistics as the jobs target within the last budget, so we can only presume that the jobs plan of the Victorian government is for zero jobs in this financial year, and for next financial year a total of 7000 new jobs. But what should we expect? I touched upon the 4200 jobs that are to be lost — that is the context of the \$6 billion of cuts. If you take the previous budget and the budget update, and the savings measures which are really cuts, we have a total over four years of \$6.352 billion of cuts to the government's expenditure. Sitting through the hearings of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee it became clear that it is a fanciful idea that \$6 billion of cuts can be undertaken without a significant impact on the services that are delivered to the Victorian community. Clearly there will be significant cuts.

It is interesting to note, and I note the coverage on Channel 10 relating to these matters, that over the forward estimates there are \$68 million of cuts to the police. In the TAFE sector the government has identified \$100 million in cuts a year. I did note that the

Minister for Higher Education and Skills could not guarantee that there would be no closures; there was not even a guarantee from the responsible minister that TAFE institutes would not close. As was pointed out in the hearings by the deputy chair of the committee, TAFE institutes are often the only form of higher education offered in some regional and rural communities. When the issue arose of preserving these institutes ensuring that there will be no closures and giving a guarantee, no such guarantee could be given. That sums up the approach that has been taken in this budget.

If we look to what the Premier himself said in relation to the budget, we see he spoke about what services would be considered front line. At a time when TAFE closures cannot be ruled out, the Premier was asked to identify the front-line services in his own area.

Mr Nardella — Tell us.

Mr SCOTT — The government architect was identified by the Premier of this state as a front-line service at a time when the School Start bonus has been axed.

We went through a sad charade when it came to the School Start bonus and the education maintenance allowance where two ministers, the Premier and the minister directly responsible, the Minister for Education — who happens to be at the table — did not have the courage to admit that their series of cuts would negatively impact on disadvantaged students in prep and year 7. Other ministers had the courage of their convictions and defended the cuts in their area. They explained why they were doing it and what services would be cut, but we had a sad charade in relation to these important payments being cut. The Premier and the minister responsible did not have the courage to stand behind the cuts and did not give direct answers when challenged.

I could go on for much longer about the broader issues, but I would like to turn to the issues affecting my electorate. The Preston electorate has a number of critical issues that have not been addressed. I am glad the Minister for Education is at the table, because I will raise a number of them here. Two schools in my electorate — William Ruthven Secondary College and the former Northland Secondary College, which is now the Northern College of the Arts and Technology — received significant injections of funding under the previous government. However, both of these schools need further work to be done to finalise important projects. It is important to note that both school communities have identified land that could be sold. In

the case of William Ruthven Secondary College, it is the site of the former Lakeside Secondary College. Those school communities have identified parcels of land that could be sold.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr SCOTT — I hear the interjections. I am quite relaxed about when they are sold because it is quite possible — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Weller) — Order! The member for Preston knows it is disorderly to respond to interjections, and I ask members of the government to stop interjecting.

Mr SCOTT — It is quite sensible that the government not necessarily dispose of that land this year, because the government is predicting significant rises. However, the fact that there is land available should inform the budgetary processes. I would be hopeful, because these are school communities that have taken very mature steps to work with the previous government and the now government to try to get the best outcomes for their communities. They deserve better facilities, and better facilities can be delivered to them without there being a cost to the operating budget of the state. I would hope that those matters could be resolved, and I am sad that they have not been resolved in this budget.

Sitting suspended 6.30 p.m. until 8.02 p.m.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Education) — It is a pleasure to join the budget debate on this government's second budget, and it is important to understand the context of this year's budget. What we found when we came to office was that Victoria had been badly let down by Labor over the 11 years before we came to government. Labor got it horribly wrong in many areas, and we have inherited Labor's neglect, its mess and an incredible lack of planning — which I will point out in the education area. Coupled with all of that we have very difficult economic conditions, global uncertainty and a very poor quality government in Canberra with lots of uncertainty there. We have a high Australian dollar impacting on areas important to the Victorian economy such as manufacturing, tourism and education. But despite all these difficulties the budget has remained fundamentally sound, and we are doing the hard work. It is going to take time to change things, and it is going to be very hard early in the piece, but it will be a worthwhile investment in the future of Victoria.

If we did not have this strong budgetary position, we could not provide the services that everybody expects. This could not be more relevant than in the case of education. It is interesting to hear Labor Party members say they care — that is their new slogan. If the Labor members cared, they would stand up to the federal government regarding the carbon tax. The carbon tax is something that is going to hurt Victoria hardest and first. There is nothing at all — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The Minister for Education will continue without the assistance of the other members present in the chamber.

Mr DIXON — They are incredibly silent on the poor timing of the carbon tax. They are incredibly silent — —

Mr Andrews interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is out of his seat and out of order.

Mr DIXON — If Labor cared about Victoria, it would join with us in tightening controls on the building industry which are so important to the Victorian economy. But, no, Labor members sit silently by. If state Labor cared, it would stand up to Labor in Canberra and say, ‘Victoria deserves a fair share of GST revenue’, but the members opposite are absolutely silent on that. If Labor cared, it would not have accepted the lowest common denominator occupational health and safety changes which are going to cost businesses in Victoria billions of dollars. Labor is part of the problem here; it has nothing at all to do with the solution.

One of the most important aspects of our economy and the future prosperity of Victoria is the education system. We have the best education system in Australia, but we want to compete internationally, and what is happening is that other jurisdictions — —

Mr Foley interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The member for Albert Park is out of his seat and out of order. If he cares to interject, he must go to his seat, and if he does, he will still be put in his place.

Mr DIXON — The other jurisdictions that we need to compete with are leaving us behind. What this budget does is ensure that we continue to grow investment in education as well as undertake the needed

reforms; it frees up local decision making in our schools and reduces the red tape which has been strangling them. I am very proud to stand here and say that despite the economic situation there is a 3 per cent increase in the education budget in schools in Victoria this year. At the same time as we are increasing the amount that is going to education we are increasing the proportion of that money going to schools. It is coming out of the bureaucracy and going to local networks, local clusters and local schools.

A good example of that is our reforms to the student support services officers (SSSOs). These are people like speech therapists, behavioural support people, psychiatrists and psychologists. We found that a large part of that program was lapsing, so we have decided that we can get far better value for our money if it comes out of the bureaucracy and the program is run not by the regions but by local clusters, where the schools make the decisions.

As part of our response to the Cummins inquiry we are allocating \$4 million to help with the transition from a bureaucratic model to a local cluster model of funding for student support services officers. What came out of the Cummins inquiry was that local support services and on-the-ground services are the most effective, and that is what we will actually see. No longer will SSSOs be controlled by the regions; the running and management of the SSSO program and the decisions regarding the SSSOs will be made by the local cluster or network. That will vastly improve the program and make service delivery far more timely. The experts will be in the schools, building up relationships with students, teachers and families. They will be there long term and there will be certainty about it.

This reform will cut down on the huge amount of red tape required under the previous government. We will see tens of millions of dollars coming out of the bureaucracy and going into clusters of local schools. That is where it is best spent. It will meet the needs of local schools and communities. The SSSOs know the students and families who need their care, and they are best able to react to that. We have allocated \$4 million in transition funding to enable that to work, and we will see some tremendous changes and a far more timely, efficient and effective service.

The other reform in that area is to the principals networks. They should be managed for and by the principals; they should not be a management arm of government. We are saying to principals, ‘We trust your professionalism in doing the right things for your school, your cluster and for education in your area’. No longer will they be told what to do and what it is

important to do. That needed to be done for some schools in some cases, but we have moved on from that.

In the SSSO changes and the principals network changes we want local solutions to local issues. These are two key reforms. Such reforms do not all cost money; it is about changing the attitude, about us letting go and saying, 'We are here to support schools. We do not have all the answers. We want you to respond to the issues in your school with the expertise that you have'.

One area we have increased funding for — and it is an area of great need in all parts of Victorian education — is students with a disability. Building on from the additional \$50 million in growth funding we put in last year for students with a disability, we will invest an extra \$14.9 million in providing transport for students with disabilities and an extra \$8.2 million in the program for students with a disability. There is a growing demand, and we need to meet it. That extra money is on top of the \$150 million in growth funding that was in last year's budget. If we had not allocated this extra money, for the first time we would have 600 students on the waiting list for that program. There was no growth funding built into the program. We had to provide that growth funding last year and this year because we cannot afford to have those students left behind.

One of our other great innovations in funding for students with a disability — in fact it is not a funding issue; it is an organisational issue, which just shows you that not all answers in education are about money — is the introduction of the abilities based learning and education support program. The previous government started to implement this program and did some of the early research; we have finished that research and we have now implemented that program in schools. We have made it available not only to special schools but also to mainstream schools that have students who are struggling. It is about identifying what the child knows and enabling them to grow by building on that. It is a very positive program; it is about the child's ability, not their disability. So many schools are signing up to this. It has a strong research base. It is web-based so that resources are there. It is a great help to teachers not only in special schools but also in mainstream schools, as I said.

Moving on to capital works and maintenance, there is a \$200 million commitment to this in this year's budget. What we have found is an appalling lack of maintenance in our schools. In fact under Labor maintenance spending dropped by 20 per cent between 2000 and 2010 — a massive cut. School stock was

breaking down, and at the same time maintenance was cut by the previous government. At this stage our audit has thrown up what we think will be, when it is finalised, at least a \$300 million maintenance backlog which we have to tackle. Members on the other side often say, 'We were building and modernising schools'. Now that we have had an opportunity to look at the claims made by the previous government, we have found that the Victorian schools plan was actually a fraud. Schools that the previous government said were upgraded and modernised may have had \$300 000 spent on them in 2002, and that was simply to tick off that school as having been modernised.

I have three examples of schools where the maintenance backlog was greater than the amount of capital works money spent on them by the previous government. For example, Rosehill Secondary College has a maintenance backlog of \$580 000 and it received \$563 000 worth of capital works. It just shows you that the old Victorian schools plan was just not meeting the need. It was a fraud for the previous government and the unions to say that many hundreds of schools were modernised; they were not — it was a lick of paint and a promise, and that is about all. Scoresby Secondary College has \$1 million in maintenance backlog, and it received \$400 000 in capital works funding over the 11 years of the previous government. According to the previous government, that school was modernised — it is all okay. What about the \$1 million of maintenance that is outstanding? Lilydale Heights College needs \$727 000 worth of maintenance; it had \$600 000 worth of capital works. According to the previous government, that school was modernised. That is not the reality; it is a fraud, and we have to start all over again.

We are carrying out that full audit of all our schools. We have announced that we have increased the basic maintenance funding for schools, the yearly maintenance, by 48 per cent to \$87 million a year. On top of that, in recognition of the fact that we know the audit will throw up a lot of issues, we are investing an extra \$20 million in maintenance funding to meet the highest priority needs the audit will reveal. In addition, we are spending \$80 million on a range of schools in country Victoria. We are buying land; we have spent more than \$50 million on land to build new schools in growth areas. It was great that the member for Monbulk was so effusive in his praise of this government for providing \$15 million to finish off the regeneration in his electorate. In Geelong, in Ballarat and in Bendigo — we are delivering on capital works everywhere. As I said, we are spending a lot of money on land; we have to build for the future. Our suburbs

are expanding, our population is expanding, and we really need to build for that.

Language education is another great area that I am very proud of. That is the future. Our students being able to go out into a global world and have the skills to meet the demands of the jobs and careers that are required in that world is very important to us. There was \$6 million in this year's budget for language scholarships to build up the capacity of our teachers so that they can educate children in other languages and cultures. There is \$1 million for start-up grants for schools that have not had a language program before. We are doing a whole range of other work with clusters of schools in organising and looking at better ways of delivering language education rather than just putting a teacher in front of the class. We have trained 30 language teachers to teach the sciences and maths, for example, in a language other than English. As I said, we are undertaking a lot of research in this area as well. This is a major investment in Victoria's future prosperity. This is what it is about. It is about some long-term vision and a long-term plan to equip our students so that they can be readily employable and have the skills to meet the needs of the world they will be working in.

I want to talk briefly about teacher performance pay. We have put on the table a performance pay system. In Victoria what we have not done and what we have not invested in is a teacher performance management system. Our worst teachers are being paid the same as our best teachers. That is just not the way to go and is not the way the top systems work. We do not want to change only the rates of pay; we want a performance management system that is going to recognise the quality of our top teachers and reward that quality. That is the only way we will get to the top tier. Our teachers are the key, and that is what we need to do. It is not about the amount of money involved; it is about its management and rewarding teachers who make a difference. Just spending money is not enough; we have to have a management system that recognises those teachers.

In conclusion, the extra funding and the reforms we are making are going to make a real difference to education. In a very difficult financial position there is a 3 per cent increase in funding in the education budget, and I thank the Treasurer and the Premier for the great work they have done.

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) — I rise in condemnation of the Baillieu government and its 2012–13 state budget. It is a budget which on many levels and across multiple areas will hurt Victoria and Victorians. It is a budget which will hurt Victoria's economy and its

reputation as a great place to live, work and raise a family. Rather than going forward, this budget will stifle interest in investment. It will stifle innovation and set back the many advances in social justice and living standards for all Victorians which were a hallmark of the previous Bracks and Brumby governments.

I wish to raise a number of issues that are of particular concern to my electorate, including the St Albans rail crossing and the Caroline Springs railway station. In addition I will speak about the savagery of the cuts to TAFE funding, this government's rape and pillage of statutory authorities such as the Victorian WorkCover Authority, cuts to the education maintenance allowance (EMA), which supports children from disadvantaged families and assists them to continue their education, the battle looming over teachers' wages and cuts to funding provided to improve transport infrastructure so that it meets disability compliance requirements. I will also speak about Victoria's appalling recent record in relation to job losses in manufacturing and job creation under this lazy, incompetent, and asleep-at-the-wheel government.

My electorate of Kororoit does not rate highly in terms of advantage. Members have heard me speak regularly about just how disadvantaged many of my constituents are, and the reasons for this. This budget does absolutely nothing to improve the circumstances of the people in my electorate whom I represent in this house. I came to this Parliament because I believe in the power of our democracy to work for and respond to the needs of the community. With no plan, no vision and no ideas, this government should be ashamed, embarrassed and humiliated.

The farce that is the St Albans railway crossing saga is a perfect example of where this government is prepared to ignore real need and punish the most disadvantaged areas of the state. The Premier can find millions of dollars to upgrade a level crossing in Brighton which is ranked 23 on the independent expert priority list, yet he cannot seem to find money for the crossing at St Albans which is ranked no. 3 by those same experts. The St Albans crossing is high on the list not only because of the many lives that have been lost there but also because of the delays experienced by drivers as they queue for frustratingly long periods. Surely their time would be better spent either contributing to the state's economy or at home with their families. How many more lives will be lost before the people of the Kororoit electorate see action on this issue?

The blame game the government is playing in relation to the Caroline Springs railway station is another issue that demonstrates the lack of commitment to action that

plagues this government. Thousands of people in Caroline Springs do not have access to a railway station, and they are not interested in the bleating of members of this government that it is not their fault. You are the government; you have the keys to the Treasury and you have the power to fix it, if you have the will.

I would also like to comment on the debacle that is the railway station protective services officers. Time is limited so I will only point out that the lack of interest shown so far in terms of recruiting the promised number of officers will ensure that this issue remains a festering sore for this government for some time to come.

And what about the disaster that is TAFE funding? Because of this government's direct action in cutting funding to TAFE institutions we will see many thousands of people unable to afford the very thing that can propel them beyond minimum-wage jobs — vocational training. The Baillieu government's cuts are cruel will cost hundreds of jobs and hurt students across the state. The TAFE system cannot afford to have millions of dollars per year slashed from its bottom line. We should not be surprised if some campuses close, such is the savagery of these cuts. In the past weeks we have heard a number of TAFE CEOs warning of major losses, the need to slash jobs and potentially to cut many courses. If, as mooted by several TAFE CEOs, TAFEs or TAFE campuses are to close their doors, such closures will impact on local economies and limit education options for Victorians. Many TAFEs are based in regional and rural Victoria, providing students with education close to home. They are a significant local employer for regional areas. Making these devastating cuts represents a false economy and will set Victoria's workforce back years.

Labor recognised the value of TAFE institutions in our community and provided funding for them to operate effectively. This government stands condemned for its short-sighted decision to put budgetary considerations above ensuring that the Victorian workforce is prepared to meet current and future labour market needs.

Speaking of the workforce, I will say that in the 12 months between December 2010 and December 2011 — the full-year period occurred under this government — unemployment in my electorate increased from 6.05 per cent to 7.1 per cent. That 1 per cent increase over 12 months represents real people, real families and real lives on the margins while this government does little to stimulate investment to grow jobs. It sits idly and watches as manufacturing jobs, the cornerstone of employment in my electorate, simply

disappear. What has this government invested in? What is its plan for jobs in Victoria? What measures does it have up its sleeve to get Victoria back on track and off its knees?

Breaking promises is the first dot point in its plan. This is evidenced by the government's refusal so far to honour its promise to Victorian teachers that they would be the best paid in the land. It is no wonder that the community regularly despairs about the state of politics and politicians when it is fed promises that are never intended to be kept. A lack of intellectual rigour and vision is the hallmark of this government. It is no surprise then that Premier Baillieu and his struggling Treasurer have opted to milk dry any avenue to balance the books.

The government sees its stash of gold in the form of the Victorian WorkCover Authority — an organisation that was almost dead and buried the last time the Liberals were in government. The authority was brought back to life by the previous Labor government. It was so well run under Labor and its committed board of directors that workplace safety was improved remarkably, premiums were lowered and the authority was able to accumulate reserves to ensure that it was able to meet any unforeseen events. But the minute this government got the keys to the strongroom, it announced it would bleed it dry to the tune of a half a billion dollars over the next four years.

It is often said that a society can be judged by the way it treats the most vulnerable. By any measure people living with disabilities fall into this category. This government showed a lack of compassion by slashing funding that was designed to make tram, train and bus infrastructure accessible for people living with a disability by over 84 per cent in its first budget. Funding to upgrade public transport infrastructure to be compliant with the commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 is vital to ensure that people living with a disability have access to Victoria's trams, trains and buses. The government slashed that funding by over 80 per cent.

To add to the disgusting nature of these decisions, the coalition's creative accounting and media releases have shown that every attempt has been made to dupe the public into believing that additional funding has been provided. Over its last four years in office Labor invested \$85.6 million in upgrading the rail infrastructure of trams and trains and \$46.6 million in bus infrastructure. Under this government this amount has been cut to just \$5 million over the next four years. The budget papers of the Liberal-Nationals also make it clear that there will be no new low-floor trams and that

only 16 tram stops will be upgraded — that is 9 less than in the last financial year.

Further, there are no plans for metropolitan or regional train station upgrades to be completed in this financial year. Sadly, this lack of investment will continue to marginalise those with disabilities, particularly those with mobility issues. The architects of this decision ought to be ashamed of themselves, but they have no shame because they have no hearts.

Another decision that attacks families and the disadvantaged is that which removes the paying of the education maintenance allowance to schools. The removal of the payment to schools will impact on the ability of schools to assist those who can least afford to participate in activities such as school camps and excursions. Schools use the EMA to ensure that eligible children are able to attend such activities, which are important in forming social relationships amongst students. By not attending those activities the students risk further marginalisation. Removing the payment of the allowance to schools will result in schools reframing activities, seeking payments from parents who can least afford it or removing curriculum choices to stay in the black.

There are many elements of this government's budget which I can take issue with, and I have highlighted but a few of the most damning. I should take the opportunity to say that the junior partners in this unholy alliance, The Nationals, should have a cold, hard look at themselves. I guess members of The Nationals have no say in the relationship, because if they did they would be advocating for the continuance of the funding to TAFEs in the regions. I would have thought there would be infrastructure projects of major importance to rural and regional Victoria on the wish list of The Nationals, but this is a partnership in name only.

The jobs crisis in Victoria, the lack of investment in infrastructure and the failure to support the most disadvantaged are not new to coalition governments. But when promises are made and are not delivered — such as failing to make Victorian teachers the best paid in the country — people will not forget. The days of voters giving governments second chances are gone, and we will ensure that we continue to remind the community of this government's litany of broken promises.

We will continue to hold this government to account for dismantling its responsibility for the economic and social wellbeing of the state and its people. We will continue to remind this government of the projects that must be delivered. We will continue to remind this

Liberal-Nationals government of its responsibility, whether it be its continued failure to fix the mess at the St Albans level crossing or its failure to provide for disability access and public infrastructure. We will continue to remind the community of this government's actions and inaction, including callously removing the schools component of the education maintenance allowance. We will continue to expose the shallow thinking and ineptitude of this government as in opposition, we build the trust of Victorians. Victorian people will tire of this government's laziness, lies and deceit. It is not a matter of if it will tire but when.

Mr CLARK (Attorney-General) — I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of this year's budget. It is one which puts Victoria's finances on a sustainable basis. It delivers on our election commitment to fix the problems and build for the future. It provides substantial infrastructure spending, it protects the most vulnerable, reduces business costs, reduces debt and is consistent with maintaining a AAA credit rating.

Lest there be any mistake about it, this government, as is so often the fate of coalition governments, has had to deal with some enormous problems inflicted on this state by the previous state Labor government and the federal Labor government. One of the biggest challenges the previous Labor government had in its first eight years of operations was how to spend the ever-increasing revenue that was flowing into its coffers thanks to the legacy it inherited from the Kennett government and the sound national financial position established by former Prime Minister John Howard and former Treasurer Peter Costello.

When the global economic and financial crisis struck, however, what did the members of that previous Labor government do? They just kept on spending as if there was no tomorrow. They papered over the widening, underlying budget problems by counting as revenue the one-off short-term capital funding they received from the commonwealth. The accounting rules allowed them to do that, but they should have recognised there was an ever-increasing underlying financial stress on the system. To make matters worse — —

Mr Herbert interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The member for Eltham is out of his seat and out of order.

Mr Herbert interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! The member for Eltham will not talk back to the Chair.

Mr CLARK — To continue to present the facade of credible forward estimates they failed to fund key programs on an ongoing basis right across government. These are the black holes the current government has inherited, where fundamental programs had funding that lapsed last year or this year. That would have caused devastation to key parts of service delivery by government had the coalition not found the money to fill the black holes that had been created by state Labor.

That has occurred in the context of growing national economic uncertainty and instability, courtesy of the Rudd and Gillard governments. I will not go over the cuts to GST revenue caused by the weakening national economy and the flawed GST allocation model that was imposed under Prime Minister Julia Gillard and federal Treasurer Wayne Swan. Those were additional challenges we as a government in Victoria have had to deal with in the context also of a weakening international situation.

There have been significant downgrades, therefore, in the estimates of revenue that will flow into government coffers. We have had to deal with that. We have had to achieve a sustainable budget capacity in that context. We have had to tackle the falling levels of productivity that the previous government allowed to emerge. We have had to rebuild and strengthen the state's focus on exports, trade and international engagement. We have had to make provision for industries in transition. This budget has delivered on all of these. It has delivered on fixing the problems the previous government left to us and on laying the foundations and building for the future.

We have adopted medium-term fiscal strategies that provide for infrastructure investment of 1.3 per cent of gross state product, which will put infrastructure investment on a sustainable basis. We have targeted reduction of net debt over the next decade. We are continuing to extinguish the state's unfunded superannuation liabilities. We committed to a surplus of at least \$100 million and consistent with our other targets. That means, on currently available figures, we are one of only two jurisdictions in Australasia that will be able to keep its budget in surplus over the entirety of the forward estimates period.

Contrary to the myths that some seek to perpetuate, surpluses are not spare money that can be used on spending up and having a good time. As anybody involved in trying to run a small, medium size or even a large business will know, having growing business surpluses on your operating account — profits, as these would be referred to in the private sector — is vital for providing the cash flow with which to commit to the

infrastructure you need to grow your business. In the public sector that means you need surpluses in order to afford the infrastructure that will provide the schools, the hospitals, the courthouses, the police stations, the roads and the railways we need for a steadily growing population. Our commitment to a \$2.5 billion surplus by 2015–16, therefore, is so we can continue to afford that infrastructure while keeping debt contained and reduced.

Those on the other side need to acknowledge and apologise for the fact that their profligacy was putting Victoria's AAA credit rating at risk. Those of us who have been through previous periods of Labor government will recall the loss of Victoria's AAA credit rating prior to the election of the Kennett government and the enormous effort that had to be put in over those seven years to rebuild Victoria's finances — only to see them being trashed again over the 11 years of the Bracks and Brumby governments. To go down the Greek path — to borrow as if there is no tomorrow and let our credit rating fall away — would have imposed an enormous burden on our kids and grandkids.

Mr Herbert interjected.

Mr CLARK — The honourable member for Eltham seems to think it is a good thing to spend as if there is no tomorrow, but a responsible government ensures that debt is contained and is sustainable, because that is the only way to provide responsibly for the future without leaving the finances trashed, as they have been internationally and as they are being at a national level here in Australia.

We have had to rein in expenditure growth and put that on a sustainable basis, which it was not under the previous government. If you look at the escalation of debt that would have occurred if the previous government's unsustainable ways had continued, you can see that the state's finances would have been in very bad shape indeed. But by taking the responsible measures that we have taken, we have been able to provide a record level of state-funded infrastructure spending despite the challenging times in which we live. That has funded projects that the previous Labor government was never able to tackle, such as grade separations, the Dingley bypass, the Koo Wee Rup bypass and rail infrastructure upgrades. We have also been able to cut business costs through reducing WorkCover premiums. We have been able to put funds into growing businesses, markets and exports, and we have been able to deliver for the needs of families and communities.

People talk about protecting those in the community who are most vulnerable. One of the key challenges the coalition government faced on coming to office was the lack of protection for vulnerable children under the previous government. The Minister for Community Services has made that a top priority, and that has been strongly backed by the government through the Cummins report and through not only the funding but the restructuring and the new service delivery models that funding will provide to better protect the most vulnerable children in our community. We have been making the responsible decisions, and we have been putting the budget on a sustainable basis, but we have also been providing infrastructure and services to those in the community who need them most.

Let me say just a few words about some of the initiatives in the Attorney-General's portfolio. The one I will mention first reinforces the point I was making earlier about the previous Labor government's failure to provide ongoing funding for core activities of government. The example of Victoria Legal Aid makes this point, because legal aid is fundamental not only to providing justice for individuals but to ensuring that the court system operates effectively so that delays do not soar and victims, witnesses and indeed accused persons are not waiting years for the outcomes of trials. Waiting lists at all levels of court in Victoria hit the highest levels in Australia under the previous government. We are turning that around. We are contributing to fixing that by putting funding into legal aid on a sustainable basis. The previous government provided only temporary, one and two year top-up funding; we have provided ongoing funding to put the state budget funding base for Victoria Legal Aid on a sustainable basis. Regrettably the commonwealth government failed to match that in the budget it handed down following ours.

As I mentioned earlier, funding has been committed as a result of the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry. That includes funding to expand the availability of what is referred to as new model conferencing, which is designed to come up with outcomes that will best protect vulnerable children through having parents, support workers and other professionals sit down around a table, talk through what is needed to best protect the children concerned and best provide for their future, and hopefully come up with an outcome that can then be endorsed by the court as an agreed solution rather than having these issues fought out in open court through duelling and contesting lawyers. That model is proving very successful. There is funding in this budget to build on that, which can only be to the benefit of the children concerned.

Alongside that we are providing \$10 million for an additional Children's Court facility at Broadmeadows. That will increase the geographical coverage of the Children's Courts, ensuring that more families are able to get to the Children's Court for hearings at locations that are convenient and accessible to them, where there are appropriate support services available nearby —

Mr McGuire interjected.

Mr CLARK — and that are accessible by public transport, as the member for Broadmeadows will get to know, I am sure.

There is also additional funding in the budget to put dispute resolution services funding on an ongoing basis to deal with applications for personal safety intervention orders. It will also continue mediation of civil cases in the Magistrates Court. Again, this is to ensure that those services continue to be available. Those services were not funded on an ongoing basis by the previous government. The coalition government has put that funding on a stable and ongoing basis.

We have also provided additional funding for language services and for the Court of Appeal to continue its good work in reducing delays in criminal appeals. Again, the transformation that is taking place under this government is seeing government and courts working constructively and positively together to achieve outcomes. The Court of Appeal deserves congratulations for the reforms it has pioneered. They are having a significant effect in reducing Court of Appeal criminal waiting lists, and the current government has been prepared to back those reforms with ongoing funding to continue the good work that is being achieved.

There is a lot more to come alongside that in terms of reform to jury directions, reform to sexual assault law and a range of other reform initiatives that we are introducing to strengthen community protection. That is another core area of neglect of the previous government. You can have all the arguments about crime statistics you like but what was absolutely clear was that under the previous government the levels of crimes of violence against the person, property damage crimes and antisocial street offences were going through the roof. The previous government refused to acknowledge and act on that.

We are putting more police on the streets, we are putting protective services officers on railway stations and we are introducing sentencing law reforms in terms of statutory minimum sentences for gross violence, baseline sentences, and reforms to community-based

sentences that will allow judges and magistrates to attach conditions that will better protect the community and help offenders get their lives back on track. Across the board this government has been prepared to take responsible decisions in difficult times to fix the problems and to build for the future, and I am delighted to support the budget that is now before the house.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes) — Order! I call the member for Derrimut. I ask for due respect to be shown by all members of the house, including the member for Broadmeadows.

Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) — Thank you, Acting Speaker; I appreciate your protecting me from those opposite. It gives me pleasure to rise tonight to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. The bill provides appropriation authority for payments from the Consolidated Fund for the ordinary annual services of the government for the 2012–13 financial year. As members would be aware, the amounts contained in the schedule to the bill provide for the ongoing operation of departments. In addition to the annual appropriation contained in this bill funds are also made available to departments by way of special appropriation. Special appropriations arise through provisions that are contained in the legislation.

Before we get on to the nitty-gritty, so to speak, of the bill I think it is important to put in context the type of funds, or the state of affairs, this government inherited from the previous government. The Attorney-General spoke about these matters. Let me first of all say that what this government inherited was a very good financial management situation and the legacy of a AAA credit rating for each and every quarter since we came into office in 1999. The other thing it inherited in terms of economic management of the state was ongoing economic growth right through from 1999 to 2010 in the whole of Victoria — growth in terms of jobs. Those jobs were created because Labor understands that it is important for every Victorian to have a job, to have the opportunity to go to work. We were able to see that growth because Labor had a plan. Those of us who have been here long enough know that in every Labor budget there were serious and significant initiatives aimed at creating employment.

The other important matter is that we had an agenda for the whole of the state. We made it clear when we came into office that we would grow inner Melbourne but that we would also grow outer Melbourne, and indeed that we would grow the regions and rural Victoria. We grew the whole of the state. There was an agenda for

everybody. Let me tell those opposite one thing everyone knows now, particularly in the western suburbs, and that is that this government is not there for the western or northern suburbs — not in terms of infrastructure, not in terms of education, not in terms of health, indeed not in terms of other services in the west and the north.

In terms of major projects, Labor cut costs for business. The members of the government can get up and say a million and one times that that was not the case, but the fact is that if you talk to the top end of town, if you talk to the business sector, as we continue to do, those people will tell you that they were pretty confident with our direction in growing the economy, with our direction in growing jobs and with the financial management of the state. There were more jobs for teachers, there were more jobs for nurses, there were more jobs for police officers each and every year.

In my electorate of Derrimut in the western suburbs, in Sunshine and St Albans, there has been a massive 19 per cent increase in unemployment according to analysis that we conducted, the information source for which was the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. It shows clearly that Derrimut's unemployment rate is now 11.10 per cent. That is more than double the average of the state, which, as you would be aware, Acting Speaker, is 5.4 per cent — in other words, we have had the seventh-highest increase in the state. The increasing unemployment rate, from 9.3 per cent in December 2010 to 11.10 per cent in December 2011, is a damning indictment of the Baillieu government's failure to produce jobs and to have an agenda, particularly for the western and northern suburbs. More than 1000 jobs each week are being lost in Victoria. Those opposite should not kid themselves. We talk to ordinary people, like they do, and they should listen to them. The reality is that we are losing jobs.

We know that sometimes there are factors which are outside the control of governments. The problem with this government is that it does not have a plan. It does not have an agenda. We have now had two budgets, and there was not a single part of an agenda in either of them for the purpose of job creation. More than 1000 jobs are being lost each week now and were last year. Major employers are also warning of looming job losses, particularly in the manufacturing sector. This is alarming news for thousands of people, particularly those who live in my electorate in the western suburbs.

The Treasurer said that his government would create about 50 000 to 55 000 jobs. Where are they? We provided those when in office. I can tell you, Acting

Speaker, that in the electorate of Derrimut we would welcome fair dinkum initiatives that created jobs for the western suburbs. It is a great pity that the government has chosen not to consider and not to have an agenda for jobs growth, employment and economic growth, particularly for the western and northern suburbs of Victoria. We should not forget that. It should grow the whole state.

The other important matter I wish to refer to in the context of this debate relates to the Victorian certificate of applied learning. Members would be aware that this is an important issue. VCAL was developed in response to the *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria* of 2000, the Kirby report. The shadow minister, the member for Eltham, who is at the table, is doing a tremendous job on this issue in representing schools and standing up particularly for kids who require support. He is fully aware of the need to support them. Unfortunately lots of schools are being damaged by the budget cuts in relation to this important program. Members will be aware that the Kirby report indicated that a broader range of programs was required to meet the needs of some young people who are in the post-compulsory years. VCAL specifically focuses on applied learning and provides valid and realistic pathways for students, preparing them for apprenticeships, traineeships and employment as well as further education and training.

In passing I wish to mention that I have spoken, as members would, to schools in my area. For example, some parents and members of the school council at Sunshine College have come to my office and made representations on behalf of their kids and their school. They would tell you VCAL is important to the school. At Sunshine College funds are being diverted from one program to another in order to provide the VCAL programs there. The school has around 70 VCAL students — up from 40 last year. That is not the only school.

I mention St Albans Secondary College in relation to the same subject. I have also spoken to members of that school council and to parents, and they have decided to continue VCAL. They and people from other schools are saying they are taking money from other programs and asking existing staff to take on VCAL coordinator functions. In other words, this is not affordable or sustainable. It will not succeed in the future. The budget cuts in this area will hurt students and — make no mistake — the government. The government will be hurt by this at the next election. I am sure that parents and school councils will not forget what this government is doing with this program — and it is not the only program to be cut.

There are other important matters that I wish to refer to. There is a \$48 million cut in relation to the Victorian certificate of applied learning, but let us not forget that this is not the only program that this government has cut. The Young Readers program has been abolished. Make no mistake, each and every one of us will be reminding our electorates and the parents, students and teachers that the Young Readers program has been abolished. The Reading Recovery program, another important program, has been slashed. Education is important, and these programs are important; they are certainly important in the western and the northern suburbs. They have been slashed.

The School Start bonus has been scrapped, and the education maintenance allowance, a \$300 payment per family for costs associated with a child starting prep or year 7 — for books and uniforms — has been slashed. How mean can the government be? It is doing this to parents who cannot afford it. The parents know it, we know it and the government knows it. It is another important cut. Members of the government and members of the opposition ought to register this, because it is also happening in their electorates. They should be standing up for their schools, their children, their teachers and the future of their kids in the same way that members of the opposition are doing. These budget cuts affect everyone, particularly but not only us in the western suburbs.

In the remaining time I have I will refer to an important matter of which I believe I ought to remind the house. I refer to page 22 of the first edition of the *Herald Sun* of Wednesday, 11 June 2008 and an article by John Ferguson. It states:

Ted Baillieu will promise to spend almost \$90 million on transport in the seat of Kororoit.

The state opposition leader said he would spend \$70 million to make the notorious level crossing near St Albans railway station safe.

This was in 2008. Many of us were here then, luckily. Acting Speaker, you would remember the Kororoit by-election. The current Premier turned up to the western suburbs; he found his way there — luckily there is GPS these days. He promised in 2008 that he would fix the St Albans crossing. That is what he said.

Mr Nardella — Has he done it yet?

Mr LANGUILLER — He has not done it; he has not made a commitment. He promised he would. He said he would do it; he has not done it. He turned up to the Kororoit by-election and he said, 'I'll fix St Albans'. That is misleading and deceitful, and it will eventually haunt the government. I know this is the

west and that people will say, 'Well, who cares? We can't win those seats anyway'. But let me tell the house, fixing the crossing at Brighton before the one at St Albans is insulting to everyone in the state. Fixing the Brighton crossing before many other crossings is insulting to everyone in the state.

I am cognisant of how many crossings there are in the state — about 2500 — and of the fact that you cannot do every crossing every year. I am also cognisant of the fact that there are other pressures, but it is wrong to turn up to a by-election and promise something in the full knowledge that you are not going to do it. It is wrong to come into government and do the work on the Brighton crossing before the St Albans crossing. If you listen to VicRoads and the independent authorities, if you look at how many people unfortunately and tragically have died at St Albans and at the reports from everybody — our government and previous governments — you see the reality is that it was very deceitful and misleading of the now Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, to go to the by-election and make that promise. Every citizen and constituent out there will be reminded of that — and not just those in the western suburbs. Members of the back bench know the Brighton crossing will cost them and will cost this government. I conclude by saying that this government ought to lift its game, create jobs and grow the whole state, not just certain suburbs.

Mrs POWELL (Minister for Local Government) — I am really proud to speak on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. I begin by congratulating the Victorian Treasurer on his second budget and on putting down what we all understand has been a very challenging budget in very difficult times but also what we believe is a very responsible budget. The Treasurer promised a surplus for this year's budget, and he has carried out that promise. There is a \$155 million surplus. He also said we need to retain the AAA rating, and he has also been able to do that. This was despite a number of issues that this government has been grappling with: a reduction of GST funding and no stimulus package from the commonwealth and a reduction in stamp duty.

There are people who say Labor cannot manage money. When we say that we only have to point to a number of mismanaged major projects. Some of those mismanaged major projects have left a huge legacy for the Victorian community. The new slogan for the opposition is 'Labor cares'. If Labor cared, it would not have left the legacy for the Victorian community it did. We all know about the desalination plant, which will cost the Victorian community \$2 million a day for 28 years. Imagine how many hospitals, schools and

kindergartens we could pay for if we had \$2 million a day for the next 28 years. There is also the north-south pipeline, which caused so much anger in my community and so much heartbreak, as well as myki and smart meters. They are just a few of the major projects that the former government could not manage, and we now have the legacy of those blow-outs and that mismanagement.

I happen to represent one of the most beautiful places in Victoria, I believe, which is the electorate of Shepparton.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mrs POWELL — Thank you to the member for Melton. It is known as the food bowl of Australia, and the Goulburn Valley has a lot of fruit and a lot of wonderful orchardists. The food bowl of Australia is an icon, I believe, and this government is looking after our country areas. One of the areas it is looking after is access to \$61.4 million over four years, which is an investment in the food and fibre sector. This is about supporting productivity and profitability in the agricultural sector as well as boosting biosecurity measures across the farm sector. This is to keep out diseases such as fire blight that we cannot have in Victoria because they would decimate our apple and pear industries.

As I said, this is a great budget for country Victoria. It focuses on agriculture and small business. It is helping to drive the economy, it is helping to drive productivity and it is helping to drive job creation. The \$66 million package for better water management is driving job creation and the economy. It will help minimise the impact of future droughts. We all know the impact of droughts on country areas and on our farmers. They decimate farmers' productivity and their profitability.

This funding also will improve the environmental health of Victoria's waterways. We will review the Water Act 1989 and protect Victoria's activities under the Murray-Darling Basin plan. There are also some efficiencies around the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project, which is another project that we have had to review, and Goulburn-Murray Water. When they come together, efficiencies from those two organisations will be of benefit to our farmers and to the health of our rivers. I would like to congratulate the Minister for Water and Minister for Agriculture and Food Security for the great work he is doing for our farmers and our irrigators.

Businesses will also benefit under this budget because we will be looking at reducing red tape. This is so

important to businesses. As a former businessperson myself, I understand the importance of reducing red tape and reducing costs to business. One of those measures is a reduction of 3 per cent in WorkCover premiums. This will give a huge boost to some of our businesses. It is interesting that Shepparton businesses rely very heavily on the agriculture sector, so if farmers are doing well in Shepparton and the surrounding districts, then the retailers are also doing well.

Public safety is an issue that I have been dealing with over many years. Work has now started on the new Mooroopna police station, which will be a state-of-the-art station. The funding was in the last budget, and we are now working to find out the best ways to build that police station and make sure that it is state of the art.

We have discussed police numbers in Shepparton for such a long time. Over the last 10 years I have raised in this Parliament, with different premiers and different police ministers, the need for Shepparton to have more police. The answer I got time and again was that Shepparton has appropriate police numbers. I was told by the community and the police that we were suffering because of our police numbers. I am delighted to say that there is good news in the *Shepparton News* today. It is a lengthy news report, but I will read the subheading and some of the report. The subheading is 'Shepparton police numbers have reached an unprecedented level'. Tammy Mills writes:

Crime in Shepparton is dropping as the town enters a new era of policing, Inspector Ian Bull says.

The number of officers in the city has reached an unprecedented level, with 18 arriving during the past four months, taking numbers across the service area to more than 100.

The development is part of the Victorian government's commitment to recruit an extra 1700 police by November 2014.

Inspector Bull said the region now had the highest number of officers in history.

...

Now more police are on the street patrolling in uniform and plain clothes.

A family violence unit was established in December with members dedicated to stopping repeat offenders and more proactive work, both covert and overt, is under way.

Already it has resulted in an up to 25 per cent decrease in crime rates, Inspector Bull said.

That is a fantastic outcome because what we are looking to do is to make sure that our communities feel

safe. I am proud that our government has put that funding into the Shepparton community and other communities to make sure that communities not only feel safe but are safe.

I will talk about local government, which is a portfolio I am very proud to have after being involved in local government for a very long time. One of the issues that councils, including regional councils, talk to me about is the importance of libraries. I am pleased to say that the Living Libraries infrastructure program is contributing \$17.2 million over four years. The latest round of funding, which has just closed, contributed \$3.4 million this year and funded 10 projects. We have increased the maximum grant from \$500 000 to \$750 000, which is an indication and a recognition that costs, including building costs, are increasing. Under this round of funding three libraries received the full grant of \$750 000. We have provided \$36.8 million in recurrent library funding. This includes an additional \$3.1 million in the 2012–13 and 2013–14 budgets to ensure that library funding levels are sustained while a review of Victorian library services is undertaken by a ministerial advisory council.

I would like to put on record my congratulations to my colleagues the member for Mornington, who is the chair of the ministerial advisory council (MAC) on public libraries, and the member for Macedon, a Labor member who was chair of the libraries MAC in the last government. I asked the member for Macedon to remain on the council because I know she is very interested in libraries. She was pleased to do so, and she is making a good contribution. The member for Mildura is also on there, as well as about 11 other members from libraries and councils around the area.

We have also contributed \$1 million to the Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge. This challenge has been supported by former Premiers, and our Premier has therefore said that we will now call it the premiers' — plural — reading challenge. It is recognition that all Premiers support this. It is really important that we provide funding to encourage our young people to read.

One of the biggest issues that causes loss of production in country Victoria is weeds. For many years, probably since 2004, there has been some concern over who has responsibility for weeds. Is it the adjoining landowner? Is it the state government? Is it local councils? We have had committee after committee look into this. This government has contributed \$7.8 million over three years to control pests, weeds and rabbits on local roads. That is a doubling of the amount the former government put into that initiative. We have also determined who manages roadside weeds. There has

been confusion as to who manages weeds, but this government will amend legislation to clarify that councils are responsible for controlling roadside weeds, and we will assist them to address this challenge. As I said, millions of dollars of production is lost because of weed infestation.

This government will provide \$8.3 million for the vulnerable people in emergencies program as part of its response to the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. This will fund 64 local government areas in Country Fire Authority districts. The program will mean that councils will identify vulnerable people in areas at risk of bushfires or floods so that there if there are any emergencies or natural disasters, the council will have a register and be able to very quickly identify those vulnerable people who may be housebound, who may have a disability and who may need some support. The government is funding councils so they can provide that register. Other agencies will be able to use it as well. We are also continuing support for the Murrindindi Shire Council because it was the worst hit during the Black Saturday bushfires.

In Aboriginal affairs we have provided \$21.2 million from Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, but there is much more money coming from across other government departments — from education, justice, health, early childhood development, human services — and from the Community Support Fund. There has been \$700 000 provided for registered Aboriginal parties (RAPs), increased from \$500 000. This means that RAPs across Victoria will be funded. Fifty-six per cent of Victoria is covered by RAPs. They play a very important role in making sure that Aboriginal cultural heritage is identified, maintained and protected. This is an important responsibility for our Aboriginal groups, and they take this role very seriously. RAPs have advisory and decision-making responsibilities. They provide advice on matters relating to the protection of Aboriginal culture, places and objects. They evaluate and approve or refuse cultural heritage management plans. They negotiate the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural heritage objects.

The government has provided \$800 000 to support emerging indigenous leaders. The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council will manage that funding and provide continuous leadership to our young people. This is really important because we have to identify indigenous leaders and make sure that they are mentored and supported so that they can take their place, as they should, in the broader community.

The Cummins report identified vulnerable children. Some of the most vulnerable children are Aboriginal children, who are overrepresented in the child protection system. We have provided money to make sure that our vulnerable children are protected. I know that the Minister for Community Services has taken that very seriously and is making sure that those programs are in place to protect our most vulnerable, and I am enjoying working with her as she identifies those across the state who are most at risk.

One of the things I think the Victorian government should be proudest of is the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll, which I have mentioned a number of times in this house. Funding will continue to make sure that we recognise those Aboriginal people who have done some great things for Victoria and who have made some great sacrifices and given so much to the indigenous community. Twenty people were inducted last year into the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll, which will be housed here in Parliament. We were looking for a place, and I believe we have found the most appropriate place. The names will also be on the website so that children, schools and people visiting Parliament can have a look at those people from our indigenous community who have contributed so much to Victoria. They are so proud of this roll. I know it has bipartisan support, and I thank the opposition for being part of something which we think should have been done many years ago. I know other states are looking at how we have done this, and I am happy to work with them to make sure that they can identify and value their indigenous people.

We are continuing funding for governance training and certificate IV programs to make sure that we have Aboriginal people on boards and committees, to enable them to take their place in the Victorian community and to make sure their opinions are heard.

This government has made some very hard decisions; my cabinet colleagues have made some very hard decisions, but we have still provided a responsible budget to keep Victorian sustainable. I am proud to be part of the Baillieu coalition government. I am proud to be part of a government that has made the decisions that had to be made but which has still handed down a responsible budget. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr HERBERT (Eltham) — I am pleased to get up to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. Having looked through this budget, I would have to say that it is one of the worst this state has seen under our current circumstances. We have seen some stinkers in Victoria; that is absolutely true. But we have not seen anything like this for a

decade or so. This is a budget that really does not address in any way, shape or form the need for a growing economy or the substantial problems that we are facing right now in Victoria. If we do not get over these problems pretty quickly, ordinary people living in Victoria are going to see their hopes and dreams of making better lives for themselves and their children, like anyone, basically flushed down the drain because this government will simply not address the needs of those people and this economy.

I think this has been no more clearly expressed anywhere than in the contributions on this bill by those ministers opposite. I have heard a lot of appalling speeches, but I have never heard so much spin, so much tripe, so many weasel words, contradictions and misrepresentations as I have heard from the ministers opposite in their contributions today. A couple of speakers back we heard the Attorney-General going on and on about the current state of the economy. He seemed to be in some sort of time warp going back to former Premier Jeff Kennett — the glory days according to him.

They were the glory days unless you lived in regional Victoria, glory days unless you wanted a decent state education, glory days unless you wanted public housing to live in and glory days unless you did not have a lot of money apart from what was provided by social services to support your family and get ahead. The Attorney-General seemed to go back to those days in some sort of time warp. He talked about the current parlous state of our economy and sought to rewrite history about the debacle that has happened under his government, as if it is all the fault of others. What do we always hear from this government and its ministers? Do we hear government ministers standing up and taking responsibility for their actions? No, we only hear them constantly blaming someone else, and that is what this budget is about — it is about blaming others.

I found it amazing to hear the Attorney-General going on and on about where we are now and seeking to blame the former government. I do not know what he was doing at the time, but he did not realise how strong our AAA rating was. He did not realise that under Labor our state had the biggest infrastructure spend in its history. He did not recognise or realise that Victoria was the crown in Australia's economic crest. We were the premium state in the country, and not only in this country — in a world ravaged by the global financial crisis, we weathered that storm. Government members now have the nerve to try to rewrite history. People have said the Attorney-General lives in the past, but I have

no idea how he could be so deluded that that could be his genuine belief. I cannot believe that it is anything more than spin and blame as opposed to looking at the reality of the situation. I ask the minister and the Treasurer who they will blame when the government blows our state's AAA rating. When the government blows our AAA rating because of the escalating debt in this budget, who will it blame then? Surely the government will finally stand up and take some credit for the debacle our economy is in right now.

We heard from the Minister for Education. I genuinely think he is a decent person, but he is another member of this government who has refused to take responsibility for his actions and who has sought to cloak his actions in spin and absolute distortions of reality. He talked about a 20 per cent reduction in maintenance funding under the Labor government, as if this was so dreadful. He has increased it by \$20 million. That is good. We have no problem with that. What was it that he did not say? He did not say that capital works under Labor escalated from about \$90 million under the Kennett government to around \$500 million or \$600 million. We were substantially rebuilding our schools. Maintenance was going down because we were completely rebuilding the schools that we have, and we chose to build modern teaching facilities rather than spend money on maintaining outmoded, run-down facilities. We chose bricks and mortar over paint and Spakfilla. That was the right decision. But according to this government, it is better to spend \$200 million on capital works and an extra \$20 million on maintenance for schools in this state. What a disgrace!

Most of us on this side of the chamber know of schools that were due to be rebuilt and get modern facilities, modern educational infrastructure. We have seen all of that go out the window because the process that has been undertaken by this government is not a factor of educational need but a factor of where you live. It is about whether you are on the electoral whiteboard that the government wrote up before the election and seems to still have operating out of its offices here. Where were you on the pendulum? Unless you were in a Liberal marginal seat, unless you were in a seat of The Nationals that was feeling a bit of pressure from the impact of the slash and burn of this budget, then you would get nothing in this state. It does not matter what the regions prioritised. It does not matter what the need is. If you are a school, you get nothing unless you are on the Liberal Party electoral whiteboard for capital works. It is an absolute disgrace.

Just on that point, I want to point out that one of my local schools, Montmorency Secondary College, is a prime example of this. This college has about 800 or so students. It is a thriving school. Its enrolments are going up, and it is creating fantastic education. Under a joint sector partnership we helped to build a new gymnasium for this school. Thousands of kids play basketball in that gymnasium on weekends, during the school week and after hours. It is a fantastic achievement. The truth of it is that no matter how good this school is, its basic infrastructure is outdated. It is a school that was built for the time, but now it simply does not work in terms of the configuration, the quality of the buildings and a whole range of things that it needs in order to get exceptional educational outcomes. For that reason the school was listed as no. 3 in the regional priorities for the northern region.

The northern region does not get much money under this government, that is for sure. It might get a fraction more than the western region, but it gets bugger all. You would reckon that in two budgets a school that is the third-highest priority would get something. Under the previous government Montmorency Secondary College would have had \$9 million now and it would have been completely rebuilt, but what it gets out of this government is zip, zero, zilch — nothing! It is not on the government's electoral whiteboard for capital works for schools.

It gets a little bit worse, because Montmorency Secondary College got over \$1 million of this government's extra \$20 million for maintenance. I do not get it. I do not know if anyone else does. Maybe the economic geniuses opposite can actually give me the answer, but how does it make sense to spend well over \$1 million on maintenance on a school that needs to be rebuilt? Does that not sound silly? Is that not a waste of taxpayers money? It is a school that had the third-highest regional priority, but the government does not seem to get it that there should be a process here for the expenditure of public money.

The minister promised to visit this school and look at its needs — to actually not run away from it but to hear its story. Unfortunately that has still not happened. It has not happened because basically in education we have a government that is a long way from delivering what is needed. It is high on spin, high on rhetoric and low on delivery.

This government promised that every student in the state would be learning another language. What has it got? It has a few thousand dollars worth of

demonstration projects, and language acquisition is going backwards. The government promised to provide opportunities for schools and students. What did we see? We saw funding for the Victorian certificate of applied learning slashed. We saw benefits for parents slashed. We have just seen the education maintenance allowance for schools slashed. The government has talked about giving schools empowerment, but what has it done? It has empowered schools with professional development, pulled \$8 million out of the budget, converted it into \$1 million and said, 'Hey, this is yours'. That is not empowerment; that is being ripped off.

The government has talked about student services support officers (SSSOs) and regional network leaders and attuning them to the schools, to the clusters and not to the region. What does that mean in reality? That means less staff to support schools, less collaboration between schools and less network activity — less activity where schools share budgets, where they share vocational programs and where they work as a team, as a system, to deliver education locally. It means schools have to fight each other to try to get their share of an SSSO or regional network leader if they are lucky.

I now come to an area that I am absolutely passionate about, and that is TAFE. What a disgrace this budget has been for TAFE. I do not know how government members can look at themselves in the mirror and say that what they have put in these budget papers is anywhere near the truth. We have seen a budget paper where the government has explained that training — not TAFE; the government has confused the two quite deliberately — has blown out by \$1.2 billion to \$1.3 billion. The government is cutting it back by \$100 million in this budget. I could have said to the government that if it had acted a year earlier, it would not have been in this situation, but it chose not to act. It decided to just leave it alone; it would not respond and would not intervene. It is a classic case of how this government operates on every single issue.

In the training arena there has been a budget blow-out because the government has refused to actually administer the portfolio properly. What does it say then? It says it is going to cut \$100 million. That is all very well, but what have we found since then? What have we found since that budget announcement? We have seen that the \$100 million the government is supposedly saving on training equates to a \$290 million cut to TAFE institutes — between 20 and 40 per cent of the budget of the average TAFE institute.

The government has to do this in a couple of months; 1 July is when the new funding comes in. There has been no warning and no chance for schools to readjust their programs. The government has just hit them with \$290 million in this budget and is making them try to find 20 to 40 per cent of their budget in a couple of months. It is ludicrous but it is also dangerous and in many cases desperate, particularly for regional and rural TAFEs, which simply do not have reserves to fund those sorts of cuts.

Let us be clear: how did the government do this? It magically changed how much it would pay for TAFE provision. The TAFEs went from the government having a funding rate that equated to what it should cost to run a course to what the government suddenly calls 'subsidies'. They have gone from full funding of courses based on the cost of those courses to a subsidy which is sometimes as little as 10 per cent of the cost of that training. The government thinks this is clever.

It is so clever that the Minister for Higher Education and Skills was taken to the point of resignation because of what was forced on him. Because whilst many opposite might not understand TAFE, you cannot be the minister in charge of it without knowing that if you slash \$290 million from the bottom line — which are the government's own figures; it is what the secretary of the department told TAFEs — it is going to devastate the TAFE sector in this state. It is going to scrap all community obligations; force TAFEs to withdraw from small rural communities; and make TAFEs withdraw from community services and disadvantaged groups and only chase the bucks. In the area of TAFE cuts, things are dire. We are seeing \$290 million cut and we will see well over 2000 staff slashed and jobs lost. If you have a look at Ballarat TAFE, it has had a 40 per cent cut. When we are talking about job losses we are talking about full-time jobs and we all know the TAFE sector has a large casual and sessional workforce, so when you are talking about cuts for a university like Ballarat you are talking about 50 per cent of the full-time teaching staff in that institution gone — done and dusted.

For this government to think that TAFEs can keep the provision of education going and keep providing services to small regional country towns like Horsham, Ararat, Stawell or many other places with that level of cuts is just nonsensical. To suggest, as the Premier and the minister himself have, that TAFE institutes can make up the difference in fee rises, that they can make up \$290 million in cuts through increased fees and that students going to TAFEs can afford to go from paying a few hundred dollars to paying thousands of dollars is just not believable — unless you are a wealthy person.

I dare say that there may be wealthy people going to TAFE, but the vast majority are people who simply go there to get ahead in life and to earn a few quid later in life, and they are the ones who have been disadvantaged in this budget.

It is time to finish up my contribution, but I wish that those opposite would at least be honest about what they have put in this budget, would stop the spin as they promised and would actually come out and acknowledge just how dire this budget is for Victoria and for Victorians.

Ms WREFORD (Mordialloc) — I rise in support of the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012. This is a responsible but caring budget. There is no wild spending, and it puts money where the community needs and wants it. This budget has been shaped by the Labor-induced challenges of the present but is focused on securing the future. This budget has been impacted by the dark shadows of state Labor's waste in the boom times — Labor's extravagant desalination plant, Labor's messy myki, Labor's smart meters, Labor's wild debt and borrowing, Labor's blow-out in the public sector and all the other waste Labor is famous for — and further impacted by federal Labor's sheer almighty incompetence.

The carbon tax has damaged our economy while other countries have moved well away from a carbon tax. Consumer confidence is way down thanks to those clowns in Canberra. Federal Labor's GST rip-off has taken money out of Victoria and Labor's massive debt is growing at \$135 million per day. That makes the \$200 million we are spending on the desal plant seem minor but it really is major money, and it is distressing when you think about it in those terms. As a state and a country we have been impacted also by the global slowdown created by the political left. However, in true Liberal fashion we are taking the hard steps to get Victoria back on track, and it is the responsible thing to do.

In this budget there has been a big emphasis on improving services, particularly in health, transport and education, and importantly on productivity and jobs growth. In health, for example, the budget provides an extra \$883 million for public hospitals and \$364 million for works, \$59.6 million for cancer research, \$21 million to boost organ donation rates and \$2.6 million to support Vision 2020, as well as works at some of the very important hospitals.

In transport there is \$350 million to remove level crossings and \$171.9 million for urban rail maintenance, which is good for the Frankston line.

There has been so much improvement on the Frankston line since November 2010, and there is more to come. There is also funding for some very important roads, like the Dingley bypass.

In education there is \$200 million for capital works and \$64 million for urgent upgrades. There is \$20.3 million to buy land for future schools and \$30 million for languages education and for students with disabilities.

In the productivity and jobs area, we are boosting transport infrastructure to get goods moving and making improvements to training systems. We are providing \$58 million to support local businesses and, very importantly, a 3 per cent decrease in WorkCover premiums, which will impact greatly upon business. There is \$25 million for manufacturers to invest in new technology, \$9 million for the Building Innovative Small Manufacturers program and \$50 million to help businesses tap into new export markets. Locally the flow-on effects of manufacturing are significant, because 30 per cent of the businesses in my electorate are manufacturing businesses and a strong manufacturing base generates employment and promotes the local economy. Federal Labor is doing much to kill off any manufacturing in this country due to a number of issues, but in particular through the introduction of the carbon tax as of 1 July. In this budget we are doing all we can to support manufacturing in this state.

Other great news for the Mordialloc electorate includes \$155.7 million for the Dingley bypass, which is enough to start and finish the project. The bypass will ease traffic congestion across the electorate and will carry 45 000 vehicles a day, taking cars off Centre Dandenong Road, Lower Dandenong Road, Old Dandenong Road, Warrigal Road, Springvale Road, Boundary Road, Nepean Highway, White Street and many other roads. It will be one road going all the way from Warrigal Road and South Road through to South Gippsland Highway in Dandenong. There are many businesses between Moorabbin and Dandenong, so the east–west connection that the road will provide is important to the flow of traffic.

Interestingly enough, if you look at history, you will see that Labor promised to have the project completed by 2009. Allow me to quote the former member for Carrum in November 1999, some 13 years ago — last century. She 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.

That is a complete and utter fail.

In the last election campaign I promised \$55 million towards the Dingley bypass. Embarrassed by that, Labor scraped together a dismal and desperate \$20 million promise just to plan the road by 2014. In this budget the coalition has exceeded all expectations by committing further funding to complete the whole project, and that is significant. We promise and we deliver.

The budget allocates \$2.5 million for Dingley Primary School. The school desperately needs more learning and administration spaces but was left high and dry by Labor. The allocation of \$2.5 million will make the school complete. The budget allocates \$55 000 for Kingswood Primary School. In the context of a multimillion-dollar budget this sounds small, but it funds a project that is important to the local community and means a lot to them. It will fund the building of a high, secure safety fence around the school, which will provide much comfort to parents.

Then there is \$349 million to replace with bridges the Springvale rail crossing and two other rail crossings in Melbourne. Since 1999 there has been lots of talk about this by Labor, but in 2012, with a new government, there has been action. It will make a massive difference to the northern part of my electorate, particularly around Springvale South.

The budget allocates \$15.8 million for the planning and development of the Monash Children's hospital, another project that has been talked about for many years. We are making a start, and families in my electorate will be very pleased. There is \$39.96 million for the redevelopment of the emergency department at Frankston Hospital. This is another regional project that people have heard a lot about over the years, and now it is being done. It is very much needed in that area, and many people in my electorate will utilise the improved services.

The budget contains funding for improvements to public transport, lots for education and lots for health — and much more. There is even \$336 million to fix child protection after the shameful mess Labor left it in. This is another big failure by Labor. Never again should vulnerable people be so forgotten.

The budget builds on the good work this government has done since November 2010. There have been dramatic improvements in punctuality on the Frankston line. The Mordialloc Creek dredging has started. Parkdale Secondary School has already been granted \$5.5 million. Planning for several local projects has

begun. There have been improvements in policing and safety, and this is noticeable in the community. We have delivered on many election promises.

The budget is responsible, with a view to Victoria's future. The budget recognises and confronts the incredible challenges — certainly some financial challenges — that we face. It is a sensible and fiscally responsible budget, but at the same time it is caring. This budget has been shaped by the Labor-induced challenges of the present, but it is very much focused on securing for the future. The budget has an emphasis on health, transport and education — which are vitally important to the state — as well as productivity and growth. Without productivity and growth Victoria would be in deep trouble; it is vital for the continued wellbeing of the state.

This budget contains some great news for the Mordialloc electorate and surrounds, including funding for the Dingley bypass, Dingley Primary School, Kingswood Primary School, the Springvale rail grade separation, Monash Children's hospital, Frankston Hospital, lots of services and much more. It is a very good budget. The feedback I have received from my electorate is that everybody is very happy with it. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr FOLEY (Albert Park) — Unlike the previous speaker, I rise not to praise this bill but to point to a number of significant shortcomings of the budget. The 2012–13 budget fails Victoria on a number of the most fundamental tasks which government should be about. The budgets that any government delivers should be about providing hope for a better Victoria. This budget seeks only to spread despair and provides little or no hope.

That so early in its term this government should be reduced to such steps is a reflection of why so many Victorians have turned off this government. Like a fish, this particular budget of this particular government has problems from its head. From the first minister, who sleepily gazes across the political and economic landscape of Victoria, this government is overseeing the slow death of the hopes and aspirations of those who elected it. This is not the government that Victorians were promised, and this budget confirms that. This budget takes Victoria backwards in so many ways, and for all of that the government stands condemned.

Having received the state finances in rude good health — with a strong balance sheet, a AAA credit rating and a strong pipeline of investments in critical social and economic infrastructure — in 18 short

months the government has managed to see the blot of almost 50 000 jobs disappear and an increasing decline in state revenue. That is clearly not all of the government's own doing, but in what it has discretion to do it is seeking to increase state debt and strangle worthy projects across the board, from education to transport to health, that were in the pipeline.

I will focus particularly on health and education. Let us consider, for instance, the \$300 school start bonus — abolished. Let us consider TAFE funding. My friend the shadow minister and member for Eltham has accurately said a number of times in this place that according to the Victorian TAFE Association some \$290 million-plus is to be carved out of the system over the next two years. It goes all the way through to car registration being increased by \$35 per year; speeding fines, amongst others, being increased by 20 per cent; the education maintenance allowance being rendered almost meaningless; and the first home bonus being abolished. Financial counselling, along with other projects under Consumer Affairs Victoria, for some of the most vulnerable families in the state has been abolished. All of that is accompanied by a record \$55 billion tax take in Victoria.

We all appreciate that there are constraints on how states in the federation operate in 2012. What the government at a state level does reflects the critical choices it makes. Those critical choices are based on its public policy, its values and how it approaches the difficult issues for government. Rather than taking the approach of blaming everybody but themselves, perhaps the members of this government should think very carefully about the decisions they have made and the propositions they will take forward over the next two and a half years in their management of Victoria and reconsider some of the prospects for delivering hope to the people of Victoria. If the first 18 months are any guide, one holds little hope in that regard.

So little hope does this government project for the 2012–13 financial year that it predicts no increase in employment in Victoria over that time. There is no more miserable failing of a government than for it to concede that, given the circumstances it finds itself in, over the next 12 months there will be an increase in unemployment — that is, there will be no increase in real terms in the number of jobs for Victorians.

Whilst it is disappointing in so many ways that with this budget the government takes Victorians backwards, a more precise analysis of the budget and its proposals unsurprisingly also takes the district of Albert Park and the communities of the inner south of Melbourne backwards. I will focus on a number of those areas.

Mr Delahunty interjected.

Mr FOLEY — I hear the interjection of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, who is at the table, about Lakeside Stadium, where I understand New Zealand will not be playing any state-of-origin games any time soon. This was a fine Labor project that I know the minister had great delight in opening in recent times. Despite his initial reluctance, he continues to provide opportunities for events from Little Athletics right through to the Australian Olympic Games qualifying competitions to take place at that great project that I know the minister had terrific fun in opening. It was very gracious of him to invite me along to the opening.

Returning to the district of Albert Park, besides the opening of the Lakeside Stadium, which is now run by the department of the minister at the table, let us look at how the cuts to education in particular have impacted on the district of Albert Park and in the inner south more broadly. A recently tabled report of the City of Port Phillip shows that year after year over the past three years we have seen a net increase of 7 per cent in primary student numbers in the public schools of the City of Port Phillip. Over that same time at the secondary school level, mostly as a result of the substantial investment by the former Labor government in the state-of-the-art Albert Park College, we have seen the numbers of students more than double. That is an indication that when you invest and provide an education system that reflects the community's values of excellence and achievement, the community will support it.

We have seen Port Melbourne Primary School in particular grow. We have seen Albert Park primary, Middle Park primary, St Kilda Park primary, St Kilda primary and Elwood primary all grow substantially as they have built confidence in their communities. Now we are facing a looming crisis in inner south education as a result of the two-year holiday during which we did not see one new dollar of capital investment put into any of those schools. Whilst those opposite might crow about their investment in the targeted marginal seats that they hold, that is cold comfort for the people of the district of Albert Park, who have seen the confidence they placed in public education so cruelly dashed by this government.

This is not an issue for just the people of the Albert Park district. Recently I had the privilege of representing the federal member for Melbourne Ports at South Yarra Primary School in the district of Prahran. The principal indicated to me that his only method of managing the strength of his enrolments was to

continue to shrink his boundary, thereby excluding children from access to his public school. Despite the fact that in recent times he had the opportunity of raising these concerns directly with the Minister for Education, he had had no result.

The position has been reached where in the district of Albert Park the Southbank and St Kilda Road communities are on the verge of being told by the people at the local primary school that they are zoned to, Port Melbourne primary, that the prospects of sending their children to any local government primary school are reducing, as they look to review their boundary. This might seem a hollow threat except for the fact that, as we speak the \$25 million Albert Park College that opened last year — again the Minister for Education opened a fine Labor investment — has gone from taking 5 per cent of the number of children available in its catchment to taking more than 70 per cent of those children in two short years. This is a fantastic achievement by this school. However, in order to meet that growth it has reviewed its boundaries, and as of 2013 it has cut out all of the areas of Southbank, St Kilda Road and South Yarra Primary School. At last count some 30 families will be unable to send their children to the local government school of their choice because of the failure to match investment with the growth that has been necessary in that area.

As if that were not a problem on its own, the other local college in the area is Elwood College. It was sad to see that one of the first things this government did was to have the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development take off the table the well-advanced plans that the former Labor government went to the 2010 election with. Labor committed to funding that college to be both rebuilt and expanded to meet other needs in the inner south. What did the government do in this regard? It promised a \$200 000 feasibility study to keep the member in the marginal seat of Prahran happy and to enable him to go out and say what a great thing it is that he will get a \$200 000 report to add to the other three reports that tell us what we already know: that the inner south needs at least two more schools to be delivered for its communities. These are two more schools that the former government had scheduled and had committed to funding but which, after a two-year holiday, this government continues to abandon.

The abandonment of the inner south and the district of Albert Park more generally does not stop with education. I draw attention to an item that I understand, from perusing by Dr Google, is of some interest to the member for Mornington. This is the plan by Parks Victoria to expand a marina. The good people of Mornington face a similar issue to that faced by the

good people of St Kilda in relation to the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron. In 2009–10 the former government, through Parks Victoria, conducted a series of consultations which had widespread support from the community. There were over 130 applications and submissions from the community supporting a project in relation to the St Kilda pier, which was in a state of disrepair. A report currently before the City of Port Phillip indicates that the pier is not expected to last much beyond 2016. There was a proposal to rebuild that pier and incorporate within it a series of wave attenuators that would see the large southerly swells busted up and slowed down so as to enable the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to build an expanded marina on the northern side of St Kilda pier. It was a fine proposal that would have been a win for the public and have benefited the broader community. It would also have been a win for the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron in meeting the substantial number of commitments it had on its books in relation to expanding its private marina.

It was with great disappointment that we learnt — not by any public announcement but by stealth, through an application from the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to the City of Port Phillip — that Parks Victoria had indicated it was no longer in a position to support this project, thereby forcing the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to apply on its own to the City of Port Phillip to build a southern wave attenuator on the site. This is essentially a 100-metre long, 30-metre wide extension of the breakwater which, besides breaking up the unbroken view to the south of St Kilda pier — visited by over 1 million tourists and locals every year, making it the most visited pier on Port Phillip Bay — would allow the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to substantially expand its private marina.

The problem there of course is that having abandoned the public infrastructure, the government had announced that it was not in a position to support this project. It committed it to the City of Port Phillip. It was with great surprise, then, that we learnt from the member for Caulfield's media statement welcoming the budget that there was money, part of a \$21 million fund supported by the Minister for Ports, to support this private project. To see the anomaly between the member for Caulfield's apparent commitment to fund a no doubt worthy but private benefit project as opposed to a project for the public good — a rebuilt pier — reinforces the point I made earlier. It shows the disconnect between the values of this government and the values of the people of Victoria and why, with a bit of luck, the people of Victoria will bring this government to an end in 2014.

Mr DELAHUNTY (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2012/2013) Bill 2012, commonly known as the budget. I will be doing this from three angles. The first is obviously my electorate of Lowan, and the other two are my portfolios of sport and recreation, and veterans' affairs. The 2012–13 budget has been shaped by the economic challenges we face at present. It focuses on securing a future for Victoria. Our challenges are real and substantial. These forces are placing real pressure on Victorian businesses and families and on the government's capacity to meet community needs.

This budget sets out a clear plan to meet these challenges and position Victoria to take full advantage of current and future opportunities as they arise. It is about driving economic activity and importantly driving productivity and jobs. It is about rebuilding the state's finances and investing in state infrastructure, enhancing front-line services, taking new measures to protect the most vulnerable Victorians and meeting community needs in health, education and community safety. This is a responsible and necessary approach to the 2012 budget.

I have got to say that Labor's mismanagement left Victoria with a \$2 billion black hole. Because of Labor's mismanagement many Victorian major projects are subject to serious and ongoing cost blow-outs. We have heard about myki, we know about the Melbourne Markets redevelopment — about \$100 million has got to be found there — and we know about HealthSMART and regional rail. Contracts that were signed under Labor condemned taxpayers to many years of financial pain, and I note that the former minister for finance, the member for Lyndhurst, is at the table. He signed up to a desalination plant which will cost Victorians nearly \$2 million a day for the next 27 or 28 years. As we all know, Labor cannot manage money. We just heard the member for Albert Park talk about the Lakeside Stadium.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Springvale Rise Primary School: funding

Mr HOLDING (Lyndhurst) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that he urgently intervene to reinstate works

previously under way at the Springvale Heights campus of Springvale Rise Primary School in Springvale. These works, like those that were previously under way in similar situations at other schools in my electorate, such as Chandler Park Primary School, Wallarano Primary School and Noble Park Primary School, appear to have been suspended while further sources of funding are identified to enable them to be completed.

I will summarise the situation at the Springvale Heights campus of Springvale Rise Primary School. I recently visited the school at the request of the school council. There were contractors on site during my visit who were completing various earthworks, concreting and other landscaping activities connected to the development of basketball facilities at the school. The school had literally just been advised by the department that the works were to cease and that the contractor was to immediately rehabilitate the site and conclude the project forthwith. The school had previously received two alternative plans for the basketball works from S. J. Higgins Pty Ltd. These options were provided to the school as recently as 15 March.

On 8 May, which was the same day I visited the school, I wrote to the department to express my grave misgivings about what had occurred and to seek the urgent intervention of senior departmental officers to attempt to address the situation. I also placed a call to speak with the relevant departmental officer. I was advised that the matter had been directed to the minister's office. I have written to the minister seeking his intervention. I take the unusual step of raising this matter in this forum as the redirection of the matter to the minister's office appears to have slowed the matter down rather than assisting the school by providing a speedy escalation. The department now appears to be unwilling to engage with this matter while the matter sits with the minister's office.

The bottom line is that the works have stopped literally mid-project and the contractors have abandoned the site at the direction of the department. The school has no indication of the status of the broader stage 2 works. Sections of the school have contractor's tape around them from where previous portables were removed. There are no funds to rehabilitate the occupational health and safety danger that this presents. The school has had to use its own resources to construct a toilet block so that the students have access to safe and hygienic toilet facilities.

These developments, occurring as they have with the issues that have occurred at Noble Park Primary School, Chandler Park Primary School and Wallarano Primary School, lead me to conclude that coalition

election commitments have leapfrogged existing projects and commitments that were already under way and, in some cases, very well advanced when the change of government occurred. I urgently seek the minister's intervention to make sure this project can be completed.

South Barwon electorate: elite athlete funding

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this evening to raise a matter for the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and it is good to see him in the house. The action I seek is for the minister to consider funding elite athletes in my electorate of South Barwon under the Elite Athlete Travel grant program. This program is important in assisting elite Victorian athletes to travel to compete at national championships or international events. The Elite Athlete Travel grant program is open to applicants who are elite athletes as defined in the guidelines, residents of Victoria, members of a state sporting association and travelling to compete at a national championship or international event.

As part of the coalition government's 2010 election commitment, 349 Victorian athletes will share in the first round of the Victorian government's new \$2 million Elite Athlete Travel grant program. This first round of funding, worth over half a million dollars, will support elite Victorian athletes to compete at the highest level. These athletes are committed and disciplined individuals who may face a number of challenges throughout their sporting careers. These elite athletes may also have had to compromise their financial earnings whilst they dedicated time to train and strived to qualify in elite fields. This may especially be the case when travelling to qualify for big events in Australia or around the world.

Elite athletes make incredible sacrifices in the pursuit of excellence to represent their state or the country in their chosen field of sport. Their determination and sacrifice are rewarded by the support of their family, team members, friends and communities who get behind them and cheer them on to achieve their goals. This funding will provide a much-needed leg-up to our champions by helping out with the cost of getting to elite sporting events. These grants, which are up to \$2000, will support our top athletes on their journey towards success. In many cases their costs are valued in the thousands of dollars.

The assistance provided by programs such as the Elite Athlete Travel grant program can make a difference for athletes achieving their dreams and competing on national and international platforms. In order to qualify for the program and be grant recipients, athletes must

be recognised by their state sporting associations as representatives of Victoria or Australia and be eligible to compete at the highest national or international level. There are athletes in my electorate of South Barwon who have applied to receive funding under the latest round of the Elite Athlete Travel grant program. I ask the minister to give due consideration to those athletes who have applied for funding

Public transport: city of Moreland zoning

Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. Today I presented a petition containing 867 signatures. The action the petitioners and I seek is for public transport zone boundaries to be reviewed to include all of Moreland in zone 1.

I have raised this matter in the Parliament before, and there are many reasons it could be appropriate for the Craigieburn train line's zone 1 boundary to include all of Moreland, up to and including Coolaroo station. There is a recently built car park at the station which has 450 spaces and which cost \$36 million and is half empty on weekdays, whilst the car parks at Glenroy station and Fawkner station reach capacity before 8.00 a.m. on most weekdays. A recent survey conducted at Glenroy station showed that 52 per cent of those who drove to the station came from outside the city of Moreland. Moving the boundary would reduce congestion at Glenroy, enabling it to reach its potential as a major activity centre. Moving the boundary would also reduce unnecessary travel, which clogs up our arterials and negatively affects freight.

One of the many compelling reasons for all of Moreland to be included in zone 1 is that residents in northern Glenroy and Fawkner require it urgently. Both areas score low on the socioeconomic index for areas, have correspondingly low levels of car ownership and are particularly reliant on the bus network.

Some years ago changes were made to the zone boundaries of routes 527 and 534 and part of 542, which put them in the zone overlap area. This has improved patronage significantly, because people no longer have to pay an extra \$20 per week if they want to catch the bus to the zone 1 train station instead of driving. However, the changes did not go far enough. Two and a half bus routes were left out: 530/531, 536 and the other half of route 542 to west Glenroy. This means some people get off at Glenroy or Fawkner station and can jump on a bus and continue homewards using their zone 1 ticket if they catch the 534 or 527, but those who get off at Glenroy or Fawkner and need to catch the 530/531, the 536 or the 542 need to buy a

zone 2 ticket to get to their homes in the same suburb. Of course they drive instead — they do not walk — and therefore they are clogging up our car parks unnecessarily.

Including these three small bus routes in the zone overlap area would greatly improve social equity for these residents. It would also considerably reduce parking demand and congestion at both Fawkner and Glenroy. Most importantly it would improve patronage levels — levels which could increase on the current bus routes, which have the capacity to carry many more passengers.

Finally, a single zone 1 in Moreland would improve consistency in the zone overlay area across Melbourne — for example, route 490, which services Gowanbrae, directly borders west Glenroy — —

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

Forest Hill electorate: ministerial visit

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — I raise a matter of importance for the attention of the Minister for Community Services. The action I seek is for the minister to come to the electorate of Forest Hill to visit and meet with some of the organisations providing valuable community and welfare services to the residents of Forest Hill.

There are a wide range of organisations providing such services to local residents in the electorate of Forest Hill. Some of these organisations have employees, but in virtually all cases the service provision is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers. The work being done is to be greatly commended and encouraged as those involved continue to respond to the needs of residents approaching their organisations for assistance. One such organisation is the UnitingCare East Burwood Centre. This organisation has been providing valuable services to the local community since 1973. The work done by the board, staff and volunteers covers a wide range of community needs. I have had the great pleasure of visiting this organisation several times and seeing firsthand the good work being undertaken.

The demand on local welfare agencies continues to grow. The lack of leadership at the federal level together with the economic uncertainty surrounding the potential impacts of the forthcoming carbon tax are exacerbating the financial challenges being faced by many local residents and businesses. The initiatives announced by the minister as part of the recent 2012–13

state budget are to be applauded — for example, the record investment being made by the coalition government in relation to concessions to help ease the cost of living pressures. These concessions assist eligible householders with a range of household expenses, including electricity, water and sewerage expenses, and with municipal rates and charges. Funding for concessions has increased to \$647.1 million in the 2012–13 financial year. This is in stark contrast to the \$493.2 million funded by Labor in its last budget.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with the Minister for Community Services. I look forward to the minister's visit and the chance for her to meet with some of the members of the local organisations providing assistance to eastern suburbs residents and to discuss matters of importance to these organisations.

Rail: Eltham services

Mr HERBERT (Eltham) — My request is directed to the Minister for Public Transport. The action I request is that the minister finally clarify that the extra services Eltham will receive from the \$62 million stabling project will be peak services and will operate in the right direction.

This has been an 18-month-long saga — 18 months of inaction, 18 months of simply putting off the delivery of essential services. The previous Labor government recognised that getting extra peak services on the Hurstbridge line required extra stabling facilities and extra communication services along the line. You simply could not get any extra peak services unless you put in that infrastructure. We worked with the community, we got an outcome and we made commitments to that community as part of that project.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HERBERT — Work started in 2010 — yes, in late 2010. But unfortunately there came an election, and under this government everything came to a grinding, absolute halt. Work on it stopped. There were supposedly studies. We saw spurious pamphlets issued by members in the upper house in which they claimed a whole heap of work had been undertaken only to have to deny it locally and say that in fact maybe the words should not be taken literally, because nothing had happened. Eventually, after many requests from the public and from me in this chamber, the government decided that Labor was right and that we needed the Eltham stabling and the communication upgrade. Just recently a contract has been let for that \$62 million project.

In response to me the minister wrote and said that yes, there would be extra services as part of the project. The whole point, however, is to get peak services. What was promised to the community by Labor in relation to this project was two extra peak services in the morning going in the direction of the city and two extra peak services in the afternoon running towards Eltham. It was a clear commitment. It was the whole purpose of the project. Unfortunately, however, all we have seen since then is spin — basically words — really meaningless promises.

All I am asking from the minister is for him to do what he said he would do and be straight about this. Are there going to be extra peak services in the right direction to and from Eltham as part of this project or are there not going to be? Will they start at the end of this year or the start of next year, or will they not? These are the simple questions on this project that all people want answered. For the life of me I cannot understand why the minister will not be straightforward.

Kangaroo Hoppet: funding

Dr SYKES (Benalla) — My issue is for the attention of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The request I have of her is to confirm the coalition government's continuing support for events in our alpine resorts — in particular the Kangaroo Hoppet conducted at the Falls Creek resort each year in August. For those of you who may not be familiar with the Kangaroo Hoppet, it is conducted annually. It has three races: the major event, a 42-kilometre event; the 21-kilometre Birkebeiner event; and the 7-kilometre joey event.

I was introduced to the Hoppet day via former member for Benambra Tony Plowman, who was a regular competitor in the event. I followed his lead, albeit not completely in that I compete in the joey, the wuss's version. Having said that, I can also say that others who have competed admirably in the wuss's version include the member for Lyndhurst, who is at the table this evening. I should say that I actually go around the joey course twice to get my money's worth, but as the member for Lyndhurst wisely said on one occasion, the difference between going around once and going around twice is that the first time around is enjoyable and the second time around is agonial. That is the one time I have agreed with the member for Lyndhurst in many, many years.

Mr Holding interjected.

Dr SYKES — You did say that. That was before he got lost. The Hoppet involves over 1200 competitors, both local and from north-eastern Victoria in general. It involves families, but it also involves national and international competitors.

In our area in north-eastern Victoria we have a very strong commitment to snow sports. Our schools, particularly at Falls Creek and Mansfield, have high-achieving athletes who achieve regular success in the Victorian Interschools SnowSports Championships. We have also produced international champions, such as Britteny Cox from Mount Beauty and, in the snowboarding arena, Alex ‘Chumpy’ Pullin from Mansfield. My electorate is fortunate to have the four major ski resorts in Victoria — that is, Falls Creek, Mount Hotham, Mount Buller and Mount Sterling — and also Lake Mountain, which I lease out to the member for Seymour! These alpine resorts are very important to our local economies. It is therefore critical that the coalition continue to support our ski resorts. The resorts are critical to the success of our regional economies. I note that already the coalition government has indicated that these ski resorts are eligible for funding from the Regional Growth Fund. I ask the minister to reaffirm her commitment to the Kangaroo Hoppet.

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

Essendon Keilor College: funding

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that the minister provide the urgent funding needed to bring the facilities at Essendon Keilor College up to the standard required to deliver the excellent programs on offer at the school. During the 2010 state election campaign Labor pledged \$10 million towards the redevelopment of the school. Regrettably, following the election the Baillieu government refused to honour Labor’s commitment. The school was again neglected in the recent 2012–13 state budget. This is despite the Minister for Education stating last year:

... the conditions out at that school are disgusting, they are not safe for teachers, they are not good for those students.

Last year over 1600 people signed a petition which acknowledged that the poor condition of the current Essendon Keilor College facilities and the state of disrepair of a number of buildings are adversely affecting the education and learning experience of students attending the college.

I recently visited the school and got to see firsthand not only the school’s need for funding but its commitment to learning. Essendon Keilor College is a fantastic school which plays a leading role in a number of education initiatives and is recognised as a leader in innovative practices. I urge the Minister for Education to match the commitment to learning displayed by the college through providing adequate funding to create a school environment that sends students the message that their school matters, their education matters and their future matters.

Montrose Soccer Club: funding

Mr HODGETT (Kilsyth) — I rise today to call on the Minister for Sport and Recreation to make a funding commitment from the Strengthening the World Game grants scheme for improvements at the Keith Hume Fraser Reserve in Montrose. The Montrose Soccer Club has applied for funding under this scheme to upgrade its facilities. The project would include the construction of additional change rooms for females and referees and the redevelopment of the two soccer pitches through the installation of drainage, irrigation and warm-season grass.

I have had a close relationship with Montrose Soccer Club over many years and cannot speak highly enough of its commitment to growing the game at a grassroots level. Last year I attended the small-sided football gala day held at the Keith Hume Fraser Reserve, and I am always encouraged to see so many young kids enjoying the game. In a recent update from the club I was informed as follows:

Our numbers continue to grow with over 250 registered playing members across the juniors and seniors. We now have 10 junior teams including our first all-girl team of which we are very proud. Our ladies team won only their fourth game in four years on Sunday, which is terrific, but making that win even more special they beat the reigning premiers that hadn’t lost a game in the last two years. The senior men’s team are finding the Bayside premier league a challenge, but the team structure and discipline is evident and they are a young team so it won’t be long before we start to see some victories come our way.

Soccer remains on the rise in Victoria as people of all ages take up the game. My electorate is no exception, and numerous local clubs continue to thrive. The Montrose club in particular has done a lot of work in planning for the future with its Towards 2015 project. This demonstrates the commitment of locals to soccer and to making their clubs financially viable while ensuring that the best possible facilities are available for the players. One benefit of projects such as this is that the rewards are shared among the whole community. Local schools, residents and other community groups

are able to utilise the magnificent pitches and clubroom facilities.

I applaud and commend the Montrose Soccer Club, particularly Keith Pentland and also Ben Clark of the Montrose Junior Soccer Club, for their hard work and persistence in relation to the club's Towards 2015 project. This project is a real opportunity to help to continue to grow soccer in my electorate and to support a valuable local club. The Baillieu government has demonstrated its continued support for improving soccer facilities across Victoria with the \$1.45 million in funding that was announced in the 2012–13 state budget. This funding will result in many fantastic facilities for clubs right around Victoria, and I rise today to call on the Minister for Sport and Recreation to ensure that Montrose Soccer Club at Keith Hume Fraser Reserve is one of them.

Gordon Institute of TAFE: funding

Mr TREZISE (Geelong) — I raise an issue for urgent action with the Minister for Higher Education and Skills. I plead with him on behalf of the community of Geelong to reinstate the \$14.5 million this state government has slashed from the budget of Geelong's Gordon Institute of TAFE, known as the Gordon. This \$14.5 million equates to approximately 20 per cent of the Gordon's budget. In human terms it will mean that vital teaching and administration staff will be sacked and courses will be drastically reduced; thus training opportunities for those who need them will be lost.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the Gordon TAFE, and I do not think there has been a more important time than right now for the Gordon in Geelong. At a time when only yesterday we saw 113 workers axed from Avalon, at a time when Alcoa is reviewing 660 jobs at Point Henry and at a time when the government itself has announced it is slashing the jobs of 4200 of its own employees, including no doubt many from Geelong, this government's response is to decimate the funding of the very institution that would have played a pivotal role in retraining many of these people, the Gordon TAFE. It is tragically ironic that the very people who would have delivered much of that training, the teaching staff at the Gordon, thanks to this government are in the gun for redundancy themselves.

Geelong is blessed to have many outstanding educational institutions, including of course Deakin University, but not every student aspires to go or has a realistic opportunity of going to Deakin. Many students, for whatever reason — and many kids from a working-class background — rely on the Gordon for further education and choose courses which are

practical in nature and which will provide them with a direct link to a job, like courses in the retail sector, courses in hospitality and courses in community work. It is these courses that will be directly affected by this disgracefully short-sighted funding cut. It will be the very kids who cannot afford to miss out on some form of vocational training who will suffer under these cuts.

What is also disappointing to many people in Geelong is the fact that the minister and many of the Geelong-based government members, like the member for South Barwon, have not bothered even to defend their actions, let alone to stand up in this place or in public to defend the Gordon TAFE. But next week, on Thursday, 31 May, at 12.15 p.m. at Johnstone Park the Gordon staff are having a public meeting to voice their concerns, and this is a chance for the member for South Barwon and the minister to stand up and justify their decision to these students and these teachers. I will not be holding my breath for that to happen, though, because they are Liberals first and Victorians second, and unfortunately for the Gordon teachers they come a distant last.

Disability services: Seymour electorate

Ms McLEISH (Seymour) — I rise this evening to call on the Minister for Community Services or her parliamentary secretary on her behalf to visit my electorate to join me in meeting with disability service providers and/or those involved in the sector so that they can hear firsthand about and appreciate disability services issues in rural areas.

I have been extremely pleased to date to know that a key priority for the Baillieu government is to ensure that Victorians with a disability get the care and support they need, no matter where they live in the state. This was evidenced by the investment of an additional \$93 million in last year's state budget for disability services across Victoria. That was great news, and I was pleased to be able to convey it to many people involved in the sector in my electorate.

I have also been very encouraged by our position with regard to the national disability insurance scheme. Nevertheless, I think a meeting with the different providers and interested parties is important to ensure that the needs of those living with a disability in regional areas are understood and met. Those in the regions are faced with a number of challenges that are not always faced by those in metropolitan areas. It is not always easy for them to access the services they need. Often they need to travel, and that brings its own set of challenges, because transport services are minimal and often the distances they are required to go

are great. It is also very important to look beyond the person with the disability and the services they receive to the families and the services that need to be provided to support them.

When we are thinking about disability services we need to keep in mind that not everybody is born with a disability. Some are struck with an illness or a disease later in life. There are certainly examples of older people in my electorate who at the age of 60 or so have been quite unexpectedly looking after a spouse who has had a stroke. There are quite a number of people who struggle to navigate the system, which is unfamiliar to them at that age.

To date I have met with many people involved in the sector — whether as providers, parents, family members, teachers or friends — and I have very much been inspired by their dedication. I know that in the shire of Murrindindi there are some 250 people with a disability, and the number in the Mitchell shire is greater than that. They receive a range of services; however, I am aware that some people cannot easily find what they want or have to wait for services.

I have mentioned before in the house that there are many dedicated people, organisations, staff, volunteers and groups involved in this area. These include Goulburn Options, Mitchell Community Health Services and the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre, to name a few. Individuals like Mark Lewis and Judy Flarherty are also inspirational. For the reasons I have mentioned and many others it would be worthwhile for them to join with me —

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

Responses

Ms ASHER (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — The member for Benalla in his characteristic style has advocated for funding for the Kangaroo Hoppet, a series of three events held in his electorate. They are going to be held on 25 August this year —

Mr Holding interjected.

Ms ASHER — I am more than happy to respond to the interjection, whilst I appreciate that it is disorderly. If the member for Lyndhurst knew me well, he would not have asked that question, because I do not have the member for Benalla's physical prowess that would enable me to compete in such an event.

The member for Benalla raised the issue of funding for the Kangaroo Hoppet with me last year, and funding of

course was provided. Indeed the member has been an ongoing advocate for funding for this event and is obviously a very forceful advocate for ski resorts and the important role they play in Victorian tourism.

I am pleased to confirm for the member that the coalition government has allocated \$10 000 from Tourism Victoria's country events program to assist with the costs of marketing the 2012 event. As the only Southern Hemisphere event in the 15-nation Worldloppet cross-country ski series, this event is a very important branding opportunity for regional Victoria overall and it is very important to profile Victoria as a premier alpine destination for Australia. It is also important to secure from this event an economic benefit for the member's electorate. There are a range of sporting and social events held at Falls Creek in the days prior to the event. That helps increase the length of stay and expenditure of visitors to the region, which of course is why the taxpayer funds these sorts of events.

Last year's event had over 1000 competitors, including visitors from Europe and North America, attending. As the member would realise, the funding will be used to help market the event through radio advertising, coverage on the Suzuki Snowsports series on free-to-air television and website development to attract more national and international competitors and spectators to the region. I congratulate the member on his advocacy, and I am delighted to confirm that funding for him.

Mr DELAHUNTY (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — Firstly, I rise to speak to the matter raised by the member for South Barwon in relation to support for our high-level athletes here in Victoria. As I have stated in this house previously, I recently approved the first round of grants under the coalition's Elite Athlete Travel grant program. I commend the member for South Barwon because he has been active in this chamber in supporting his community and he has given a great summary of this important program to support our high-level athletes in Victoria.

I have always said that I want to make sure that we see Victorian athletes achieve their potential, and the Premier has also strongly supported this program. This announcement I made about a week or so ago will provide funding assistance totalling just under \$500 000 for 349 Victorian athletes. It has been provided to enable a range of high-level athletes to reach their potential by making it easier for them to travel to national and international competitions or training venues. I am pleased to inform the member for South Barwon that over \$12 000 has been provided from the program to enable eight athletes from his electorate for travel. The list includes Emily Bews, who will receive

\$1400 to compete in this year's surf lifesaving Australian titles. As we know, the Surf Coast shire has a lot of athletes doing surf lifesaving, so Emily will get some support. Other athletes who will get support are Miss Jakara Anthony, who will receive \$1720 to compete in the National Mogul Championships in Perisher this winter — we wish her all the best — and also Cahill Bell-Warren, who will receive \$2000 to travel to compete in the surfing world tour events in Europe.

There is no doubt that these grants will help remove some of the obstacles facing our high-level athletes and make it easier for them to focus on representing and promoting Victoria and Australia. Importantly, our athletes deserve this support so they can aspire to and achieve their potential here in Victoria, across Australia and hopefully across the world. Well done, and I congratulate the member for South Barwon on his advocacy for athletes in his electorate.

The next issue I would like to respond to is the member for Kilsyth's matter of funding for soccer facilities in his electorate. I have to say the member for Kilsyth is also a most active member, not only in his electorate but in this chamber; he obviously talks to ministers all the time. He is also active as cabinet secretary, so we need to keep sweet with him in relation to that. In his adjournment matter tonight he spoke about the support for soccer facilities in his electorate, particularly the Montrose Soccer Club and its Towards 2015 program, which involves the schools. He gave a good summary of the demands on this important soccer club.

Deputy Speaker, as you know and as we have spoken about before in this chamber, soccer is on the rise in Victoria, with more and more people of all ages getting involved with their local soccer clubs.

Mr Trezise interjected.

Mr DELAHUNTY — In fact they are being more active more often. The coalition government is committed to building a vibrant soccer community across the state for the long term. So I am pleased to inform the member for Kilsyth that I have recently approved 10 applications for funding under the latest round of the Strengthening the World Game program, one of which features in his electorate. Yarra Ranges Shire Council will receive \$100 000 in funding under the Strengthening the World Game program to construct additional change rooms for females and referees and redevelop two soccer pitches by installing drainage, irrigation and warm season grass at the Keith Hume Fraser Reserve in Montrose.

The member spoke about the fact that we have attended this important reserve, and a great deal of work has been done out there. It is important to get out there and visit this important group that has done a lot of work for the soccer players in that community. The coalition government understands the importance of this program to grassroots soccer across Victoria. That is why I was pleased to announce that the program will be extended for a further year, with \$1.45 million committed in the recent budget. I look forward to supporting local groups who enjoy soccer in their communities, and I want to encourage more and more people to take up the world game. Again, congratulations to the member for Kilsyth on his advocacy on behalf of his community.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Mental Health) — I am pleased to speak in the adjournment debate tonight. Firstly, the member for Forest Hill raised with me the opportunity to come out to his electorate and meet with groups, including UnitingCare in East Burwood, who work with people who need a range of care and support. The member for Forest Hill has been a long-time advocate for vulnerable members of his community. I would be very pleased to join him and discuss with them some of the challenges they are currently facing and the important work they are doing on behalf of and with the community. I would also like to have discussions about where things are heading in the future.

The member mentioned that many who perform these important roles in the community are volunteers. That is very relevant given that last week was National Volunteer Week, which recognises the important work volunteers do in our communities in relation to people who need care and support in a variety of ways. I want to congratulate the member on his long-time active involvement in the non-profit sector and his care and advocacy in relation to both the agencies and, importantly, the people for whom they work in his electorate. I would be very pleased to have the opportunity to come out, meet with the agencies he selects and talk about the challenges they face.

In relation to the matter raised by the member for Seymour, particularly about disability organisations in her electorate, I would be very happy for either the Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services, a member for Southern Metropolitan Region in the other place, Andrea Coote, or me to come out and have those important discussions. It is an important time for disability agencies as they face continuing demand, often increased complexity and uncertainty around what is going to happen in the future. At the same time the national disability insurance scheme is in

negotiation with the federal government. We, too, have some uncertainty, as we have not yet had clarity from the federal government about what the launch sites will look like and where to from here. But the state government remains very committed to the need for significant reform in the disability sector and to provide care and support for those who need it.

The member for Seymour has been an active advocate for people with disability in her electorate and has been engaged in many different activities. A little while ago she attended the launch of *Is This House My Home?*, a short film acted by people with a disability who live in community residential units. She provided me with a copy of the DVD, which I watched with interest. She continues to advocate on behalf of people with disability and the agencies who support them in her electorate. It would be valuable to have those discussions so that we can continue to make sure that the state government support and commitment to people with disabilities, which is very strong, continues to be communicated and that we continue to hear from the grassroots and the front line of the needs and supports that can be provided. I am very happy to follow up with the member for Seymour directly in relation to that matter.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Education) — The member for Lyndhurst raised with me an issue regarding the Springvale Heights campus of Springvale Rise Primary School and some building works there. My understanding from the information — —

Mr Holding interjected.

Mr DIXON — Yes, the basketball courts, which were part of a master plan for the site. The first stage, I understand, is a Building the Education Revolution project, which is being completed, and then there is a second stage of works, which is part of a master plan. I will go into this in more detail tomorrow when I ask the department to follow it up, but my understanding is that those works were not funded — there was no money allocated. I presume the school was expecting money to flow on, but there was never any money allocated for the basketball courts.

In terms of the remediation that was happening, I think the only reason that might have been needed is that the builder thought there was money or the school was under the understanding that money was to be forthcoming, so they started to do some of the early earthworks to prepare for the basketball courts, and when the funding was not there for the basketball courts — it was never meant to be there — they had to remediate the site. I presume that may be the context

for that, but as I have said I will clear that up and see why this has happened and the reasons behind it. Of course the basketball courts could have been funded if we had the money. As has been pointed out in many of the budget responses today and previously, we have not been left with a lot of money. The desalination plant costs \$1.8 million a day, which probably could have done the basketball courts for the school.

It has also been mentioned that perhaps our commitments are more important than the opposition's commitments. However, I must point out that in this year's budget \$91 million worth of capital projects were announced in opposition electorates compared to \$79 million for government electorates, so you can hardly say that is us prioritising government projects over opposition projects. However, I will talk to the department about that and — —

Mr Herbert — You are virtually making a list in terms of electorates.

Mr DIXON — The opposition does it all the time. I will investigate the matter more fully tomorrow when I have the resources of the department behind me.

The member for Niddrie raised with me the issue of Essendon Keilor College. Unfortunately the new member for Niddrie was left holding the baby. He may not be aware, but his predecessor was in government for 11 years, and as a senior minister and Deputy Premier he failed to do anything in the boom times. There was lots of money around and lots of opportunities for the previous member for Niddrie to do something about that school. The former member for Niddrie seemed to think that it all fell apart after November 2010, but obviously the size and the range of maintenance issues in that school are quite horrendous, and they have been there for a long while. They have developed over many years.

Since we came into government we have spent a lot of money on urgent maintenance that needed to be done. A good example of the maintenance that needed to be done was a door that fell off a frame — the former member for Niddrie actually brought the door into this place for a stunt. That just shows you how bad things were there. The new member for Niddrie has been left holding the baby.

We obviously are not in a position to fund all the hundreds of millions of dollars — in fact billions of dollars — of capital projects that we have been left with. Many schools were led to believe that because they had gone through a planning process they were going to receive funding at the end. In fact many

schools were actually promised that, and they have not received funding. We have inherited over 200 schools which are basically shovel ready, or at least master planned, and which were under the false expectation that they were going to be upgraded.

As I mentioned in my budget contribution today, the Victorian schools plan has turned out to be a farce. Some schools received a lick of paint in 2004, and according to the previous government they had been upgraded. We have a range of issues out there. There are billions of dollars of problems — a conservative estimate of at least \$300 million in maintenance backlog — and we are putting extra money in for maintenance in the meantime. We have to provide a safe environment for kids and also for their teachers, so the extra maintenance money will be part of that. We put extra money in this year as well because we understand that there will be some high priorities thrown up by the maintenance audit when it is soon completed.

In terms of the project the member raised, I know the school. It is a good school, and it will certainly be part of our future budget considerations when we are working up to next year's budget in terms of capital commitments.

Mr R. SMITH (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — The members for Pascoe Vale and Eltham both raised issues for the Minister for Public Transport. The member for Pascoe Vale raised the issue of the minister reviewing the opportunity for the city of Moreland to be put into zone 1. The member for Eltham raised the issue around clarifying whether the extra services for his electorate would be peak services.

The member for Geelong raised a matter for the Minister for Higher Education and Skills regarding funding for Gordon TAFE. I will ensure that those three issues are raised with the respective ministers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 10.45 p.m.