

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Thursday, 16 October 2014**

**(Extract from book 14)**

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## **The Governor**

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

## **The ministry**

(from 17 March 2014)

Premier, Minister for Regional Cities and Minister for Racing . . . . .	The Hon. D. V. Napthine, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, and Minister for Regional and Rural Development . . . . .	The Hon. P. J. Ryan, MP
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Minister for Higher Education and Skills . . . . .	The Hon. N. Wakeling, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, and Minister for Water. . . . .	The Hon. P. L. Walsh, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for Bushfire Response . . . . .	The Hon. K. A. Wells, MP
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services, and Minister for Disability Services and Reform . . . . .	The Hon. M. L. N. Wooldridge, MP
Cabinet Secretary . . . . .	Mrs I. Peulich, MLC

## Legislative Assembly committees

**Privileges Committee** — Ms Barker, Mr Clark, Ms Green, Mr Hodgett, Mr Morris, Mr Nardella, Mr O'Brien, Mr Pandazopoulos and Mr Walsh.

**Standing Orders Committee** — The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Ms Barker, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Mr O'Brien and Mrs Powell.

## Joint committees

**Accountability and Oversight Committee** — (*Assembly*): Ms Kanis, Mr McIntosh and Ms Neville.  
(*Council*): Mr D. R. J. O'Brien and Mr Ronalds.

**Dispute Resolution Committee** — (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr O'Brien and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Drum, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik.

**Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban/Interface Services Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess and Mr McGuire. (*Council*): Mrs Millar and Mr Ronalds.

**Education and Training Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks and Mr Crisp. (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr and Mrs Kronberg.

**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr Delahunty. (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mrs Peulich, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis.

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

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr Madden, Mrs Powell and Ms Ryall. (*Council*): Mrs Coote.

**House Committee** — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Mr Blackwood, Mr Burgess, Ms Campbell, Ms Thomson and Mr Weller. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr D. R. J. O'Brien and Mrs Peulich.

**Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee** — (*Assembly*): Ms Kanis, Mr Kotsiras, Mr McIntosh and Mr Weller. (*Council*): Mr Viney.

**Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr Carroll, Mr McCurdy and Mr Southwick. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer.

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

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

**Rural and Regional Committee** — (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller. (*Council*): Mr D. R. J. O'Brien.

**Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** — (*Assembly*): Ms Barker, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella, Dr Sykes and Mr Watt. (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva.

## Heads of parliamentary departments

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

*Council* — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

**Speaker:**

The Hon. CHRISTINE. FYFFE (from 4 February 2014)

The Hon. K. M. SMITH (to 4 February 2014)

**Deputy Speaker:**

Mr P. WELLER (from 4 February 2014)

Mrs C. A. FYFFE (to 4 February 2014)

**Acting Speakers:**

Mr Angus, Ms Beattie, Mr Blackwood, Mr Burgess, Ms Campbell, Mr Languiller, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Mr McIntosh, Ms McLeish, Mr Morris, Mr Nardella, Mr Northe, Mr Pandazopoulos, Ms Ryall, Dr Sykes and Mr Thompson. (to 2 April 2014)

Mr Angus, Mr Blackwood, Mr Burgess, Mr Crisp, Mr McCurdy, Mr McIntosh, Ms McLeish, Mr Morris, Ms Ryall, Dr Sykes and Mr Thompson. (from 3 April 2014)

**Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Premier:**

The Hon. D. V. NAPHTHINE (from 6 March 2013)

The Hon. E. N. BAILLIEU (to 6 March 2013)

**Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party:**

The Hon. LOUISE ASHER

**Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Premier:**

The Hon. P. J. RYAN

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals:**

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

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

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

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

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clayton	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Murray Valley	Nats
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	McGuire, Mr Frank <sup>6</sup>	Broadmeadows	ALP
Baillieu, Mr Edward Norman	Hawthorn	LP	McIntosh, Mr Andrew John	Kew	LP
Barker, Ms Ann Patricia	Oakleigh	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Seymour	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Madden, Mr Justin Mark	Essendon	ALP
Bauer, Mrs Donna Jane	Carrum	LP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Beattie, Ms Elizabeth Jean	Yuroke	ALP	Miller, Ms Elizabeth Eileen	Bentleigh	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
Brumby, Mr John Mansfield <sup>1</sup>	Broadmeadows	ALP	Naphtine, Dr Denis Vincent	South-West Coast	LP
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Campbell, Ms Christine Mary	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Newton-Brown, Mr Clement Arundel	Prahran	LP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Mathew	Williamstown	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan <sup>2</sup>	Niddrie	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip <sup>7</sup>	Lyndhurst	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Tarneit	ALP
Delahunty, Mr Hugh Francis	Lowan	Nats	Pandazopoulos, Mr John	Dandenong	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Pike, Ms Bronwyn Jane <sup>8</sup>	Melbourne	ALP
Duncan, Ms Joanne Therese	Macedon	ALP	Powell, Mrs Elizabeth Jeanette	Shepparton	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Mitcham	LP
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian	Gippsland South	Nats
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Ann	Evelyn	LP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Shaw, Mr Geoffrey Page <sup>9</sup>	Frankston	Ind
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Kenneth Maurice	Bass	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Sykes, Dr William Everett	Benalla	Nats
Helper, Mr Jochen	Ripon	ALP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Eltham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Kilsyth	LP	Trezise, Mr Ian Douglas	Geelong	ALP
Holding, Mr Timothy James <sup>3</sup>	Lyndhurst	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Ballarat East	ALP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Hulls, Mr Rob Justin <sup>4</sup>	Niddrie	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Swan Hill	Nats
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Keilor	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Weller, Mr Paul	Rodney	Nats
Kanis, Ms Jennifer <sup>5</sup>	Melbourne	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Scoresby	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Doncaster	LP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Ballarat West	ALP	Wreford, Ms Lorraine Joan	Mordialloc	LP
Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 21 December 2010

<sup>2</sup> Elected 24 March 2012

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 18 February 2013

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 27 January 2012

<sup>5</sup> Elected 21 July 2012

<sup>6</sup> Elected 19 February 2011

<sup>7</sup> Elected 27 April 2013

<sup>8</sup> Resigned 7 May 2012

<sup>9</sup> LP until 6 March 2013



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**Thursday, 16 October 2014**

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Christine Fyffe) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Notices of motion**

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Notices of motion 8 to 20 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

**PETITIONS****Following petitions presented to house:****Phoenix P–12 Community College**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the Napthine coalition government's cuts to school funding.

Petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on Denis Napthine to match Labor's commitment to fund Sebastopol's Phoenix P–12 College secondary campus to completion.

Under Denis Napthine and the coalition, our kids will not get the opportunity to get the skills they need to start their careers.

**By Mr HOWARD (Ballarat East) (97 signatures).**

**Buninyong planning zones**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the Napthine government's changes to the residential zoning in Buninyong, whereas the government has disregarded the recommendation of Ballarat City Council to zone Buninyong neighbourhood residential zone allowing for minimum lot sizes of 800 square metres and instead has adopted general residential zone for Buninyong, which gives developers 'as of right' the opportunity to subdivide to lots of 300 square metres.

We therefore request for this situation to be reversed to protect minimum lot sizes of 800 square metres for Buninyong.

**By Mr HOWARD (Ballarat East) (71 signatures).**

**Phoenix P–12 Community College**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly Denis Napthine's cuts to school funding. In particular, we note that:

1. Under Denis Napthine, our kids can't get the skills they need to start their career.
2. Across Victoria, school buildings are unfinished, classrooms are falling apart and our kids miss out.

Petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on Denis Napthine to fund Phoenix P–12 Community College secondary campus in the upcoming state budget.

**By Ms KNIGHT (Ballarat West) (27 signatures).**

**Country Fire Authority funding**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the Liberal government's cut of millions of dollars from the Country Fire Authority.

In particular we note the \$41 million cut by the Liberal government from the CFA and the effect of this cut on the training and equipping of firefighters in our region.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly condemn the Napthine Liberal government for cuts to the CFA.

**By Ms KNIGHT (Ballarat West) (43 signatures).**

**Ballarat ambulance services**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that more patients are waiting longer for an ambulance. We note that the performance of the ambulance service has fallen since the election of the Liberal government.

We particularly note:

1. ambulance response times have increased;
2. Ballarat has been left exposed with paramedic shifts left unfilled.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Napthine government to immediately address the failure to provide Ballarat with the continuous coverage of professional paramedic services it needs.

**By Ms KNIGHT (Ballarat West) (54 signatures).**

**Doncaster rail link**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of Victorian residents points out to the house that the undersigned seek an immediate commitment from the Victorian government to fund a railway line to Doncaster.

Manningham is the only metropolitan municipality without train or tram services. For many years now, successive governments have ignored this community's feedback that we need more integrated and high-capacity public transport options, especially rail.

We call on all parties to provide bipartisan support to ensure the delivery of this important project.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria give a firm undertaking on a budget timetable for delivering rail to Doncaster.

**By Mr KOTSIRAS (Bulleen) (11 signatures).**

### **Doncaster rail link**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

We the undersigned seek an immediate commitment from the Victorian government to fund a railway line to Doncaster.

Manningham is the only metropolitan municipality with no train or tram services. For many years now, successive governments have ignored this community's overwhelming feedback that we need more integrated and high-capacity public transport options, especially rail.

We call on all parties to provide bipartisan support to realise the importance of delivering such an important project.

We also call on the government to give a firm undertaking on a budget timetable for delivering rail to Doncaster, followed by the decoupling of South Morang as a staged approach and in that order.

**By Mr KOTSIRAS (Bulleen) (9 signatures).**

### **School chaplaincy and religious instruction**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the support in our community for the role of chaplains and wellbeing workers in government schools and the overwhelming support for the provision of special religious instruction. Both of these services are accessed on a voluntary basis, with over 300 schools employing chaplains and almost 800 schools offering special religious instruction.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria take note of this support and affirm the commitment by all parties and members to ensuring that both chaplaincy services and special religious instruction remain part of our school system.

**By Mr WATT (Burwood) (1431 signatures),  
Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (1511 signatures),  
Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (1973 signatures) and  
Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (2497 signatures).**

### **Kingston green wedge**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws the Parliament's attention to our concerns that Kingston council has resolved to convert a large portion of the green wedge for residential development by rezoning the Mentone Grammar playing fields and other land abutting Braeside Park and Southern Golf Club to a residential zone and the land between Heatherton/Kingston Road and Lower Dandenong

Road to rural living zone with a minimum subdivision size of 2000 square metres (approximately half an acre).

If implemented, Kingston council's resolutions would:

be contrary to the Kingston green wedge plan;

be inconsistent with state and local planning policies;

result in the loss of productive market gardens; and

create uncertainty and set a precedent for the conversion of more of Melbourne's green wedges for residential development.

The petitioners therefore request that the Minister for Planning promptly inform Kingston council that he will not authorise any planning scheme amendments to implement their plans to rezone the green wedge for residential development.

**By Mr LIM (Clayton) (138 signatures).**

### **Family violence**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the multicultural communities of Victoria draws to the attention of the house our immense concern about the devastating effects that violence against women and children in their homes is having on our communities.

Family violence does not discriminate on the basis of geography, ethnicity or culture. It affects all of our communities.

We the undersigned wish to advise the house that we believe that all forms of family violence are unacceptable. As a society family violence should never be tolerated or ignored and perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions.

Victims of family violence should be better protected from abuse, and intervention orders respected, and if breached, appropriate and timely action should be taken.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria take action to review the use and effectiveness of intervention orders, whether the intervention orders available to the courts are adequate to provide protection for victims of family violence and whether the responses to breaches of intervention orders are appropriate.

**By Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) (1660 signatures).**

### **Retirement villages local government rates**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Victoria draws the attention of the house to retirement villages in Victoria who do not use the level of services that are offered by local government to all residents, and as a retirement village has many individual properties the rates paid are well in excess of a standard housing block.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria introduce legislation requiring local

government rates be adjusted for retirement villages across Victoria. As part of the review for the drafting of legislation the government would be required to review the current practice across all local government areas and assess the most suitable and sustainable outcome.

**By Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (80 signatures).**

### **Firefighter compensation**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain residents of Victoria draws the attention of the house to the following:

1. that Victoria's firefighters, both volunteer and career, have a greater risk of contracting certain cancers because of their service to the people of Victoria as firefighters;
2. that Victoria's compensation requirements for firefighters who have contracted such cancers are significantly more onerous compared to compensation requirements for federal firefighters and those in other parts of Australia and the western world including Canada and the United States;
3. notes that because of the recognised greater risk of contracting certain cancers, and the practical difficulty of identifying specific exposures which caused such cancer, firefighters in these jurisdictions outside Victoria are 'presumed at law' to have contracted the specified cancers during their duties as firefighters (unless proved otherwise) and are therefore entitled to quick and easy access to compensation for medical treatment and financial support for them and their dependent family.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly take urgent action to legislate for changes to Victorian compensation laws so that they provide those who serve or have served the people of Victoria as volunteer or career firefighters and who contract one of the twelve forms of cancer listed in the Commonwealth's Fair Protection for Firefighters Act 2011 are presumed to have contracted such cancer as a result of their duties and activities as firefighters (unless it can be proved otherwise) and consequently have speedy access to full compensation entitlements as provided under current and future law and financial arrangements.

**By Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (8094 signatures) and Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North) (7816 signatures).**

### **Keilor electorate secondary school**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents within Caroline Springs, Taylors Hill and Hillside draws to the attention of the house the urgent need for a year 10–12 secondary school to be built in the municipalities of Caroline Springs and Taylors Hill.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria commence planning and construction of a year 10–12 secondary school in the municipalities of Caroline Springs and Taylors Hill.

We the undersigned urgently require the establishment of a year 10–12 state secondary school in Caroline Springs and Taylors Hill.

**By Ms HUTCHINS (Keilor) (1540 signatures).**

### **Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria points out to the house:

the concern we have that amendments to the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011 discriminate against injured workers.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

support injured workers by repealing the amendment to the Water (Long Service Leave) Regulations 2011 dated 8 July 2014.

**By Ms HUTCHINS (Keilor) (345 signatures).**

### **New Gisborne Primary School**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the New Gisborne Primary School community draws the attention of the house to:

In June 2011, the purpose-built art room at New Gisborne Primary School was destroyed by fire. The school council has written several letters to the Minister for Education and local MPs seeking a time frame for when rebuilding works will commence. To our disappointment, the minister has not provided the school council with a timeframe and it appears that the works are not considered a priority.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

seek an assurance from the Minister for Education that rebuilding the art room at New Gisborne Primary School is a priority and calls on the minister to provide the New Gisborne School council with a detailed time line of when works will commence and be completed. Given the length of time that has elapsed since the fire, petitioners also request that these works commence no later than the end of the 2014 calendar year.

**By Ms DUNCAN (Macedon) (577 signatures).**

### **Wollert bus service**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Wollert and surrounding areas draws to the attention of the house the Naphthine government's neglect of the northern suburbs and in particular the inadequate state of bus services to and from the Eucalypt estate in Wollert, leading to greater congestion on our roads and inadequate time for residents to spend with their families.

The petitioners therefore request that the government immediately fund a bus service along Epping Road into the Eucalypt estate in Wollert.

**By Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) (136 signatures).**

**Biofuels**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of students, teachers, parents and affiliates of Huntingtower School, Mount Waverley, draws to the attention of the house:

The dwindling unrenewable resource of crude oil. This resource, which is forecasted to run out in 40 years at the current consumption rate, is essential for a multitude of reasons. All plastics and pharmaceuticals are manufactured from this resource, yet 40 per cent of crude oil goes towards fuelling transport. In order to save crude oil for the manufacturing of more essential and everyday items, we propose the alternative of biofuel, which is grown from sustainable sources such as corn or sugarcane. These biofuels run at the same efficiency as diesel, in all capacities, and can be used in diesel engines without modifying the vehicle. It is efficient and existing modes of transport running on diesel do not have to change to use biofuel. This makes this form of energy a great stepping stone towards the implementation of more forms of sustainable energy.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

allocate funding to the implementation of biofuels and its research, as well as promoting the usage of such an energy to the public; that is, to educate Victorians about biofuels through public awareness programs.

**By Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (377 signatures).**

**Abortion legislation**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

that the law should protect the unborn of our human race. The current act allows babies up to full term of pregnancy to be aborted with no pain relief and also no help is given if still alive when aborted (i.e., failed abortion).

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria repeal the current abortion act.

**By Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (1128 signatures).**

**Abortion legislation**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the undersigned residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the long overdue need to review the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 which did away with all legal protection for babies in the womb even right up to birth.

After 24 weeks a baby may be aborted (killed) if two doctors 'agree' it is 'appropriate'.

This law is a blight on Victoria, a betrayal of the medical profession and health workers. It contravenes irrefutable expanding scientific evidence that babies in the womb are real people; hence the law should protect all unborn children from conception until natural death, thereby respecting all human life.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria repeal the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 and replace it with proper legal protection and support for children before birth and their mothers.

**By Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) (500 signatures).**

**Local government rates**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the Naphthine and Abbott governments' planned tax increases.

We note that many local councils have continued to increase their rates well in excess of CPI in recent years.

Petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly request the Naphthine government to immediately legislate to cap council rates at CPI and force councils to justify any further increases.

**By Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (213 signatures).**

**Pound-Shrives roads, Hampton Park**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria who use the intersection of Pound and Shrives roads draws to the attention of the house the traffic congestion, accidents and delays that motorists experience at this intersection.

In particular, we note:

1. there is considerable traffic congestion at the intersection of Pound and Shrives roads in Hampton Park;
2. the intersection has a worsening accident record;
3. motorists avoid turning at the intersection by driving through a service station located on one corner creating safety hazards within the service station;
4. the Naphthine government has refused repeated requests to provide funding for safety improvements to the intersection.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urges the Naphthine government to provide a funding commitment for safety improvements at the intersection of Pound and Shrives roads.

**By Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) (89 signatures).**

### **Newman Street–Keilor Road, Niddrie**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the extremely dangerous intersection at Newman Street and Keilor Road in Niddrie.

This intersection severely lacks adequate traffic management measures and puts lives at risk as drivers cross between traffic in multiple directions. Accidents occur regularly and locals believe it is only a matter of time before lives are lost.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Napthine government, and in particular the transport minister, to swiftly take action to address the problems at this intersection.

**By Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) (916 signatures).**

### **Chandler Highway bridge**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria who travel across the Chandler Highway bridge draws to the attention of the house the Napthine government failure to provide funding for or a commitment to, the duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge. In particular we note:

1. 97 per cent of respondents to a local survey supported the duplication of the existing bridge.
2. Chandler Highway bridge has been identified as a major thoroughfare and traffic congestion is continuing to get worse. It also poses a threat to cyclists and pedestrians.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Napthine government to provide funding for, and give a commitment to, the duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge.

**By Ms RICHARDSON (Northcote) (54 signatures).**

### **Yan Yean Road upgrade**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house, the state government's refusal to fix Yan Yean Road including VicRoads decision not to 'declare' the central section between Kurrak Road and Bridge Inn Road as a state government-funded road.

In particular we note:

1. Yan Yean Road services some of the most rapidly growing areas in Australia;
2. the road is recognised by the RACV as one of the worst in Victoria, with over 30 000 users daily;
3. despite a plan to upgrade the southern section, this has not been given funding nor a timetable of when funding may be expected;

4. VicRoads decision not to 'declare' the central section cost-shifts ongoing maintenance to hard-pressed local ratepayers;
5. the upgrade of the road continues to be a top priority for local residents and both Whittlesea and Nillumbik councils;
6. failure to upgrade Yan Yean Road is not simply an issue of resolving congestion, but is critical to ensuring the community can seek safety on code red days.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Liberal state government to fund the upgrade of Yan Yean Road.

**By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (78 signatures).**

### **School buses**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the decision by the state government to cancel school buses servicing schools in Nillumbik.

In particular, we note:

1. students living in Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Mitchell and Murrindindi have to travel great distances to attend public high schools with school buses ensuring that kids can get to school safely and in a timely manner;
2. a recent PTV review has cancelled services and imposed charges on preserved services to Diamond Valley College, meaning that some students will either be dependent on their parents getting to school or will have to travel long distances to get to other public transport options;
3. that much of Nillumbik and Murrindindi is rural in nature, with few safe foot or cycle paths for students to use;
4. the state government has also not provided funding for either the Hurstbridge rail trail project nor funded community transport services across the area that could assist with getting students to school.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Liberal government to reinstate existing school bus services and to improve local transport options, with more bus services and upgrades to cycle and footpaths such as the Hurstbridge rail trail.

**By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (33 signatures).**

### **Doreen and Mernda schools**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the rapid increase in families moving to Doreen and Mernda in recent years, and the acute shortage of schools.

In particular, we note:

1. there are now almost 2000 students enrolled at government primary schools in Mernda and Doreen; by 2016 almost 4000 12 to 17-year-olds will live locally;
2. there is currently no state secondary school in Doreen or Mernda and a shortage of primary schools, with parents travelling on congested roads to schools as far as Whittlesea, Mill Park, Epping, Greensborough, Eltham, Montmorency and Diamond Creek;
3. the state government has finally caved in to community pressure to fund Doreen South Primary School (opening in 2014) and phase 1 of Doreen Secondary College for years 7 and 8 only (opening in 2015); however the area still needs other schools and school buses;
4. funding has not yet been confirmed for years 9–12 at Doreen Secondary College, nor to build Mernda P–12, nor for more school buses or footpaths to enable students to walk or cycle to existing schools and the new Doreen Secondary College post-2015.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Liberal government to fund new bus services and cycle and footpaths.

**By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (12 signatures).**

### **Doreen and Mernda police resources**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the need for a new 24-hour police station to serve the fast-growing suburbs of Mernda and Doreen and for increased numbers of police in the area.

In particular, we note:

1. the population of Mernda and Doreen, which is now estimated to be 31 867, is expected to be 51 093 by 2031;
2. at present the Whittlesea township police station, which covers the suburbs of Doreen and Mernda, is only open during business hours with police responding from Epping and Mill Park after hours;
3. the ongoing population growth in the city of Whittlesea is putting increased pressure on the two nearest 24-hour police stations in Epping and Mill Park, meaning that the fast-growing suburbs of Doreen and Mernda are getting a worse service.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urges the Naphthine state government to fund a new 24-hour police station to cover the policing needs of the growing suburbs of Mernda and Doreen.

**By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (11 signatures).**

### **Whittlesea police resources**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the need for new and upgraded 24-hour police stations in the north of the city of Whittlesea, to serve existing localities such as Whittlesea township as well as the fast-growing suburbs of Mernda and Doreen, and for increased numbers of police in the area.

In particular, we note:

1. the city of Whittlesea is the second fastest growing municipality in Australia;
2. at present the 1950s rural Whittlesea township police station is only open during business hours with police responding from Epping and Mill Park after hours;
3. the ongoing population growth in Epping, South Morang, Wollert, Donnybrook, Mernda and Doreen is putting increased pressure on the two nearest 24-hour police stations in Epping and Mill Park, meaning that the north of the municipality is getting a worse service.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urge the Naphthine state government to work with the local community to upgrade police resources serving the north of the city of Whittlesea.

**By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (20 signatures).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Ballarat East be considered next day on motion of Mr HOWARD (Ballarat East).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Ballarat West be considered next day on motion of Ms KNIGHT (Ballarat West).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Caulfield be considered next day on motion of Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Yan Yean be considered next day on motion of Ms GREEN (Yan Yean).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Gembrook be considered next day on motion of Mr BATTIN (Gembrook).**

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

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Burwood be considered next day on motion of Mr WATT (Burwood).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Clayton be considered next day on motion of Mr LIM (Clayton).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Macedon be considered next day on motion of Ms DUNCAN (Macedon).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Niddrie be considered next day on motion of Mr CARROLL (Niddrie).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Keilor be considered next day on motion of Ms HUTCHINS (Keilor).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Mount Waverley considered next day on motion of Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Narre Warren South be considered next day on motion of Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Hastings be considered next day on motion of Mr BURGESS (Hastings).**

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Narre Warren North be considered next day on motion of Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North).**

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

### Parliamentary commissioner for standards in Victoria

**Ms ASHER (Minister for Innovation) presented report.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be printed.**

## DOCUMENTS

**Tabled by Clerk:**

Albury Wodonga Health — Report 2013–14

Alfred Health — Report 2013–14

Auditor-General:

Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria, 2013–14 — Ordered to be printed

Report 2013–14

Austin Health — Report 2013–14

Ballarat Health Services — Report 2013–14

Barwon Health — Report 2013–14

Bass Coast Regional Health — Report 2013–14

Bendigo Healthcare Group — Report 2013–14

Castlemaine Health — Report 2013–14

Consumer Affairs Victoria — Report 2013–14 — Ordered to be printed

Country Fire Authority — Report 2013–14

*Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* — Order under s 17D granting a lease over Geelong Telegraph Station Reserve

Eastern Health — Report 2013–14

*Financial Management Act 1994:*

Reports from the Minister for Environment and Climate Change that he had received the reports 2013–14 of the:

Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council

Barwon Regional Waste Management Group

Central Murray Regional Waste Management Group

Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability

Desert Fringe Regional Waste Management Group

Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group

Goulburn Valley Regional Waste Management Group

Grampians Regional Waste Management Group

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Highlands Regional Waste Management Group

Mildura Regional Waste Management Group

Mornington Peninsula Regional Waste Management Group

North East Victorian Regional Waste Management Group

South Western Regional Waste Management Group

Victorian Environmental Water Holder

Freedom of Information Commissioner — Report 2013–14

Goulburn Valley Health — Report 2013–14

Greyhound Racing Victoria — Report 2013–14

Health, Department of — Report 2013–14

Justice, Department of — Report 2013–14

Kerang District Health — Report 2013–14

Kilmore and District Hospital — Report 2013–14

Kyneton District Health Service — Report 2013–14

Latrobe Regional Hospital — Report 2013–14

Melbourne Health — Report 2013–14

Mercy Public Hospitals Inc — Report 2013–14

Monash Health — Report 2013–14

North East Health Wangaratta — Report 2013–14

Northern Health — Report 2013–14

Peninsula Health — Report 2013–14

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre — Report 2013–14

Portland District Health — Report 2013–14

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority — Report 2013–14

Royal Children's Hospital — Report 2013–14

Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital — Report 2013–14

Royal Women's Hospital — Report 2013–14

St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Ltd — Report 2013–14

*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:*

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rule 126

Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* — Ministerial direction to complete an approved advanced responsible service of alcohol program

Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, Department of — Report 2013–14

Upper Murray Health and Community Services — Report 2013–14

Victoria Police — Report 2013–14

Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation — Report 2013–14

Victorian Industry Participation Policy — Report 2013–14

Victorian Inspectorate — Report 2013–14 under s 131T of the *Fisheries Act 1995* and s 74P of the *Wildlife Act 1975*

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation — Report 2013–14

West Gippsland Healthcare Group — Report 2013–14

Western Health — Report 2013–14.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Adjournment

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourn until a day and hour to be fixed by the Speaker, which time of meeting shall be notified in writing to each member of the house.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MEMBERS STATEMENTS

### Field and Game Australia

**Mr WALSH** (Minister for Agriculture and Food Security) — On Saturday I had the opportunity to join with Field and Game Australia, Bendigo, led by Tom Chick and Mark Daly, for its fox shoot in the Gunbower forest. Along with about 40 Field and Game members we were joined by staff from the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, the North Central Catchment Management Authority and the recently established Game Management Authority.

Regular fox shoots are carried out in the Gunbower forest and other wetlands in northern Victoria to help control the foxes and protect the native fauna in those areas, and in this case it was to stop foxes from disturbing and eating the turtle eggs buried in the sand beds in the Gunbower forest. I congratulate Field and Game Australia on the work it is doing to control pests in our state parks.

### headspace

**Mr WALSH** — I thank the Minister for Mental Health for her work in securing a headspace centre for Swan Hill. The community of Swan Hill has done a lot of work, but I particularly thank the minister for her perseverance in lobbying the commonwealth government to set up a headspace centre in Swan Hill.

We all know the issues around mental health, particularly in relation to youth in our communities, and Swan Hill is no exception. The community is very appreciative of the work undertaken by the minister to get this facility, and it will be very welcome. I understand the centre will be up and running by the end of next year, which is a great outcome for the community of Swan Hill.

### Olinda swimming pool

**Mr MERLINO** (Monbulk) — The Olinda pool is a much-loved community facility. Unfortunately cracks were discovered in the pool more than 12 months ago,

causing the council to close the pool down. In January the Yarra Ranges Shire Council passed a motion to expedite its reopening but, unfortunately, has done nothing since. It deliberately ran down the facility, closed it and now has no intention of reopening it. It is not good enough.

The conservative council clearly wants to close this facility permanently, and the Napthine government will stand by and do nothing. I am proud to say that under an Andrews Labor government Labor will deliver \$500 000 to rebuild the Olinda pool and construct a playground for the Olinda community.

### **Belgrave South Recreation Reserve**

**Mr MERLINO** — The Belgrave South Recreation Reserve is a wonderful facility. A major and much-needed redevelopment of the pavilion has been ongoing for many years. The redevelopment will benefit many local clubs, including the Belgrave South Football Club, the Belgrave South Cricket Club and the Belgrave South Red Devils Basketball Club as well as local scouting groups and schools. It gave me great pleasure on Monday night to announce Labor's commitment to deliver \$500 000 towards the new pavilion and community playground.

### **Swinburne University of Technology**

**Mr MERLINO** — My final contribution for this parliamentary term is on the issue I have spoken the most about, which is the closure of Swinburne Lilydale. This government closed Swinburne Lilydale. The choice on 29 November for the community of the outer eastern suburbs is clear: shipping containers in a used car saleyard under the coalition or the return of TAFE and higher education to the Swinburne Lilydale site under Labor.

### **Doncaster electorate**

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Minister for Mental Health) — Eight years ago I had the honour of being elected by my community as the member for Doncaster. Together we have achieved some substantial things, including upgrades to bus services, a redeveloped Box Hill Hospital, a refurbished Birralee Primary School, enhanced community facilities and community safety and support for vulnerable families and individuals.

We have held town hall meetings, cleaned up Mullum Mullum Creek and Ruffey Lake Park, raised money for the Breast Cancer Network Australia and the RSL,

participated in the Relay for Life, and provided gifts and food to Doncare at Christmas.

It is the end of an era; after 38 years, the seat of Doncaster is being abolished, having only ever had three members — Morris Williams, Victor Perton and me. What has always inspired me is the contribution and commitment of local people who make a difference in the lives of so many. I particularly want to acknowledge Doreen Stoves, Carmel O'Brien, Les Manning, John Morasco, Judy Sammut, Helen Jercevic, Wendy Lyons, Hal Grix, Darren Bourke, Ray Lord and Geoff Roberts. However, they are only the tip of the iceberg. I also thank the Doncaster Liberals, particularly Brent Rodrigues, Johnny Hassed and Harry Lubansky.

I thank the people of Doncaster for their trust in and support of me as their parliamentary representative over the last eight years. As I expect to be in the other place representing the Eastern Metropolitan Region after 29 November, I certainly look forward to continuing to be a part of and contribute to the wonderful community of Doncaster.

### **Bellarine electorate neighbourhood houses**

**Ms NEVILLE** (Bellarine) — We all have neighbourhood houses in our electorates. In my case I am very lucky to have five, with one new house being established. We have the Bellarine Living and Learning Centre in Whittington, the Ocean Grove Neighbourhood Centre and the Springdale Neighbourhood Centre in Drysdale, where I spent three years as the coordinator prior to standing for election. We also have the Queenscliffe and District Neighbourhood House and the Portarlington Neighbourhood House — the most recent, which has gone from strength to strength. Recently the Leopold community has come together and commenced the process of establishing a Leopold neighbourhood house, which will be fantastic for this growing community.

As I said, I have worked in neighbourhood houses, and was also the chair of the Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Centres, so I have a very strong belief in the role of neighbourhood houses in our community. During our time in government we funded Ocean Grove, increased funding to Bellarine Living and Learning, Queenscliffe and Drysdale and also commenced the funding of Portarlington.

I was pleased recently to join with the Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Centres and representatives from the board of Portarlington to sign the support pledge for neighbourhood houses. I indicated I would continue to

be an advocate for what they do. I also accepted hundreds of petitions in support of growing neighbourhood houses. Unfortunately they have not been able to be tabled, but I want to acknowledge the support in our community for neighbourhood houses.

### **Rotary Club of Drysdale**

**Ms NEVILLE** — I want to acknowledge the great work of the Drysdale Rotary Club Bruno Callori Young Artist Mentorship Program, and acknowledge Jack, Aaron, Courtney and Mitchell, this year's mentees, who are doing a great job. I thank mentor Jill Shallless, the rotary club and in particular Caroline Rickard, who is the current coordinator of this program.

### **Point Nepean**

**Mr DIXON** (Minister for Education) — It is disappointing that Labor is opposed to the opening up of the historic quarantine station precinct at Point Nepean to the people of Victoria. The proposal from the Point Leisure Group is completely consistent with current and past master plans developed after extensive community consultation. In fact both Labor and the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) have previously advocated the sorts of uses for the area that are proposed by the Point Leisure Group. This policy backflip is just a cheap and shallow pre-election stunt by the two groups.

The proposal will see the area made available to far more people and will use, restore and maintain the existing buildings, as well as provide 400 jobs into the future. The biggest threat to Point Nepean is Labor's plan to blast 25 million cubic metres of rock at Port Phillip Heads, which will ruin the marine park and raise bay sea levels by 15 centimetres. If the VNPA wants to be relevant, it should stand up to its comrades in the ALP and not cheer on this insane, destructive plan.

### **Retiring members**

**Mr DIXON** — I wish to acknowledge all those members retiring at this year's election and congratulate them on their commitment to their electorates, this state and the Parliament. I particularly wish my good friend the member for Bulleen all the best as he and Angela begin a new phase of their lives. He has been a great personal support to me and to our colleagues in his various roles. At the same time he has bordered on being bipartisan — heaven forbid! All the best to you, Nick.

### **Ambulance services**

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — I rise today to demand that the Premier and the Minister for Health immediately release the local data for Bendigo that will reveal the crisis in Bendigo's ambulance system. We have seen information about Ambulance Victoria's performance at a statewide level. We have only seen that performance data because it was leaked to the media. It showed that in the Loddon area, which covers Bendigo, the time taken for 90 per cent of code 1 cases is 27.3 minutes. As I said, we only have this information because it was leaked.

The Bendigo paramedics I talked to would like to see this information released, and we need to have this information released at a local community level, because we know the cuts to our health system by this Liberal-Nationals government are really hurting our hospitals and our ambulance services. When I was fortunate enough to be in government, we worked hard to secure new ambulance stations in Bendigo. I do not want to see that service go backwards.

### **Retiring members**

**Ms ALLAN** — I wish the retiring members of Parliament on both sides all the very best for the future and their time with their families, which they will greatly appreciate.

### **Parliamentary staff**

**Ms ALLAN** — I finish my final contribution for the session by thanking the clerks and all the parliamentary staff, who have been an enormous support to me in the roles I have performed. I greatly appreciate their wisdom and the advice they have given me across all levels over this time.

### **Heathmont road safety**

**Ms VICTORIA** (Minister for the Arts) — For a number of years now, whenever I have been doing one of my regular 'listening posts' in the Heathmont area, the most prevalent complaints have been about road safety. Firstly, there is the issue of safe exit from Armstrong Road into Canterbury Road. After numerous accidents and at least one fatality, the community's voice has been heard. I have advocated for full signalisation of the intersection, and only a Napthine coalition government will deliver this much-needed project. The other safety concern for locals has been the speed of vehicles, especially trucks, on their way to EastLink through the Heathmont shops area. Again the Napthine coalition government has

listened, and the speed limit will be reduced from 70 kilometres per hour to 60 kilometres per hour.

### **Wantirna Health education centre**

**Ms VICTORIA** — A fantastic new education centre has just been opened at Wantirna Health. There are meeting rooms, videoconferencing facilities and a brilliant teaching ward, in which there are multiple lifelike training mannequins. One in particular is hooked up to a control room, where an operator can change the dummy's vital signs, prompting the nursing student to make a diagnosis on the state of the patient's health. It replicates real-life scenarios and is invaluable as a teaching tool. One of the other mannequins is of a pregnant woman, where various birthing scenarios can be dealt with. This facility is a wonderful collaboration between the state and federal governments, Eastern Health and two major universities.

### **MPavilion**

**Ms VICTORIA** — There is nothing better than a person with passion who follows through with gusto and has great momentum around them. I congratulate Naomi Milgrom and her team for bringing MPavilion to Melbourne over the next few months. The coalition government is proud to have partnered in this project, and I look forward to attending many events in the wide and varied program.

### **Western suburbs education commitments**

**Ms THOMSON** (Footscray) — Victoria University has spent a lot of money over the years developing its facilities to enable it to train people under TAFE. Unfortunately with the \$1.2 billion cut to the TAFE system by this government, those facilities are totally underutilised and, more importantly, the students who wish to access those facilities have not been able to do so because either their courses no longer exist or they cannot afford the fees. In the west, that training is desperately needed.

Labor, on the other hand, recognises the importance of education in the west. We have committed to Sunshine College to ensure that it gets its master plan built according to the work that was done before the 2010 election. We promised the college its new school, and we will deliver its new school as the master plan dictates. We are sorry for the gap of four years, but we will deliver it.

In Footscray itself there is the education precinct. We note that the Liberal Party abysmally failed to have anyone attend a public meeting on this issue. This is

about securing future places. The demand for places in secondary schools in the inner west is going to increase beyond the current capacity of the schools to meet it. We are planning for that. We will develop an education precinct that goes from child care through to tertiary education.

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

### **Kilsyth electorate schools**

**Mr HODGETT** (Minister for Ports) — I rise today to commend the Napthine government on its support for local schools, particularly in my electorate of Kilsyth. In the four years since this government has been in office it has had a fantastic track record of delivering important school infrastructure projects. Students, their families and communities in my electorate of Kilsyth have been direct beneficiaries of a number of great projects. They include the Yarra Hills Secondary College, which has now undergone a full rebuild, thanks to a \$10 million capital funding injection from the coalition government. Bayswater North Primary School is also looking forward to upgraded facilities due to \$2.3 million worth of works announced in this year's state budget. The school community at Eastwood primary school is also looking forward to the opening of its brand-new school, with works well under way thanks to \$7.3 million in funding for both stages of the full rebuild.

The coalition government has clearly demonstrated its commitment to improving education opportunities for students in my electorate. However, there is always more work to be done. Melba College was formed when the Croydon and Maroondah secondary colleges merged in 2012. The newly formed school provides fantastic secondary education opportunities for students in the region. Today I presented the Minister for Education with a number of letters from the school community calling for a rebuild of the school on one campus site. I am working with the school community and strongly advocating for funding from the coalition government for this project. The coalition government has demonstrated its commitment to providing students, not just in my electorate but around the state, with the best educational opportunities and facilities. Along with the staff, students and families at Melba College, I will continue to work hard to achieve the funding for a rebuild of Melba College on the one campus site.

### **New Gisborne Primary School**

**Ms DUNCAN** (Macedon) — Today I tabled a petition with 577 signatures calling for the Minister for

Education to give an assurance that the government would rebuild the purpose-built art room at the New Gisborne Primary School, which burnt down in June 2011. Since that time the school council has written several times to the minister seeking a time frame for when works would start to replace the art room. I have also written to the minister. On each occasion the minister would not give a time frame and indicated that this school and its art room were not a priority.

Last week I went to New Gisborne Primary School with Labor candidate Mary-Anne Thomas and we were presented with a petition for me to table this week in Parliament, the last possible time for tabling prior to the state election. Government members had previously visited this school and no commitment to rebuild the art room had been made. I am very pleased to say that following the concerted efforts of the school council, our visit to the school and the handing of the petition to me and to Mary-Anne Thomas, the Liberal government has just announced that it will fund the rebuilding of this art room. This is very good news for the school and the community generally as this school has a strong emphasis on art in its curriculum. The people of Gisborne can now be assured that this art room will be built, regardless of the election outcome.

The shame of this, however, is the fact that this government has politicised all aspects of school buildings. There is no priority list for school maintenance. It is not about the state of the school. Under this government it is all about the state of the electoral margin. Instead of replacing the school's art room in a timely manner, it has made it an election issue. It should not have come down to the Liberal government's efforts to win the seat of Macedon. It should come down to the school's efforts to continue to provide a curriculum —

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

### **Murray region tourism**

**Mr WELLER** (Rodney) — I rise to spread some good cheer about the tourism space in my electorate. This week our local paper, the *Riverine Herald*, reported that 750 000 domestic overnight guests visited Echuca-Moama in the year to June — up 16 per cent on the previous year. The Murray tourist region reached 2 million tourist nights in that period — up 23 per cent, and Echuca-Moama attracted almost 40 per cent of all visitors, cementing itself as the jewel in the Murray region crown. The figures also show that visitors spent around \$320 million while they were in the region, generating many positive spin-offs for our

accommodation providers, restaurants, wineries and retailers.

These fabulous results are largely attributable to the excellent work of regional tourism marketing bodies, such as Echuca Moama Tourism, as well as record investment in the sector by the Victorian coalition government. This year's state budget provides new funding of \$69.7 million over the next four years to drive tourism growth across the state, including \$14 million for initiatives to attract more visitors to regional Victoria. The Victorian government has also invested considerable funding in assisting the Murray Regional Tourism Board to undertake its destination management plan to drive increases in visitation, length of stay and the visitor experience. This year our government also invested \$30 000 from its \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund in the development of the Murray region tourism events strategy.

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — I have come to love the colour pink, and this time of year it is everywhere — a sign of kindness, resilience and hope. It is the rosy colour of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I again thank the Hampton Park Bowls Club members who held their 7th annual pink ribbon breakfast, raising \$1050 for Breast Cancer Network Australia. I am always amazed and grateful for the efforts of such generous-hearted people. Tracey Ryan, the guest speaker, was the star. We all love her.

With all this goodwill around it is really difficult to imagine that there are people out there who can be nasty, distasteful and untruthful about the cause. I have already told the house about the nauseous abuse of the pink symbols by zealous antiabortionists who have been outside Parliament house propagating the false assertion that abortion causes breast cancer — and they are back. I expect they are fired up by the activities of the Tea Party types in the Liberal Party, such as Mr Finn, a member for Western Metropolitan Region in the Council, who I read in *Hansard* frequents adult sex shops, and the member for Mount Waverley whose record of dealing with women is not exemplary.

I have never sought to use my experience of breast cancer as an excuse for anything. Rather, I have used it to increase awareness, raise funds and counsel others. I try to look after myself and get on with the serious job of representing the people of Narre Warren South. I love my family and my job, so it angers me to find out that there is a person running around my electorate suggesting that I milk it or use it as a tag. Politics is a tough game — I am up for it.

The behaviour of a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the Council is indecent and it needs to stop. Even I think she can do better than this. Let all of us in this Parliament get behind this good cause, the Pink Cause. We should do everything we can to support our sisters and our men, and find a cure for this horrible disease.

### **Small Town Transformations program**

**Mr BAILLIEU** (Hawthorn) — I rise to support the Small Town Transformations program that has been underway in Victoria for the last two years and thank the more than 60 small towns across Victoria with populations under 1500 people who participated in this program. I congratulate the five towns that have received grants as a consequence. This program brings small towns and the arts together to transform communities. It transforms more than the physical side of these communities; it brings community groups together to literally transform the focus of those towns.

The program has been highly successful, and on 4 October Ouyen had a festival marking its reconfiguration and upgrade of the Roxy Theatre, bringing young and older people together. It is a very successful program. Also on 4 October Dookie, through the Dookie Earthed festival, launched the Quarry Epitheatre at the Dookie quarry, and I thank Carrie, Alice, Leticia and Serana and the owner of the quarry who did such a remarkable job. Last Saturday the Avoca Chinese Garden was launched. It was a highly successful program conducted under the tutelage of Jane Howie, Lindy Lee and others. On 24 October Natimuk will launch the Verj, and Neerim South will launch its project on 26 October.

Small Town Transformations has been a highly successful program. I look forward to the results of the assessment of it and to a repeat in the future. I congratulate Regional Arts Victoria, Esther Anatolitis and Bruce Esplin on their fantastic work.

### **Education funding**

**Mr BROOKS** (Bundoora) — How fitting that in this last sitting week of the 57th Parliament this dysfunctional government's neglect of school maintenance has once again been exposed by the Victorian Auditor-General. The Auditor-General has refused to provide an unqualified opinion on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's financial report tabled yesterday as part of the department's annual report. Put simply, the Auditor-General has called out the Napthine government's dodgy accounting scam that is clearly

designed to undervalue school infrastructure with a view to providing less maintenance funding. This sums up the Napthine government's record on education — nasty short-sighted cuts that mean that in many cases our kids go to school in substandard buildings and classrooms while the Napthine government fudges the truth and, in this case, uses funny-money bookkeeping to dodge its responsibilities.

This government scrapped the Labor government's plans to rebuild or renovate every school in the state and slashed hundreds of millions of dollars from the school buildings capital program. It killed off the Gonski funding model, which would have made our education system much fairer. It has cut funding to the Victorian certificate of applied learning and to drug education, and most cruelly it has abolished the modest education support payment to low-income families, the education maintenance allowance. Then of course there has been the decimation of TAFE, which has seen fees rise dramatically, courses cut and campuses close, like the Greensborough campus of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE in my community.

### **Waverley Chinese Senior Citizens Club**

**Mr GIDLEY** (Mount Waverley) — On Tuesday, 7 October, I joined the Waverley Chinese Senior Citizens Club to celebrate its 25th anniversary and the moon festival. For 25 years the club has provided an opportunity for seniors to come together and share fellowship as well as host guest speakers on relevant topics of interest to seniors. I recognise and thank the Waverley Chinese Senior Citizens Club president, Mr Frank Chau, the vice-president, David Chau, and all current and past members and volunteers who have worked to build the club over that time.

### **Community centres**

**Mr GIDLEY** — I recently met with Merial Clark of the Network of Inner East Community Houses, Ellen Prior of the Kerrie Neighbourhood House and Jan Dempsey of the Waverley Community Learning Centre to discuss with them their priorities for the next parliamentary term. Whilst the petitions they provided to me cannot be lodged as they are outside the forms of the house, I thank them for taking the time to make representations to me. I will be certain to provide them to the Minister for Community Services.

### **Thalassaemia Australia**

**Mr GIDLEY** — A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet with Jim Demetriou from Thalassaemia Australia to gain a better understanding

of the disorder. Thalassaemia Australia has an office in the electoral district of Mount Waverley and also utilises the Monash Medical Centre. I wish Jim and his team well in developing their long-term strategies and thank them for the opportunity to gain an understanding of their activities.

### **Glen Waverley Bowls Club**

**Mr GIDLEY** — The Glen Waverley Bowls Club recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. I congratulate the club — built, developed and maintained by volunteers — on this milestone and wish it great success.

### **Parliamentary staff**

**Mr GIDLEY** — I also recognise and thank the staff and all those involved with this Parliament for the opportunity to serve the people of the electoral district of Mount Waverley.

### **Australian Pensioners Voice**

**Ms GARRETT** (Brunswick) — Last month I was delighted to once again meet with Vic Guarino and Gino Iannazzo, who are very fine and dedicated representatives — the president and secretary respectively — of Australian Pensioners Voice. I have met with them on many occasions during my four years in this place, and they have always been extremely committed and dedicated to ensuring that the views and struggles of pensioners are heard at every level of government.

During this most recent meeting they highlighted some of the real struggles that pensioners are facing under both the Abbott and Naphthine conservative governments. They also highlighted that for those who live in the inner city, as well as in other parts of Melbourne, paying council rates has been very difficult on fixed incomes because houses have increased in value exponentially over the last decade but incomes have not. They put to me very strongly the case that we need to look at relief in those areas, which is why Labor is taking to the election a policy of capping council rates. I pay tribute to both these men and their organisation for their strong voice and for imploring all politicians to ensure that the concerns of pensioners are listened to and heard during all decision-making.

### **Dookie Earthed**

**Mrs POWELL** (Shepparton) — On Saturday, 4 October, the township of Dookie came alive, with 5000 people attending Dookie Earthed. This was a

12-hour festival which had the whole town involved and transformed, through art.

I had the honour of opening the festival on behalf of the Minister for the Arts, Heidi Victoria. I was joined by my husband, Ian, the mayor and councillors, and a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place, Wendy Lovell. The member for Hawthorn, who is the former Minister for the Arts, initiated the program. I congratulate the director of Regional Arts Victoria; Helen Kelly, the artistic director of Dookie Earthed; Carrie Donaldson, the project manager of Dookie Arts; Alice Tallis, chair of the Dookie Arts subcommittee; and Greg Barr, The Nationals candidate for Shepparton.

The Victorian government provided \$350 000 for this project, which was also to transform the Dookie quarry with its magnificent ancient rock formation into the Quarry Epitheatre.

### **Furphy family businesses**

**Mrs POWELL** — Congratulations to Adam Furphy, managing director of J. Furphy and Sons Pty Ltd, and Sam Furphy, chairman of Furphy Foundry, on the companies' 150 years of service. Both companies are owned and operated by fifth generation descendants of John Furphy and are proudly located in Shepparton.

The celebration also included the launch of the Furphy Museum in Shepparton on 11 October by the Deputy Premier, who was there with his wife, Trish. Also present were a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place, Wendy Lovell, and The Nationals Shepparton candidate, Greg Barr.

The museum tells the story of the Furphy business, which produced many agricultural products. The most famous is the Furphy farm water cart, which was used at the time of the First World War. Troops gathered around the water carts on the battlefield and told stories — some true, some not so true. Therefore the word 'furphy' was formed; it means 'rumour' or 'false story'.

### **Firefighter compensation**

**Mr DONNELLAN** (Narre Warren North) — I congratulate Country Fire Authority volunteers on the collection over a short period of time of well over 16 000 signatures to petitions about presumptive legislation in relation to firefighters, both volunteer and full time.

We on this side of the house recognise that there is a direct link between fighting fires and certain types of

cancer. We also note that the commonwealth Parliament passed, in a bipartisan way, presumptive legislation which allows recognition of that link and changes the onus of proof from the firefighter. Therefore firefighters are able to make a claim against WorkCover based on the presumption that certain types of firefighting and chemicals can result in cancer.

Over a period of, I think, two months the volunteers collected well over 16 000 signatures to petitions. The government to date has been silent. At the moment there is an inquiry going on at Monash University. I know there are many members of the government who support the idea of presumptive legislation and who are pushing internally in relation to that, but we on this side of the house have fully supported it for the 60 000 volunteers and the full-time firefighters.

### **Firefighter compensation**

**Mr BURGESS** (Hastings) — Earlier this week I tabled a petition that represented half of a petition with a total of more than 60 000 signatures. The petitioners are seeking simpler cancer compensation arrangements for Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer firefighters and their career colleagues.

Victorian firefighters, both paid and volunteer, are a very special breed of people; they are people who choose to put their lives at risk to keep ours safe. We are particularly fortunate in Victoria because, while we have some of the most dangerous fire conditions in the world, we also have some of the very best firefighters in the world.

The issue is one confronting all firefighters, paid and volunteer alike. In Victoria, paid and volunteer firefighters work side by side, attend the same incidents, face the same risks and are exposed to the same toxins. Technically, all Victorian firefighters are already entitled to compensation for work-related cancer, but the current onus of proof arrangements require the firefighter to provide sufficient evidence to prove that the cancer arose from attendance at particular fires or incidents or other work duties. They may be events that occurred over the last 10 to 15 years, or even more. For most firefighters this is difficult because of the absence of sufficient records, data or analysis held by the CFA on each event a firefighter attends.

Under commonwealth jurisdiction and some state laws, the law lists 12 cancers known to be more common to firefighters, and presumes them to be work related if a firefighter has sufficient years of service, effectively reversing the onus of proof. The CFA volunteers are asking for legislation that will take the burden of proof

away from the sick firefighters and, importantly, that will treat all firefighters, volunteer and paid, as equals.

My own electorate is in an area protected by CFA volunteers, but that is not unusual — CFA brigades protective 60 per cent of suburban Melbourne — —

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

### **CREATE Foundation and St Josephs College Parliament House visit**

**Ms HALFPENNY** (Thomastown) — I had the great pleasure of hosting a group of students from the CREATE Foundation and St Josephs College in North Melbourne for lunch and a tour of Parliament House on Tuesday. Many of these students have lived in out-of-home care because they are refugees and their parents are locked up in detention centres or because their own families are unable to look after them.

I was very impressed by how smart, witty and politically up to date these students were. The students have asked me to pass on their thanks to the Premier, the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition, who took the time out to meet with them and who also allowed themselves to be subjected to a grilling. This demonstrates to me how important these students are.

I want to extend my thanks to the students. They were wonderful company and it was a great day. Thank you to Kayla, Dylan, Russ, Rhiannon, Nigel, Rachel, Guy, Matthew, Brooke, Thomas, Muhammad, Mohsen and Parastoo.

### **Victoria Maori Wardens**

**Ms HALFPENNY** — I would also like to pay my respects and offer condolences to the family and friends of Phyllis Tamati of the Victoria Maori Wardens, who recently passed away. Victoria Maori Wardens is an organisation that was established in Melbourne over the last couple of years, although it has been in New Zealand for many years. It is a great organisation that provides a lot of support to and mentoring of young people from Maori and Pacific Islander backgrounds. I had the great honour of joining Victoria Maori Wardens and becoming one of them, although I am yet to get out onto the streets and help them in their work. They do a lot of patrolling of streets, such as the ones around the Frankston shopping area.

### **Lara police resources**

**Mr EREN** (Lara) — I recently hosted an information stall in the suburb of Lara in my electorate.

One of the main issues raised by residents that day was about community safety and the existence of the local police station. They have growing concerns about the increase in crimes committed in their local area. When we see a flashing sign on the main street saying, 'Lock your cars. High incidence of break-ins', you know something is not right. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services should come out and categorically deny that services to that area will be depleted and that the police station will not close.

**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
(SUCCESSION AND SURROGACY)  
BILL 2014**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 15 October; motion of Mr CLARK (Attorney-General).**

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr NOONAN (Williamstown).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

**SEX OFFENDERS REGISTRATION  
AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 17 September; motion of Mr WELLS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services).**

**Mr NOONAN (Williamstown)** — On behalf of the Labor opposition I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Sex Offenders Registration Amendment Bill 2014, and I note at the outset that Labor does not oppose the legislation. The Victorian parliamentary Labor Party clearly supports measures designed to protect people, including children, from sexual offences and abuse. All members of the house will be aware of the issue of sexual abuse of children from this Parliament's own inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations and the federal government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I am sure other members will talk about those inquiries in their contributions, not least the member for Broadmeadows.

The Labor Party supports sensible and considered legislation to further protect and keep members of our community safe from sexual predators. From 1999 to 2010 Labor in government had a proud tradition of enacting, with broad support from all parts of the

Parliament, groundbreaking measures in relation to sex offenders. Labor led the way with extended supervision orders for serious sex offenders, first with regard to offences against children and then with regard to offences against adults. Before we came to government in 1999 such people at the end of their sentences simply walked free, without any restrictions at all. In 2005 the Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 commenced, which provided for community-based, post-sentence extended supervision of child sex offenders at high risk of sexual reoffending. In 2008 the scheme was extended to provide for the extended supervision of high-risk sexual offenders with adult victims.

On 1 January 2010 the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 commenced, with the purpose of enhancing the protection of the community by requiring offenders who have served custodial sentences for certain sexual offences and who present an unacceptable risk of harm to the community to be subject to ongoing detention or supervision. In October 2004 the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 came into operation. In 2005 and 2007 there were amendments to legislation to increase the scope and extent of reporting obligations under the Sex Offenders Registration Act, reducing the likelihood of serious sex offenders reoffending and assisting in the investigation and prosecution of future offences. It was a significant body of work done by the previous government, as I have simply outlined here.

In regard to the operation of the Victorian register of sex offenders, all adults sentenced for committing sexual offences involving a child are automatically included in the register of sex offenders. Sex offenders under 18 and adults sentenced for sexual offences against adult victims may be included by order of the court. Registered sex offenders living in the community must keep the police informed about their personal details and whereabouts for a period determined by the act — typically 8 years, 15 years or in some cases life. Victoria Police is the custodian of the register, and there are more than 4000 Victorians on that register — I think it could be as high as 5000. In our briefing with the department, we were told that around 40 people a month are added to that register.

With respect to this bill Labor is willing to support new measures to provide greater supervision of sex offenders and ensure that there is a sound basis for sensible information sharing in regard to child sex offenders. However, I point out that Labor is less than satisfied with the poor performance of this government when it comes to crime and law and order. New crime figures covering the last financial year, 2013–14, have

recently been published. Under the watch of this government crime has surged 18 per cent in four years. Specifically as they relate to this bill, crimes against the person, which include rape and sexual assault, have increased by a massive 30 per cent over that period. At the same time the Chief Commissioner of Police has been forced to find more than \$100 million worth of savings in his budget, and as a result he has reduced the number of civilian staff by 400.

Labor has particular concerns in relation to this bill, which government members might help explain, relating to the number of recorded offences under the Sex Offenders Registration Act. In four years there has been a doubling of the number of occasions on which registered sex offenders have furnished false or misleading information. That is a very disturbing trend. Whilst we all appreciate the vigilance of Victoria Police and its efforts, the fact is that the number of these offences has increased and remain at very concerning levels. Let me go through those levels. There were 229 offences back in 2009–10 for failure to comply with reporting obligations for those on the sex offenders register. This grew to a staggering 1372 offences in 2012–13. Thankfully it has dropped back in the most recent full financial year to 1037, but there have been over 1000 offences per year for each of the last three years.

This bill deals in no small part with tightening reporting obligations. But we are on the last sitting day of this Parliament, and it is fair to ask why it has taken so long for the bill to be introduced. In saying that, we need only refer to the statistics I have just gone through for the four financial years of reporting to see that this is not a new problem; it is an existing problem, and it has got worse.

The origins of this bill go back to 2011. In February 2011 the Ombudsman handed down a very damning report into a failure by police to notify the Department of Human Services of more than 300 registered sex offenders who had unsupervised access to children or were living with them. The investigation into the failure of agencies to manage registered sex offenders under the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 pointed out a number of limitations in the legislation, including at recommendation 10 the following:

Consider providing a reference to the Victorian Law Reform Commission to examine the legislative arrangements in place for the registration of sex offenders and the management of information provided under its reporting obligations. The ambiguity of the definition of unsupervised contact should be considered in such a review. In addition, the power to test the veracity of information provided to the registry by offenders should also be considered.

In April 2011, the government responded by asking the Victorian Law Reform Commission to review the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004. In all, the commission made 79 recommendations, including a recommendation for enhanced information sharing about sex offenders between police and parents of at-risk children. Those were submitted to the government in December 2011 and were made public in April 2012. Nearly two and a half years later we in this Parliament are now considering this legislation in regard to those recommendations. While this bill will enact many of the recommendations made in the commission's report, there are still some substantial gaps identified in the report that remain unresolved. I will go through some of those as I make my contribution.

I also point out that in terms of identifying those gaps the departmental staff who provided the briefing indicated to us that there would be a national working group established across Australia to look at model legislation in all jurisdictions in relation to the issue of sex offenders. I thank the departmental staff for that briefing and for their advice that in many respects Victoria will lead the work on achieving a better level of national coordination.

However, it is a pity that the current government has not devoted sufficient priority and resources to this important work, with areas of the Victorian Law Reform Commission's work such as recommendation 2 regarding child-related employment, chapter 5 in reference to selecting who is on the register, chapter 6 on refining the reporting obligations and chapter 8 regarding child protection prohibition orders really not featuring as part of this legislation we are debating today.

Perhaps in their contributions government members might explain why these gaps exist while also explaining why it has taken so long to introduce this bill. Again, members will remember that the report of the Victorian Law Reform Commission was completed in December 2011, yet this bill has not come to this chamber for its second reading and subsequent debate until the very last moment.

Turning to provisions in the bill, clause 4 inserts a new definition of contact with children, which was something pointed out by the Ombudsman and reported on extensively by the commission in chapter 7 of its report. That report notes in recommendation 32:

The Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic) should define 'contact' with a child or children for these purposes as:

- (a) any form of physical contact, including physical proximity or touching, or
- (b) any form of oral communication, including face-to-face, by telephone or over the internet, or
- (c) any form of written communication, including electronic communication,

In circumstances where the registered sex offender is:

- (a) supervising or caring for a child or children, or
- (b) visiting or residing at a dwelling where a child or children are present, including staying overnight, or
- (c) exchanging contact details with a child or children, or
- (d) attempting to befriend a child or children.

Most of this is picked up in the bill, albeit in a different formulation, but I note that attempting to befriend a child or children is in fact omitted. Again, there is an opportunity for government members to clarify why there is an omission from the bill in regard to that aspect in terms of attempting to befriend a child or children.

Clauses 10 and 11 impose stricter controls on registered sex offenders by requiring them to verify their movements when travelling overseas. I understand that this is to provide a better and more immediate level of information to police and to act as a deterrent in relation to sex tourism. While it is important, it is worth noting that that particular aspect does not seem to have been covered by the law reform commission's work. The bill also changes reporting obligations by reducing variability of the reporting periods within which registrants must report changes in their personal details. The second-reading speech and explanatory memorandum refer to simplifying arrangements, although in most cases there are reductions from 14 days to 7 days, including to reflect the fact that the time frame for reporting some changes to personal details must be reduced to increase the accountability of registrable offenders. I assume that the main intent of the changes to time frames is simply to impose stricter conditions on offenders on the register. Once again, that is my assumption, and it would be welcomed if government members could outline those intentions to the house and say whether there is any evidence to show that shortening the reporting period obligations would assist with prevention of crime.

A further aspect of this bill is that it provides in clause 28 clearer and more comprehensive arrangements for the sharing of information about registered sex offenders. Secretaries of the Department of Justice and the Department of Human Services can

share information, as can the Chief Commissioner of Police and the secretary. New section 42D, which is inserted by the bill, provides that the Secretary of the Department of Human Services or an authorised person such as a police officer or a caseworker can disclose certain information of a registrant's identity to any other person where on reasonable grounds doing so protects the child's safety. The minister has noted that this might particularly be a parent or guardian.

While the bill is silent as to how or to whom the secretary might be authorised to disclose information, I assume that the minister will seek to clarify that through regulations or protocols, if only to clarify the powers of the secretary. It would be useful to clarify aspects of this — for example, will the secretary provide authorisations on a group or an individual basis, and what are the practical issues the secretary may need to consider in that process?

In clause 13 the bill further provides the chief commissioner with the power to retain important information and intelligence on registered sex offenders after they have completed their period of registration. No doubt this will assist police in their efforts to solve future sexual crimes, as it is apparent that for many sexual offenders there is a pattern of reoffending over a very long period of time. The retention of information may also ultimately assist with the sharing of information between jurisdictions in Australia and help deal with unsolved crimes, particularly as there are significant advances in things such as DNA testing and other forensic crime processes that can solve crimes that have remained unresolved for many years.

The bill provides for new indictable offences for registered sex offenders who fail to report changes in personal details or who furnish false or misleading information to police. I note that recommendation 29 of the Victorian Law Reform Commission report relates to this, but it recommends combining everything into a single offence with a level 7 penalty. The bill provides for a mixture of level 6 and 7 penalties, which is similar to the penalties imposed at present. Whilst this aspect of the commission's report is in the bill, suggested entry and search recommendations by the commission are not included in the bill, which leaves a gap between the work of the commission and what is dealt with in this bill.

Clause 16 of the bill provides the chief commissioner with the power to suspend the reporting obligations of certain registered sex offenders if they are satisfied that the registrant does not pose a risk to the sexual safety of the community. This provision was included in the commission's report, although it was not dealt with in

the minister's press statements. Again, government members might explain that omission or clarify the circumstances under which the chief commissioner might be expected to exercise that power. I assume, for example, that if someone on the sex offenders register became permanently incapacitated, police would no longer be required to exercise the sorts of powers they would under this and other legislation available to them.

As I alluded to before, the bill seeks to codify arrangements for relevant agencies to exchange fulsome and timely information with each other to protect the safety and wellbeing of children who come into contact with registered sex offenders. I note that in his second-reading speech the minister referred to codifying existing arrangements. This is a curious aspect of the bill. If all the arrangements for information exchange are extant, I am not sure why the bill needs to codify them. It is also not clear what the bill adds to the existing arrangements, if anything — for example, is there some case law that requires specific codification? That is not clear.

It is worth making the point, or at least posing the question, about how this provision relates to the Ombudsman's findings that existing arrangements were inadequate. Was it a matter of systems failure or a lack of clarity and guidance in previous regulations? System failure is very much our concern in the areas of child protection and rising crime rates, including the extraordinary rise in the number of offences under the Sex Offenders Registration Act, which I dealt with in the earlier part of my contribution. The bill also contains some minor provisions in regard to transitional arrangements and FOI, which do not pose any concerns to the opposition.

I conclude by saying that Labor takes very seriously issues in regard to sexual crimes and offences. In my own electorate right now there are real concerns over a serial sex offender who is preying on women who are doing nothing more than getting out in the morning to exercise or walk. Some of those women have been wearing headphones and have been targeted. It really shakes the confidence of the community when these offences are committed, but even more so when a series of offences are committed. To their credit the police, as you would expect, have done a power of work in seeking to apprehend this offender, but also to keep the community alert to some of the things its members can do in order to better protect themselves. None of us wants these sorts of people in our communities where their heinous crimes shake the confidence of everyone.

This really goes to the issue about the community being convinced that Victoria is a safer place today than it was in 2010. It is a ridiculous proposition that is continually put. It is a proposition that my community and other communities are having to stomach through a continuous cycle of advertisements telling them that they are safer. The government was happy in 2010 to rely on the crime statistics to make the case that Victoria was not safe, which by the way it was. Under Labor there was an increase in police and a reduction in crime for each and every year it was in government.

If the government was happy to use those measurements when it was in opposition, it should be prepared to face up to the fact that it needs to be measured by those same statistics. It should stop the nonsense that it continues to promote across the media outlets with its ridiculous and outrageous ads. However, as sure as night follows day we will continue to hear government members, one after another, stand up and boast about their government's record on law and order. I encourage those members to visit my community and explain how these policies are helping those women who want to do nothing more than go out for a weekend jog or who are too afraid to venture out in the community for some leisure activities.

I will not trek back over crime rates — we all know they are up. Our collective priority should be to keep people and children safe from sexual predators. The record of this government is just not good enough. The increase in the number of offences under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 is alarming, and the government and the minister have been sitting on their hands for far too long. Again I return to the fact that the bill emanates from a report in 2011, which was made public in early 2012, but on the last sitting day of this term of the Parliament, in October 2014, we are debating the bill. We do have a bill before us at last, nearly three years after the Law Reform Commission presented its report, but since the 2010–11 financial year crime has increased by nearly 21 per cent, in just three years.

Police have been hamstrung by having to find more than \$100 million of savings in their budget, and as a result they have reduced the number of civilian staff by approximately 400. No wonder we are seeing half-done, late legislation. On behalf of the opposition I am willing to allow the passage of the bill without opposition, but I condemn the government for its failure on law and order and its failure to rein in the crime rate, including by sex offenders on the register.

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) — It is my pleasure to speak on the Sex Offenders Registration Amendment

Bill 2014. This is a very important bill, and I commend the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for Community Services and the Attorney-General for their work in this area. We have been diligent in working towards ensuring that the public feels safe. Policing and law and order have been top priorities for our government. We have provided record funding in policing, introduced a number of reforms in law and order and introduced a range of laws around ensuring that children and families feel safe and that we stamp out the horrid family violence that surrounds us.

I also commend the government and those involved in the *Betrayal of Trust* report, which goes to the heart of ensuring that all our children feel safe and are protected in every possible way. It is interesting that the member for Williamstown said we as a government have not done enough and that he criticised us for the work we have done. He went on to talk about the issue of family violence and said the government has not done enough to protect women. That is an appalling thing to say, particularly as in the last few weeks we have introduced a comprehensive policy supported by \$150 million funding to ensure that women feel safe. The implementation of the policy includes education utilising the latest technology in regard to protection of women, as well as changes to the monitoring of sex offenders.

What was the response from the opposition when we released the policy last week? The shadow Attorney-General said, 'Too little too late. We don't think the government has done enough. When we are in government we will have a royal commission into this matter'. That is typical of the opposition. It is all about talking about things and not doing anything at all. It is quick to criticise, and its criticism of this bill is an example of that. The shadow minister for police, the member for Williamstown, could have stood up and said, 'This is important legislation that we need to pass'. He could have shown bipartisanship in this area and said, 'This is something that together we should be working on to ensure that sex offenders are held to account and children are kept safe on our streets'. But what did he do? He grandstanded and said the bill was too little too late, that we should have moved more quickly and that his party would have moved more quickly. But in 11 years the opposition did nothing in this area.

We are mopping up, fixing up and introducing important legislation. The bill creates an indictable offence for registrants who fail to report changes in personal details or who furnish false or misleading information about certain personal details to police

responsible for managing them. That is an important change in the legislation — that sex offenders need to report in a timely manner the contact they have with children. Previously contact was measured exclusively by time, but now it will be measured in terms of actual contact because however brief the contact, it may be enough to be considered a breach of the offence. The bill defines 'contact' in order to ensure that all periods in which a child comes into contact with an offender are properly monitored.

One of the most important elements of the change is that it imposes stricter controls for registrants when they move or travel. In the media we have seen reports of sex tourism, where people head overseas and commit crimes against children. Prior to the bill being introduced a lot of that information was not recorded, reported or monitored, but the measures in the bill ensure that a whole range of information, including where an offender stays while overseas, what they do and all their arrangements and information are reported back to ensure that we know what is happening. It clarifies that reporting element and ensures that all of the information is taken into account.

Another important change to the legislation is that it gives police officers the express power to disclose the identity of a registered sex offender to a parent, guardian or another third party where doing so protects the child safety. Previously this information would have remained confidential. In a situation where someone was responsible for the care of a child and unwittingly allowed a potential sex offender to come into contact with the child, the police would not necessarily have been able to disclose that information to the child's carer. This is important. We know that often these crimes are committed because there is insufficient awareness of an offender and the person who is best served by having this information is the carer. In many instances children do not understand the dangers that are around them, so it is important that those carers and guardians have that information.

The bill creates new indictable offences for people on the register who fail to report changes in their personal details. It allows police to prosecute offenders on the register who fail to report or lie to police about information that could lead to reoffending, including information about contact with children, online identities, telephone details, club affiliations and memberships. The bill creates summary offences for the non-reporting of certain personal details that may lead to reoffending. It clarifies when people on the register are required to report to police and ensures that all the relevant information is retained if police believe the information may be needed at a further time. The

bill now allows police to retain that information rather than having to destroy it as they would have in the past.

In the last moments of my contribution on this bill I would like to commend the government for its diligence in delivering on law and order and policing which ensures that our citizens feel safe on our streets. We have done it through record funding of police services. We have trained and introduced 1700 new police on our streets, and we are very proud of the work that our police officers do and conscious of the danger they are subjected to every day. The introduction of protective services officers on each and every train station from 6.00 p.m. until the last train departs has ensured that commuters feel safe. We know from the feedback of many of those commuters that they face a completely different situation now when they are travelling on public transport. Public transport is the artery from our suburbs into and through the city and can be a filter for crime in many instances. Having those protective services officers visible on train stations ensures that commuters feel safe.

It is absolutely critical with anything we do in this house that the safety of our citizens is paramount, that law and order is paramount and, in relation to this particular bill, that the safety of children is paramount. I am sure all members of the house feel the same way. It is my pleasure to commend to the house a bill that seeks to ensure that children in Victoria continue to be safe under our government.

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Sex Offenders Registration Amendment Bill 2014. I acknowledge that Labor will be supporting this bill.

I wish to comment in response to the member for Caulfield's inappropriate attack on the member for Williamstown. Rather than arguing on the facts he argued against the member. I want to point out that it is not only the role of the opposition but the duty of the opposition to highlight deficiencies so that we get better results. I am particularly bemused that the member for Caulfield claimed the member for Williamstown did not make his contribution in a bipartisan way, because I would argue he went out of his way to do that. The issue of bipartisanship is critical. It should never be forgotten that bipartisanship is the gift of the opposition; that is the ultimate proposition.

We now understand that the sexual and physical abuse of children has been endemic in many public and private institutions of our state for a long time. We know there has been a failure to address these issues when they have been brought to the attention of those

organisations. We know the criminal justice system has been deficient in protecting victims and potential victims. We know that an alternative dispute resolution system is required to complement the civil law remedies. We know all critical reforms are required and there is no excuse for not having moved on these reforms on all fronts.

The value of the inquiry into child sexual abuse by religious and other non-government organisations and the publication of the report, *Betrayal of Trust*, was that it validated the rights of individuals. However, this government has failed to deliver on changing the broad principles which are crystal clear and incontrovertible. It is to the advantage of the organisations that appeared before the inquiry to postpone or delay the implementation of the recommendations in the anticipation that eventually the community will move on, leaving them relatively unscathed in the long term. That is exactly what has happened in other jurisdictions.

If accountability simply involves acceptance of temporary outbursts of anger and nothing more, then it is not meaningful to anyone, least of all the victims, and it does not provide any greater protection for the future. Criminal sexual abuse of children was covered up because the institutions knew of its significance. This is the critical motivation for the cover-up that led to wilful blindness, codes of silence and noble cause corruption. This was outlined in detail in the *Betrayal of Trust* report.

I remind the Parliament that the *Betrayal of Trust* report identified a cover-up that killed. That is the proposition we are dealing with here. There is no conceivable justification for not implementing all of the recommendations that won bipartisan support. Bipartisanship is critical, it is rare and it should not be squandered. It was given in good faith that this would be the mechanism for all of the recommendations to be implemented in the 57th Parliament, and here we are today, on the day that this Parliament expires, and it has not been done. That is a failure of this government. It is a failure of its duty, and it is a failure of the people whom we as a Parliament invited to come here and to testify.

This was harrowing evidence for everyone involved. An 87-year-old woman disclosed for the first time what had happened. The people who came before this Parliament showed enormous fortitude. They were courageous to do it. We now know that it takes on average 23 years before people can even address these issues that have blighted their lives. They stood on the steps here on the day that the *Betrayal of Trust* report

was handed down. They came in and listened to what was being debated and the response to it on that day. They had what they called the Rally of Hope. They had red balloons, and they really wanted to hear the response. They were absolutely delighted that they had been heard, and that was incredibly important. I was in Queen's Hall, and they dragged me out to address the rally on the fly. We had middle-aged men weeping with joy, we had women who had been silenced by unspeakable crimes from the time they were girls giving three cheers for the Parliament of Victoria, the 57th Parliament — cheers that we had bipartisanship on this issue, that we were going to implement all of the recommendations.

Since then I have appealed in a bipartisan way at every opportunity to the government to introduce all of the recommendations, because if we do not implement them, we fail these people. Does the government not understand what is going on? There is another excuse — 'Wait until the royal commission hands down its findings'. It is irrelevant; we know the royal commission will only echo what we have revealed. It is no longer good enough to say about the past, 'We didn't know'. Yes, there was a cover-up, but it is now revealed. In my view that makes it worse that we have not acted in this 57th Parliament and that we have not delivered on our duty to all these people and to the community to provide a safer Victoria. This is the least we should have done.

I have raised it in adjournment matters for the Premier and the Attorney-General. I have gone to the media. I have campaigned as best I can in a bipartisan way, and I will continue to do this. The Labor Party is on the record as saying that should we win the great privilege and honour of the right to govern the state of Victoria, we will implement all of these recommendations, because here is what is going on: religious institutions are saying to the government, 'You don't have to do this, wait until the royal commission hands down its findings'. Then they are saying to the royal commission, 'No, it is a states issue, let them do it'. This is what has happened in other jurisdictions. Eventually what will happen is that other events will overtake this issue and the media attention, the community focus, the focus of this Parliament will move to other issues. These people could be left yet again.

Some of our leading philanthropists have written to the Premier. They wrote to me, and I raised it in the Parliament — again in a bipartisan way — so that what needs to be done actually gets done. They have said, 'Please don't do this', and they have stated that if the recommendations were not implemented it would be, in

their words, another betrayal of trust. I really want members to think about what has happened to these people and how institutions have failed them all their lives. We invited them and we asked them to go through these harrowing, life-defining issues in many ways. We had parents whose children had committed suicide, and they came. They showed enormous courage. You can see how they still carry it. It is right there; you look into their eyes and you can see it. You can see the hurt. We had the opportunity to stand as one and to get all of this passed. The evidence is incontrovertible; there are no valid excuses. It goes to the issue of why people feel betrayed by institutions on a bigger level and why there is a lack of faith. This was the opportunity we had to do this together.

I want to thank all of the members who were on the *Betrayal of Trust* inquiry, right across the political spectrum. Liberal Party members, Nationals members and my colleague, the member for Thomastown, all did a great job. We all gave it everything we could. The member for Hawthorn has come into the house; I want to acknowledge the member for Hawthorn, the former Premier, for setting up the inquiry. It is rare that we have an opportunity to make systemic changes that will affect generations of people. That is my sorrow today. That is my regret — that on the final day of the 57th Parliament I am standing here saying, 'Why didn't it happen?'. It should have happened, and this is the least we should have done. In good faith I ask that no matter who wins the right and the privilege of governing the state of Victoria for the 58th Parliament, we get this done. We do not have to wait for a royal commission — no more ducking and diving and walking away and finding excuses. This is what shreds credibility institutionally. It has got to be done better, and hopefully it will be done under Labor.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time; by leave, proceeded to third reading.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

## VALEDICTORY STATEMENTS

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) — I seek leave for retiring members to make valedictory statements for a maximum of 10 minutes each.

**Leave granted.**

**Mr KOTSIRAS** (Bulleen) — Being a member of the Victorian Parliament is an honour and an enormous privilege. It has its rewards but also its challenges. You have good days and you have bad days. I have had the privilege of serving the people of the electorate of Bulleen as a local member for 15 years, and together we have achieved much. I thank them for their trust, support and encouragement, and I owe them my gratitude. As the local member I was driven by what is right and wrong, not by left or right or political ideology.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship I emphasised to all Victorians that if you try hard enough, you can have unity through diversity — and Victoria is a better place for valuing our cultural diversity. As Minister for Energy and Resources I tried to make it fairer for consumers and to deliver benefits to all consumers, and I tried to instil in mining companies the thought that they need a social licence as well as a mining licence to be successful.

As a member of Parliament, in your party room you participate in debates, you feel the tension and the anxiety, you hear emotionally charged views on social issues and you discuss political directions. Then you come out of your party room and repeat the whole process again in this place. On a daily basis you deny what is written about you, you question what is said about you and you refute what others allege that you have done — and that is simply dealing with our media, because on a daily basis we are individually assessed by our friends in the media. We are assessed on our performance in Parliament, on our performance on TV, on the number of times we appear in the media, on the number of stories we give the media — and we get bonus marks should it be a leak from our own party — on the type of car we drive and whether it has a sunroof or tow bar, and on whether the local sporting club has offered us a free cappuccino. We are constantly put under the microscope, and I welcome that. It comes with the job, and if you cannot handle the scrutiny, you are in the wrong business.

Our friends in the media are the same people who blame the editor or subeditor when your quote is missing from a story that you have given them. But the reality is that we cannot do without the fourth estate; it is part of our political process. I thank those individual journalists I have exchanged words or shared a cup of coffee with over the years. It has been a real joy responding to their inquiries, especially at 5 o'clock in the morning. The one thing I will really miss is hearing, 'Mate, this is off the record. Can you tell me about ...', which is code for, 'I've written the story, I've got no facts, but please give me something which I can hang it

on'. I did not realise the number of senior spokespeople we have in the Liberal Party!

I also thank the ethnic and multicultural media, which are valuable, especially *Neos Kosmos*, radio 3XY, *Il Globo* and *El Telegraph* for their support. I hope that at some stage we will find room for our multicultural media in the media gallery, because I think they deserve it.

I also thank those in the Greek community of Victoria for their support over the last 15 years. My success has been partly due to their assistance and encouragement. I would like to thank the Premier for having confidence in me and giving me an additional responsibility with the energy and resources portfolio. Denis, you are a great Premier and a great leader. You are a leader who is able to relate to people, a person who keeps his word, and a Premier with a real vision for Victoria. I wish you all the best in the future.

I say to my former ministerial colleagues, it was fantastic working with you. If I remember anything from those cabinet meetings, it has to be the cabinet lunches that we individually paid for. That is for our friends in the media. The search for that elusive meat platter reminded me of my children during the annual Easter egg hunt. I am very proud to have been part of a team that has made a real difference to Victoria. To my Liberal and Nationals parliamentary colleagues, I thank you for your friendship, advice and companionship during the last 15 years. I say a special thankyou to all the members of the prayers group, which has met religiously at 6.00 p.m. every sitting day for 30 minutes. I hope prayers will continue in the new Parliament, and I endorse the member for Nepean as the new chairman of that group.

To my parliamentary colleagues on the other side, I have come to know some of you via committee work and our overseas trips, and I thank you for your friendship. Can I say to the member for Eltham that I will remain true to my word and not reveal our activities and interests overseas for the rest of my life. To the Leader of the Opposition, I thank you for your bipartisan support for multicultural affairs. Unfortunately your kind words and praise for me at events made me spend an hour convincing the people present that I was not a member of the ALP.

Thanks to my electorate staff, Trish Drivas, Vita Brecevic and Sarah Moate, for their loyalty and hard work over the years. Our electorate staff are the people who make us look good. This is especially true when you are a minister. They are the ones who deal with constituents that you do not want to deal with or that

you are unable to see. To my former ministerial staff, Con Allimonos, Anthony Moate, Abilene Roscoe, Greg Hannan, Miranda Oakes, Peter Leminos and Roula Hatzimanolis, I say thank you for your guidance, support and loyalty while I was minister. I could not have achieved anything without your assistance.

I need to thank the clerks, of course. Apologies to the clerks for not honouring my commitment to bring back the wigs, as I promised you I would if we formed government. To the rest of the staff in this Parliament, I thank you for making my life so much easier. The Victorian Parliament works so smoothly and efficiently thanks to your efforts. I would like to thank my chairman, Malcolm Andrewartha, and his wife, Margaret, for their support, guidance and advice over the last 15 years, and more recently, Eddy Gisonda, for his tireless efforts.

I also need to thank all the branch members in the electorate of Bulleen. Each and every one of you was instrumental in ensuring that we did better at every election. While some of my colleagues on this side of the house would say that the Bulleen annual general meeting was held during our annual family Christmas dinner, the reality is that the membership must be representative of the local community in order to be successful.

I came into this place in opposition, and it has been a fantastic journey to go from opposition to government and to serve as a minister. I have to say there is no better place to learn the ropes, gain the skills and get to know the people than in opposition, because when you finally get into government you never want to go back to opposition. While I wish all of you all the best for the forthcoming elections I believe those opposite need a few more years to experience opposition so they can appreciate government in 2030.

Finally, I say thank you to my family — my wife, Angela, and children, Stavroula, Costa and James, and my grandchildren — Angelina, Alexia, Angelique and Peter. Thank you for your help over the last 15 years. Thank you to my mum and my father for their sacrifices; I appreciate the work. I thank you all and wish you all the best.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Pascoe Vale) — I thank the Parliament for the unique opportunity to express my gratitude. Firstly, thank you to Kevin, my wonderful husband of 37½ years. For just over 50 per cent of our married life I have been the member for Pascoe Vale, and virtually every night during that time you have

asked me, ‘What did you do today? How was work?’ Your interest and care has been profound and enduring. Through times of immense elation or hell, and everything in between, you have always been with me. To have you as my husband has been the greatest gift of my life.

Thanks to our children, Clare, Greg, Tim and Rebecca. Dad and I are so proud of the wonderful daughters and sons that you are and the good citizens which you have become. For you I am just ‘Mum.’ Your spirit, family values and work ethics are individually moulded but you are obviously partly the product of our family’s political involvement. Hopefully I have taught you to give 110 per cent to your work but to remember that no work deserves the sacrifice of your nature and values. You live longer with yourself than with any job or cause. For Dad and me, you are the greatest gifts of our lives.

To my extended family, especially my mum, dad, siblings and friends, thanks for sustaining me. As the nomination form for the seat of Pascoe Vale was an official document I signed it as ‘Christine’, which introduced a dividing line into my life. Before that, except for Mum and Dad, everyone called me Chris. To my lifelong friends who call me Chris I promise that in future when we are partying my mobile phone will be off. If it goes off, put it in water, not the glass of red or white that I hope we are enjoying!

To Labor Party members, thank you for the honour of being preselected five times. To the two State Electorate Campaign Committee (SECC) office-bearers who have long service awards — our inaugural and ongoing campaign secretary, Michael Leahy, and Ron Spencer, our treasurer — I say thank you. Our SECC composition was always fully inclusive of the very rich tapestry of Labor. Our campaign teams and volunteers for each election have been superb. Together, our successful campaigns have promoted Pascoe Vale from 18th when I was preselected to 14th in my first election. That result was either maintained or improved. In 1999 we were 11th; in 2002 we were 14th; in 2006 we were 11th and at the last election we were 9th. With the new boundaries we are 7th on the pendulum and we have an increased two-party preferred vote. I am proud of these immensely important results for our party and for my team at Pascoe Vale.

To my constituents in Pascoe Vale, thank you for these electoral results, which indicate your trust and appreciation of me and the outstanding work of my outstanding electorate officers. ‘Making people the priority’ has been my motto since being preselected in 1995. Together with my electorate office team I have

strived to live and deliver that motto. We have delivered first-class individual and personalised service and established a trusting partnership on many community projects. I sincerely thank my electorate officers for their dedication to constituents, to the party and to me. Particular thanks go to Kerrie Loughnan, Jenny Lobato and Kathleen Matthews-Ward, who have worked on all my campaigns.

In partnership with my staff, the Labor team, inspiring community visionaries and the Moreland City Council team, we have achieved significant results for the electorate including delivery of the entire Edgars Creek parkland management to Moreland City Council. We have rebuilt Pascoe Vale North Primary School and Oak Park Primary School, saved Glenroy Valley open space from subdivision with its transferral to Moreland City Council for public open space, built the new Fawkner police station, retained the old Oak Park High School gym for the Strathmore Unicorns Basketball Club, established Harmony Park and obtained funding for its Access for All Abilities playground.

We have also completed the Upfield shared pathway to the end of my electorate and achieved many other wonderful sporting upgrades such as those at the Pascoe Vale Sports Club, the Glenroy sports association and the Pascoe Vale Soccer Club, lighting for the Moreland Wolves Soccer Club, court upgrades for the Hadfield, Glenroy and Oak Park tennis clubs and the Hadfield Netball Club as well as new multi-use courts in Gowanbrae. They were all delivered under Labor — only Labor! Thanks to our Labor state governments, ministers and advisers who delivered these projects, some in partnership with Moreland City Council and our local communities.

There are so many individual and delightful constituents who have contacted my electorate office and been looked after in the way we or our own parents, siblings, friends or children would like to be looked after. They have persistently received caring and courteous advice, delivered with great integrity. I can give lots of examples, but I want to quote the one we are never able to help people with: they could not understand why we could not get them off speeding fines, red-light fines, parking fines or myki fines. The lowlight was Melbourne Water and the misleading of Pascoe Vale residents. If any member of senior management at Melbourne Water ever wants to get in touch with me and take on board what they should have done and can still do, I am still available and my mobile number remains unchanged.

It is not only Labor ministers who know of Team Pascoe Vale's persistent advocacy. The Minister for

Roads knows that I have forwarded to him 55 written constituent complaints about their inability to sleep or open windows because of the Western Ring Road and their desperate need for noise walls. I have good news for him: after November he need no longer be kept awake thinking about what innovative ways he will say no, because an Andrews Labor government is going to deliver those noise walls. The Minister for Education, who knows Team Westbreen Primary School has relentlessly raised the issue of its school rebuild, will be able to sleep easy too: I will no longer be handpassing him his Carlton footballs across the chamber with the relevant messages inside because an Andrews government is going to rebuild the Westbreen Primary School.

I will refer to some assorted highlights. The Victorian adoption apology in October 2012 and the national apology in May 2013 were immense. I thank Elizabeth Edwards and other mothers whose children were illegally taken from them for adoption for their fortitude and endurance. In 1996, as shadow minister for women, I sat in disbelief as I was briefed for hours on example after example of illegal adoptions of children who had been stolen. The apologies occurred because of the relentless and courageous endeavours of mothers for the truth to be recognised — the truth that they gave birth to babies whom they loved and continue loving. Elizabeth's outstanding leadership has extended from this state to national and international movements, and other parliaments are now learning the truth from brave mothers who are giving evidence of how they were unsupported and/or duped and had their children stolen. We thank them for their persistence and for teaching us the truth.

Elizabeth was also one of the many mothers who tried to warn Victorian MPs that surrogacy was the new form of abuse of some mothers for the benefit of childless couples. At the time her comments seemed alarmist to me and many MPs, but recent events have proven her wise insights. To be a parent is not a right; surrogacy serves the same end as unlawful adoption. My vote would go to Elizabeth for an Australian of the Year award. The joy of meeting so many adoptees, such as Tom Corneille, who have stood beside Elizabeth and other mothers, is profound, as is the heartbreak of mothers such as June Smith, whose adult child refuses to meet her. One joy of being an MP who has travelled during the last 18 years and has been touched so much by adoption is Tom's annual Valentine's Day card, which is addressed to 'his girl in the big house'.

When the opportunity to exercise conscience votes occurred, I did so. I could have sat on the sidelines and

walked into the chamber for the vote, but to the acclaim of some and the consternation of others I chose to speak. What I said, I believed. What I believed, I said.

Two reasons prompted me to stand for Parliament: one was the gag by the Kennett government on welfare agencies, committees and staff, which manifested itself in funding threats to the agency I managed. One of the things I spoke about then was surrogacy. Interestingly that gag ended up with me nominating and then fighting the Labor government on surrogacy. I will continue to speak and advocate. As one colleague said in an interesting comment, 'Even if your constituents do not agree with you on bioethical matters, they know that if they ask for support on any other matters, they know you will present their case, even if it means challenging colleagues'.

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

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mrs POWELL** (Shepparton) — On 15 May 1996 I stood in the Legislative Council with great excitement and optimism and gave my inaugural speech. Today, almost 18½ years later, I stand in this place with some sadness but also some satisfaction to make my valedictory speech. It has been a great honour and privilege to have been elected as a member of the Victorian Parliament as a representative for the electorate of North Eastern Province in the other place and, from 2002, the wonderful electorate of Shepparton in this place. I thank the community of Shepparton district for putting their faith and trust in me by re-electing me over the years to represent their interests in this Parliament.

I particularly thank my wonderful husband of 44 years, Ian, for his love, support and patience. When the community elected me they got two for the price of one, as Ian often joins me at community events as well as being a leader in the community in his own right. He is in the gallery this morning. I thank my two wonderful sons, Corey and Nathan, for their unfailing love and support. They have helped me at every election. I also thank my wonderful daughters-in-law, Allyson and Verity, and precious grandsons Alex, Cody and Thomas. Hopefully I will now be able to spend more time with them.

I have had the proud and unique distinction of being the first woman elected to The Nationals in Victoria in both houses of Parliament. I acknowledge the great support of my Nationals colleagues. Even though as members of Parliament we are spread right across rural and

regional Victoria we are a close-knit unit. It is like having 12 brothers, and their wives. I particularly acknowledge the great support and guidance given to me by the wonderful Leader of The Nationals, Peter Ryan. Despite all of his commitments he still finds time to support each and every one of us. I also thank The Nationals party head office and its staff.

It has been a privilege to be a part of this successful coalition government. I would like to thank my Liberal Party colleagues for their friendship and support, and I acknowledge the Premier, Denis Naphine, for his strong leadership. I also congratulate the Leader of the House, Louise Asher, for her leadership and hard work over this last year.

As members of Parliament we are often away from our electorates, so it is vital to have good electorate staff. Fortunately for me, I do. I thank my electorate officer, Diane Bethel, my right-hand person who is so professional and good with the community; Lindsay Dann, my research and media adviser, who knows just about everybody in Shepparton and has probably taught them; and Greg Barr, who was a fantastic electorate officer but resigned after working for me for 10 years and is now The Nationals candidate for the seat of Shepparton. He will make a wonderful member of Parliament if he is fortunate enough to be elected at the coming election. I also thank my former staff Kristen, Gen and Ro.

I would like to acknowledge my wonderful branch members who support me at every election. Thank you also to the president of my Assembly electorate district council, Terry Lanyon. I would like to acknowledge a former member for Shepparton, Don Kilgour, for his guidance and support and his wife, Cheryl, for their friendship and support to me and to The Nationals.

After the last election I was honoured to become the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and I thank the Leader of The Nationals and former Premier Ted Baillieu for that opportunity, which was endorsed by Premier Denis Naphine when he was selecting his cabinet. I am very proud of the work we did as a cabinet and as a government. I am proud of the work we did in consultation with local councils, delivering the most significant reform in local government in two decades. Thank you to the leadership and staff of Local Government Victoria for their hard work. My experience as a councillor and shire president of the former Shepparton shire and commissioner of the shire of Campaspe showed me the importance of local government.

I thank the leadership and staff of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria for their commitment and support to Indigenous Victorians. I am particularly proud to have helped establish the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll, which records Indigenous Victorians who make a substantial contribution to their community and to Victoria.

I acknowledge the bipartisan support of the opposition when dealing with matters important to Indigenous Victorians. The shadow Minister for Local Government and shadow minister for Aboriginal affairs and Closing the Gap, the member for Richmond, and I have worked respectfully and professionally with each other, as we did when he was the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I thank those opposition members who I have worked with on a number of committees for their friendship and great support.

As a minister you need plenty of support, and I am grateful to have had very professional ministerial staff, who are now the new minister's staff. I acknowledge my former chief of staff Simon Price, who was always on call; my executive assistant Melissa Short, for whom nothing was ever too much trouble; my advisers Josh Smith, James Martin and Sean Burton; departmental liaison officers Brendan, Rosie and Clara; and my former ministerial staff James, Kylie, Greg and Leon.

As a minister, drivers are also important. Those who have had the opportunity of having a driver understand how close you get to them because you are in the car with them over many kilometres. I acknowledge Paul Trevaskis, who almost became part of our family, as well as his wife, Bec, and his son, Stan. I also thank Don and Alan.

I thank the parliamentary staff, including John Nugent and the Hansard staff; Paul, Karen and staff in catering; the attendants of both houses of Parliament; the Speaker; and the Clerk. Thank you, Ray Purdey, for your wisdom and guidance. I also thank the media; I have always been treated respectfully and fairly.

My father brought his family to Australia from Liverpool, England, because the adverts said it was the land of opportunity, and for a ten-pound Pom who grew up in public housing and went to public schools to have the opportunity to be a member of Her Majesty's government shows that Victoria truly is the state of opportunity.

I am grateful and honoured to have had the opportunity to represent my community in this place. We should never, ever forget why we were elected and who

elected us. The great Peter Ross-Edwards, a former Leader of The Nationals and a former member for Shepparton, told me that you must always be part of your community. I hope I was able to make a difference for the better.

To my colleagues who are retiring — those on our side and those on the opposition side — I wish you good health and happiness in whatever you do in your future. I wish you all the best for any other career you have. I hope it is not retirement and that you find something else to do when you leave this place. To those who are continuing, I wish you good luck and all the best for the 58th Parliament of Victoria.

In this place you get the opportunity to mould legislation and laws for the community of Victoria. It is a very special honour. As a member of this Parliament, every time legislation came in I looked to my conscience, to the way I was brought up and to the advice I was given by many people, and I made decisions on legislation. In most instances the opposition also supported the legislation we as a government brought in. This is a place where you reform laws when there are inaccuracies or improvements that can be made. We make those improvements.

It has been an absolute delight and a great journey. I wish you all the best, and I wish everybody the best in the 58th Parliament.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr PANDAZOPOULOS** (Dandenong) — I will speak about 22 years in 10 minutes. I am the longest serving member for Dandenong and the first from a migrant background, which is very fitting for one of the most culturally diverse parts of Victoria. I have served six terms, and two as a minister. There is no greater honour than to serve in this place, but after that there is no greater honour than to be a minister, particularly in the areas of policy passion that led me into politics in the first place, and they include my recognition of my own cultural diversity.

Yesterday we had some Arabic community leaders come to talk to us about the diversity of the Arab world and the Middle East, and a Maronite Lebanese addressed us and said, 'I didn't really realise I was something different to Australian until in secondary school I was asked during the first Gulf War whether I was pro or against Saddam Hussein'. Those of us from cultural backgrounds believe in our diversity, but interestingly I think all of us would agree that our consciousness is raised by others who choose to

differentiate us from the rest of what we think it is to be Australian.

One of my policy areas of interest is diversity and multiculturalism. For the member for Bulleen and I, with our Greek heritage — Greece is where democracy was developed — perhaps the democratic principle is part of our DNA. The democratic principle of being a citizen is to serve and to be active, and politics allows you that opportunity and the opportunity to be involved in the things you want to do.

Why did I get involved? I wanted to regenerate the area I grew up in. I grew up in a suburb, Doveton, that was built as a housing commission area. It was built to service General Motors, Heinz, International Trucks and the rest of the manufacturing industry of Dandenong. It was an area of many British and other migrants. Dandenong was a place that gave a start in life to many people, and it continues to do exactly the same thing. Housing, as expensive as it is, is a little more affordable there, so if you are starting off with a chance in life, you will either go to Dandenong or to Broadmeadows, which is a mirror image of that community.

If you visit Dandenong now and have a look at the public facilities, you can see the transformation that has mostly occurred because of the work of Labor governments, to be fair about it. I know that other governments have done their bit, but Labor has provided the major funding and has worked with colleagues around creating a vision for renewing and regenerating Dandenong to harness the additional opportunities that there are in that area. This includes re-engineering the area, as manufacturing changes and declines in some areas and the service sector grows.

Dandenong was missing out on that. If you go and have a look at the main street of Dandenong you will see the significant progress that has been made with the state government office block, the new tax office under construction, and new private sector offices and investment moving into that area, with great shops and retail opportunities. That will continue to grow. It happened because the Labor government intervened in the marketplace. In effect it was the developer, because there was market failure in some of those areas and organisations. VicUrban, as it was then — it is now Places Victoria — has had a great team that has helped to transform Dandenong.

Upgrades have also occurred across many public facilities. Dandenong Hospital has been totally rebuilt with more beds; the mental health facilities have been upgraded, and schools and other public facilities in the

area have been worked on. There is no greater pride than to be able to be the member who works with their team to deliver those very positive outcomes. The worst thing in an area like Dandenong — and there are areas of lower socio-economic circumstance where great people live, though they struggle — is to see the place not looking new or refreshed, giving people the impression that they do not have access to the same quality of services that others would expect in other areas.

I have also been involved in policy areas that have garnered bipartisan support. I was a minister when we went through the very tough period of time post 9/11 and in the aftermath of the Bali bombings. It was a difficult time, made more difficult by Pauline Hanson, who had a different perspective. They were particularly difficult times for the most culturally diverse part of Australia. We saw leadership at that very important time. We saw leadership by Jeff Kennett as Premier of the time; we also saw leadership by Premiers Steve Bracks and John Brumby. As someone from a culturally diverse background, it was great to see that strong leadership, which has continued under the premierships of Ted Baillieu and Denis Napthine. There has been continuous reaffirmation that we had these troubled times. It meant we had to do things to keep the community together and to get the community to remember that we are a multicultural country, and that this is a positive thing for us.

We had to enact new laws. We enacted the racial and religious tolerance laws, because it was a very tough time. It brought out various diverse voices, including extreme voices from people who thought it was okay to vilify people on the basis of their race and religion. While it was a difficult time, I want to thank those on the other side who worked with us through it. They included Helen Shardey, Phil Honeywood, Nick Kotsiras and Ted Baillieu, to name but a few. When they were in opposition, they worked with their teams to ensure that we had the numbers so that such important legislation — that I think has stood the test of time — could be enacted in Victoria and be supported by all in an environment where we were a minority government. There were a whole number of public forums right across the state, which I travelled to, to try to deal with any people who were opposed to it. I tried to explain the purposes of the legislation through a personal approach. I think that assisted in us being able to deliver these things.

The Multicultural Victoria Act also enshrines multiculturalism in law. It recognises that the state has obligations to ensure that it delivers services to everyone, irrespective of their background. It also

recognises that people from culturally diverse backgrounds add to our economy and our society, but also have some different needs around language and for culturally appropriate services to be provided. The Multicultural Victoria Act, which may I say has been improved during this term of government, is something that creates an obligation on government to report to Parliament and the people of Victoria.

The other major policy area for me has been tourism. To have the opportunity to be a minister working in two areas that you are passionate about is a rare opportunity. What I love about tourism is that it is about who we are; multiculturalism is also about who we are. These things get us thinking outwards, rather than inwards. Multiculturalism gets us to think about the communities all around the world that people have come from to make Australia, and in particular Melbourne and Victoria, their home. Tourism is about people wanting to share the things that they love and enjoy about the place in which they live. It also adds to the economy, and has significant multiplier effects. I looked at some data when I was tourism minister, back in about 2000. I think the data set revealed it was about a \$10.5 billion industry; now it is a \$19.5 billion industry for Victoria. What other industries have in effect doubled in size in less than 15 years in this state? I think we really underplay that as a community, maybe because we think about the pleasurable side of tourism rather than thinking about the serious business side, which adds to jobs and their dispersal across regional Victoria.

Tourism explains who we are. When we pride ourselves on being the world's friendliest city or the world's most livable city, for international travellers that equates to multiculturalism, friendly faces, familiarity, happy-go-lucky Australians who have opened their doors to the world to let people come and live here freely and to contribute to this country. That is what they see, and that has economic bonuses. We are a great practical example to a troubled world of how so many people from so many different parts of the world can live together peacefully and in harmony. Tourism reinforces that.

Finally, as major projects minister it was great to be able to travel around Dandenong and the rest of Victoria, including the city, to see some of the projects that I was associated with. Federation Square was an initiative of the Kennett government. When we came into government it was said in the first briefing, 'Minister, it is going to cost \$550 million. We have 110 million bucks in the bank!'. It was a controversial project, but now we can see it is something that is really fantastic.

I was also told, 'Minister, we want to get Docklands kick-started. The financial services industry wants to move down to a new intersection we are going to call Bourke Street and Collins Street. We just need a \$48 million bridge as a Collins Street extension. It is going to link Collins Street to the precinct. Can you go and get it from the Premier and the Treasurer?'. You can imagine what it would be like in a new government going in and saying, 'We want to get Docklands started. Give me \$48 million for a CBD bridge'. They all laughed at it, but we did the maths, and we did it. Docklands has started changing and being transformed.

In the last 40 seconds of my contribution, I want to thank my staff, both in my former ministerial office and in my electorate office, particularly long-serving staff, including Sam Afra, Erica Moulang and Chrissie Katsimardos. I want to thank my broader family: my sisters; my brother; my kids, Nathan and Lucy, who as parents we do not see a lot of, though we drag them to so many things. I was a single dad for many years, and that was a hard time. This job does take a toll on you. It gives you great opportunities, and I have had some of the best experiences in my life, as well as some of the most difficult experiences in my life, in this job. It is in the nature of the job, and we accept this when we go into it. I wish everyone well in the future, and thanks for being my friend.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr McINTOSH** (Kew) — It has been an honour and a privilege for me to serve the people of Victoria in this place, having been elected as the member for Kew and re-elected on three further occasions. There is a daunting heritage in Kew in following MPs with such well-known names as Kent Hughes, Sir Arthur Rylah, Sir Rupert Hamer and the great Jan Wade, all of whom made significant contributions to the people of Victoria beyond their own electorate of Kew. Hopefully in some small way I have been able to meet the challenge set for me by the five former members for Kew I have mentioned.

As a new member, I had a fairly inauspicious start. Of course I regularly start fitness campaigns. When I say 'regularly', I start a fitness campaign probably once a week, and it usually dies fairly quickly. About two weeks after I was elected, I was down at the Kew pool. I had punched out my laps — I did about one and a half — before I had to get out of the pool, exhausted. I was standing there in my fish frighteners, absolutely dripping wet, when a bloke came up to me and said, 'Excuse me, are you the new member here?'. I puffed myself up to my full five foot seven and said, 'As a matter of fact, I am', and he said, 'Well Ted, I've got a

planning problem'. I do not know whether the member for Hawthorn is laughing, but I must admit it did give me some degree of mirth.

The pinnacle of my career probably came during the last four years. I was shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services following the Black Saturday tragedy. It was a very significant event that I witnessed and which personally moved if not all, then certainly most people in this place. I can tell the house that there is probably nothing more useless in an emergency than a shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I came to learn that in that sort of crisis there is nothing much you can do apart from allowing emergency services workers to do their job.

The thing that impressed me was not only the contribution of police, firefighters and State Emergency Services workers but also the contributions of the thousands of people who contributed in different ways as a result of what happened that day and thereafter. We got through the police cordon on the Tuesday after Black Saturday, which was the first time I had an opportunity to inspect the fireground with Damian Drum, a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place. The devastation will stick in my memory for the rest of my life. The thing that really touched me was going around and seeing the flags that marked the places where a people had died. Hundreds of emergency services workers, police and ordinary citizens were sifting through the rubble of houses and locating places where they had to put a flag. That was a defining moment in my life, and it still touches me today.

Moving on to other matters, as the Minister for Corrections — and therefore the minister for prisons — one of the really important moments in my life was saving the Ararat prison project, which was started by the former government and which we inherited. By dint of contractual issues that project fell over. I had to go to Ararat and explain to the mayor, the chief executive officer and all the other citizens, including the local member, that this was a project we were trying to resurrect. Ararat prison is the biggest employer in the town, and many others supply the prison and make a significant living as a result of their involvement with it. I thought it was my duty to at least go to Ararat on a number of occasions. Indeed in the seven weeks prior to the matter being resolved, I went to Ararat prison on six different occasions. Often I would turn up and say, 'There is nothing I can do; I cannot give you good news. I am just here to empathise with you at this critical time'. However, ultimately we saved Ararat prison. Again I will mention the member for Hawthorn. I do not know exactly what happened on this issue

when he was Premier, but the matter was resolved, and I was very pleased.

I am very proud that, as probably the shortest man ever in cabinet, as a minister I had the longest title — the Minister responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission. I am very proud of the fact that we established the first independent, broad-based anti-corruption commission. No doubt people will say, 'It is not up to the job'. I have heard all that commentary, but we established it, and the commission has significant powers. The people we appointed are led by Stephen O'Bryan, SC, who is an outstanding commissioner. He was an outstanding silk at the Victorian Bar, and while he was a contemporary of mine that was not the reason we appointed him. The fact is that he was the outstanding candidate.

Another road to Damascus experience for me relates to the issue of family violence. Probably two or three weeks after I was appointed as a minister, the first ever consultative committee was set up in Mildura. We sat down with a group of about 20 community leaders. The council was represented by the mayor, and there were police officers, emergency services workers and representatives from the local community, including the Koori community. I bobbed up and said, 'What are the crime prevention issues here?'. Right between the eyes, their response was that family violence was the biggest issue they faced. That response was replicated in something like 20 out of the 22 regional reference groups we set up.

Family violence is a significant issue. One in three women faces the prospect of family violence in their own home, and something like one in four kids will witness that sort of behaviour. If you were a crime prevention minister and you could wave a magic wand and deal with one problem, it would be that issue. Certainly I was very pleased that we were able to rejig our crime prevention grants. Indeed I am very pleased that the Minister for Community Services has now announced that this government is committing \$150 million to prevent violence against women and children. I am sure every member in the house joins me in that.

I will thank a number of people in the moments remaining to me. I thank all the attendants in this place, the catering staff and the library staff — and Hansard, who have corrected all of my fumbles in my speeches. I also thank all of the garden and maintenance staff. This must be the most magnificent Parliament House anywhere in the world, and the garden and maintenance staff, along with the cleaners, make sure that it operates. I thank all the clerks, particularly Ray Purdey, for the

assistance they have given me over the years. I think I have been back to kiddies' contracts trying to grapple with all the exigencies of being Leader of the House. Certainly I do not envy the current Leader of the House or indeed, as I was, the current manager of opposition business.

I thank my electorate chairs, Rob Cameron, Richard Clancy and David Smart. I particularly thank David for the nine years during which he put up with me both as a member and as a candidate and certainly all of the local Liberals who supported me through that process. I thank my staff, Natasha, Helen and Anne, and other staff who have worked with me during the course of the years.

Finally, I thank my wife, who is in the gallery. This might be the first speech of mine she has heard here at Parliament to hear — and she is probably disgusted! She has probably stormed out! I hope she is still here. Can anybody tell? I am not looking. On a serious note, I again thank my wife. I also thank my son, Rob. This is a traumatic year for Rob, as he is completing the Victorian certificate of education at the present time. I also thank my Italian truffle dog, Quintino Augustus Agrippa. The chief fundraiser in the Kew electorate came to me and said, 'We have just had a dog that has thrown nine other dogs. We think you should take one'. I paid a considerable amount of money for this dog, and of course it is an Italian truffle dog. He does not understand a word of English, and there are no truffles in Kew. Having said that, I thank every single member of this Parliament for their indulgence today in listening to this old man who is about to retire. Thank you very much.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr MADDEN** (Essendon) — There is some irony — and it is not lost on me — that for your inaugural speech in this place you are allocated 30 minutes but for your valedictory speech you are allocated 10 minutes. I hope that is because promises can only ever be words and accomplishments speak for themselves.

In August 1999, when I was approached to contest the upper house seat of Doutta Galla Province, my expectation was that if I was successful, I would be sitting on the backbench in opposition watching and learning. It took me 14 years to get there. I am departing after more than 15 years and four parliamentary terms, three in government and three as a minister, having held several portfolios beside two Labor Premiers, having seen two Liberal Premiers and having served across two chambers. For only one of

those terms did I sit in a chamber where Labor had a majority. That might partly explain three no-confidence motions moved against me, but having played in the ruck I graciously wear them as a badge of honour.

Serving in public office is one of the greatest privileges you can have, and I take some satisfaction from the fact that I am fortunate enough to choose the timing of my departure. I recall the night of the 1999 election. I had the role of introducing Steve Bracks at the Williamstown lifesaving club. I was not across the vagaries of the electoral system at that time, so in introducing Steve Bracks I could not work out why people were so excited. I thought, 'Gee, if this is what it's like when we lose, what about if we win?'. Some five weeks later I was sitting in Government House, being sworn in as a minister before I had been sworn in as a member of Parliament.

From the very first day it has been an absolute whirlwind, but now it is time to step off. Victoria is an extraordinary state and Melbourne a magnificent metropolis. To have made a contribution is deeply satisfying. The extraordinary dignity, resilience and perseverance of the vast majority of people in the Victorian community as they go about their daily lives — the challenges they face and the joys they share each and every day — has always been motivation and inspiration in my role of public representative.

I am a great believer in the virtue of modesty, but I have learnt that this is not a place for shrinking violets, so I want to recount what I believe are some of my achievements. In the sports portfolio there is the ticketing legislation and the crowd management legislation, record funding and participation in community sport, the inception of the rectangular pitch stadium, record investment in community facility funding, benchmark investment in state sporting associations, the country football and netball grants program, the establishment of a stand-alone facility for the Victorian Institute of Sport, the resolution of the AFL-MCG Great Northern Stand redevelopment funding, the carers card and ensuring that the headquarters of Netball Australia was relocated to Melbourne from Sydney. There was also the joy of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, involving the delivery and execution of the Commonwealth Games, including the redevelopment of the MCG, the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre redevelopment, the William Barak Bridge, the state training velodrome and state bowls centre, the state shooting centre and the State Mountain Bike Centre.

In the planning portfolio there is Melbourne @ 5 Million, the policy which really equated population

numbers with investment rather than dates that bore no relevance to population size; the locking in of the growth area infrastructure charge; the regional fast rail link and the road reserve for the outer metropolitan ring-road; targeted interventions during the global financial crisis; streamlining building approval for Building the Education Revolution; fast-tracking major social housing development during the global financial crisis; and record renewable energy planning approvals. There was much done, and there are many people I would like to thank.

I thank Marsha Thomson, Steve Bracks and David White, who roped me in. To this day I am still not sure how and what they did, but I am sure one day they will explain it to me. To former Premiers Steve Bracks and John Brumby, I am ever grateful for your having had the confidence to allow me to be a member of your respective cabinets. To former Deputy Premiers John Thwaites and Rob Hulls and my former cabinet colleagues, thank you for your support, dedication and commitment. We achieved much, Victoria is more diverse, more outward looking and more inclusive, and Melbourne is a mature and dynamic global city.

Although I am leaving, part of me would like to see a few things happening in future years. Without being political, I would like to mention some of them. There are some challenges. I believe underutilisation of existing infrastructure, while continuing to build new infrastructure, is a great challenge. When we think about it, there are universities and tertiary education facilities — building stock worth billions of dollars — that lie virtually dormant for more than a third of the year. Hospital beds are unavailable in midwinter because specialists and surgeons are travelling to warmer parts of the world. Arterial roads sit congested during peak demand, blocking tram networks because of on-road parking so that local councils can collect small change as a revenue source.

In particular, there is the issue of the health and wellbeing of young men. Disengaged young men feature too prominently in all the wrong statistics, such as poor literacy, poor job prospects, higher rates of family violence, perpetrators of violence, victims of violence, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, the road toll, rates of incarceration and self-harm, just to name a few. There must be a remedy that is more than just allowing these young men's lives to spiral out of control to the point where the only solution is to lock them up.

Regulatory equilibrium is not that exciting, and industry desperately calls for compliance regulation to be done away with, but from my experience over years in government, more often than not consumers lose out. I

place great faith and hope in what is known as big data. If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it. We can be a more creative and smarter state if we embrace the emergence of the innovation and opportunity that comes with big data.

One of the great and most humbling experiences is to serve within the Labor caucus. The longer one is there, the greater is the appreciation of the individuals you sit alongside. I will miss working alongside those members, and I thank every one of them for their discipline, their unity and their friendship.

I thank my former ministerial chiefs of staff, Barry Lovell, Phil Martin, Nataly Kucan and Justin Jarvis, and the ministerial staff who worked with them, including my ministerial personal assistant for 11 years, Val Taylor, and my driver, Dario D'Alessandro, for 11 years. While I have insufficient time to mention all the staff who assisted me, particularly in challenging circumstances, I thank Ben Carroll, Amanda Oglethorpe, Penny Smith and Jacqui Banks. To my electorate office staff over the last four years, Jenni Chappell and Simon Furey, I say a big thanks. Your patience and good humour has allowed the last four years to be a delight. To the many public servants and the Presiding Officers, I appreciate sincerely your hard work and continuing efforts.

To the Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, Daniel Andrews, his deputy, James Merlino, and the shadow cabinet, who are all great leaders, disciplined, focused and dedicated, thank you for your support and for allowing me to serve alongside you. I have enormous faith in you and for that reason I am optimistic about the future of this state and the labour movement. I thank the former member for Essendon, Judy Maddigan, for her wise council, and I look forward to Danny Pearson being the next Labor member for Essendon. I have shared an office over the last few years with Tim Pallas, and I thank him for his good humour and for putting up with my many and grand conspiracy theories.

To the constituents of Doutta Galla Province, Western Metropolitan Region, and more recently the Essendon electorate, whom I have been fortunate enough to represent, I express my deepest appreciation. To serve in public office is an honour and it is even more humbling to know that you represent the community you have lived in and been raised in.

I thank my family, my wife Julie and our four beautiful children, Sarah, Joel, Olivia and Stella, for their patience, tolerance, love and support. Virtually every sitting night over the 15 years I have been in Parliament I have gone home to Essendon during the evening

break for dinner. I have often returned with indigestion, but I acknowledge them and my dear late mother, Thelma, who did a great job with three boys.

I feel truly blessed to have worked with wonderful people, attempting to do wonderful things for the wonderful people of Victoria. On departing from a former career almost 20 years ago, I mentioned that I had to be an angry young man to do it justice, and at that time I was no longer young and I was not sure I had ever been that angry. Today I depart this place knowing that in staying too long I risk becoming old and grumpy. I am ageing, but I hope I am not grumpy yet. To those in this place and everybody I have dealt with outside Parliament, I thank you all very much. In the words of Laurence Oates, the great Antarctic explorer, 'I'm just going outside and may be some time'. Thank you very much.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Lowan) — It is great to follow the member for Essendon who at one stage played for Essendon. It is an enormous privilege and honour to be a member of Parliament. When I walked up the steps in 1999, I came in as a member of the opposition. I was told then that it was probably a good learning curve and that you can learn a lot when you are in opposition. But I can tell you that 11-year apprenticeship was far too long. Being in public life for 26 years has been an enormous privilege, both as a local council representative and now as a state member of Parliament. I need to start by thanking a lot of people, because if I do not do so at the start I might forget and run out of time at the finish.

I thank my family: my wife, Judie, and the boys, now men. Judie is in the gallery today. She has been a rock, a fantastic confidant and adviser, but most importantly a great wife, mother and grandmother to our seven grandchildren. To my parents, Frank and Kath, I am indebted to you, firstly, because I was born to you, and secondly, because you always said to me, 'Do not whinge outside the fence. Get over there and do something about it'. Whether it is in football terms or parliamentary terms, it meant getting inside this chamber and doing something about it. I am proud to say that I have achieved a lot of things I wanted to do.

I thank my five brothers and sisters who have helped and inspired me all my life. A lot of people know that Mary and I sat opposite one another in this chamber. There was only one other time that situation happened before, and it was in the very early days of the West Australian Parliament. A lot of people do not know about Michael, my brother, who is now the CEO of

Echuca hospital. My first game of league football for Essendon was against Collingwood at Windy Hill in 1971, and we played opposite each other from different ends of the ground. My grandfather sent us a card saying, 'Best of luck to you both, I hope it is a draw'. And guess what? It was. It is interesting though that we put our families through a lot because we seemed to be on different sides of the fence all the time.

To my Nationals colleagues past and present, it has been a great journey, but particularly so under the leadership of Peter Ryan, who has been a dynamic, inspirational and fantastic leader for people in rural and regional Victoria. I started off sharing an office with the then member for Shepparton, Don Kilgour, and I am finishing my career sharing the office of the member for Shepparton, Jeanette Powell, which is fantastic. To all my other colleagues in The Nationals, we have been a great team. It has been a small team but a fantastic team. I believe we have punched above our weight in a lot of areas. I particularly highlight the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund. It is not only delivering jobs across Victoria but is improving the lives of rural and regional Victorians.

I want to thank my ministerial colleagues, but first of all I thank the former Premier Ted Baillieu, the current Premier, Denis Napthine, and the Deputy Premier, Peter Ryan, for giving me the opportunity to be a minister. It was an enormous privilege and a great honour. As the member for Essendon just said, to be sworn in at Government House was an enormous thrill. We achieved a lot in those ministerial portfolios, and I think I achieved a lot as a local member. I will touch briefly on some of those achievements as a minister.

We have continued the great work in the sports program with record funding in a lot of areas. Development of Melbourne Park was another real achievement. A lot of people do not realise that Melbourne Park is the third-busiest entertainment venue in the world. It is not only Margaret Court Arena, Rod Laver Arena and Hisense Arena but a lot of other facilities are also used there. If you go to France and have a look at Roland Garros, you will discover that it closes down for 6 months of the year. By contrast, Melbourne Park is a hive of activity for 12 months of the year and hosts many major events.

To get major events to Melbourne and Victoria was also another thrill, whether it be Amy's Gran Fondo down at Lorne or the ironman event, starting down at Frankston with a 3.6-kilometre swim, followed by a 180-kilometre bike ride and a 42-kilometre run. To have those elite athletes here requires an enormous effort. Also, for the first time in 19 years we got the

women's open golf championship being held in partnership with the men's. We now have it as a joint event that has been going for three years at Thirteenth Beach near Geelong. There was also that fantastic match when Liverpool played here against Melbourne Victory. It was a friendly match, and to have 95 000 people attend was an amazing achievement. There were many other programs but, as a person who tries to play golf, presenting the two Masters championships to Adam Scott was a great thrill.

I also want to say a big thank you to my staff, particularly Joanne Bibby, who has been with me throughout most of my career as a parliamentarian, but also to Trudi, Dianne, Leanne and Cathy. As is the case for a lot of members who sit here, the staff who have been with me over that period of time are really the backbone of what goes on behind the scenes. They do an enormous amount of work supporting you as a member. I thank my Melbourne staff headed up firstly by Will Golsby, and it was great to have him here two nights ago, and also Darren Harris, Emma Staples, Fiona, Josephine and Shannon. They were an enormous support to me in my ministerial role.

I say thank you to my departmental staff headed up by Dr Peter Hertan and Susan George. There is enormous intellect and an enormous wealth of knowledge in both those people. In the veterans portfolio I had David Roberts and now Joshua Puls, who are doing great work, particularly as we go toward the centenary of Anzac. One of the great thrills and achievements I have had was working with the current Premier, Denis Napthine, to see the appointment of the member for Hawthorn, Ted Baillieu, as chair of the Victorian Anzac Centenary Committee, along with the appointment of the member for Ballarat West on that committee, as well as the ex-service organisations and representatives. It is a very important time in the history of Victoria and Australia, and I encourage all members to get involved with their communities in relation to it. A lot of events will be held over the next four years.

I know other members have spoken about the fact you do not get any resources in opposition, and in opposition you do not. I think we give a little bit more to the opposition today.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Members can grizzle about it now, but I can tell them it was a lot less when we were in opposition. The reality is I was given enormous support by two people in Stephanie Ryan, who is a candidate for the new seat of Euroa, and Clay Manners.

Both were an enormous support to me in my shadow ministry roles.

As the member for Shepparton has said, the drivers provide enormous support. We did a lot of kilometres on the road together, and I sometimes wish I had them now because Judie, my wife, has to do a lot of that driving. I thank Cathy Geddes and Andrew for their driving abilities. I felt very safe in the car with them. I thank the Assembly staff headed up by the Clerk, Ray Purdey. All the clerks have been an enormous support. I particularly recognise Bridget Noonan as a young lady who came from Noradjuha. I announced her engagement in this house. She is very happy about that, because her future husband cannot pull out now. The reality is the clerks were an enormous support to me.

I also thank the library staff and the Hansard staff, headed by John. They all do an enormous amount of work supporting us as people. I thank the dining room staff; they put up with a lot in there. The staff around the Parliament are my friends. They are a great support to us as parliamentarians. The protective services officers do an enormous amount of work in supporting all of us in this place.

I return to talk about the parliamentary committees, and a few members have spoken about this. I have been a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the Economic Development Committee, the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee and the Electoral Matters Committee. The executive officers and staff provide enormous support. But it was also a really steep learning curve, and you make great friends on all sides of politics by being on committees. You learn a lot, and the learning process is a continuous one in life, and it is the same for all of us. But to those people I have worked with, I say thank you very much for the opportunity of working with you.

Going back home, I extend thanks to my campaign committees headed by Bill Ower and Greg Walcott. I thank them for their support in getting me into this place. To the many supporters and friends, and to The Nationals family, I say thank you for the opportunity to be in this place. I wish our Nationals candidate, Emma Kealy, all the best in the upcoming election on 29 November. She is a fantastic talent, and I hope she gets the opportunities I had to represent a great part of western Victoria in the Lowan electorate. As you know, Speaker, it is the largest electorate in the state — 76 of the other 87 MPs could fit into it.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — You have heard that a few times. I am also proud of my achievements, and I am particularly proud — and I know the Premier uses these words — that sport and recreation still drives me in my personal life and that I continue to follow my ministerial slogan of having more people more active more often.

I really want to finish off by saying to everyone in this place, thank you for the friendship. There are a couple of key messages I want to send. I came into this place and wanted to have respect. We need to have respect to do the work we do. We will not always agree with people. We will not always be able to do the things people want, but if you can hold your heads up high and have respect, you can walk out of this place like I will on 28 November down those steps that I walked up in 1999 feeling very proud of my achievements. Thank you for the opportunities.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr HELPER** (Ripon) — I thank the house for the opportunity to make a few concluding remarks at the end of my 15-year parliamentary career. This fantastic part of my life has been an extraordinary honour for me. Indeed, I find it hard to imagine anything more fulfilling. I would like to say a few thank-yous to those who have made this journey possible for me. Firstly, to the people of Ripon, not just thank you for the confidence you displayed in me by electing me to be your representative on four occasions but also for being the most fantastic group of people anybody has ever drawn an electoral boundary around.

To have been given the opportunity to be a part of the effort to rebuild the communities that make up Ripon after the devastating 1990s will always fill me with pride. It is indeed now a better place. To the many people — the volunteers, the workers, the teachers, the councillors, the doctors, the nurses, the miners, the farmers, the list goes on and on — a heartfelt thank-you. As with all these things there are, of course, some exceptions to the generalisations. I, like all members here, could name a few constituents whom I am happy to see the back of. So maybe to those people, my thank-you is somewhat diminished.

To my electorate staff, I say thank you. Lorraine has been with me for the entire 15 years and she deserves a medal for that. To Wally and Julie and those who preceded them, as well as my ministerial staff — a terrific group of people whom I had the pleasure of working with during my time as a minister — I say thank you. You have been fantastic to me, often in the face of some pretty grumpy moods. You wouldn't

believe it, would you! To Steve Bracks, John Brumby and the many, many people who made their governments so successful in building a better and fairer Victoria, thank you for allowing me to be a part of that. To the branch members who have worked so hard over the years to have a Labor member of Parliament in Ripon, thank you. To the Labor Party's head office staff, thank you for your great support over many, many years.

To the Labor Party caucus over the years, thank you for your camaraderie and friendship. It has been an honour being in your midst. To the departmental staff I had the pleasure of working with during my time as Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Small Business, thank you for the excellent advice, the often challenging discussions, and the great dedication to serving the people of Victoria.

It can be said that my ministerial time was one of drought and pestilence in this state, and I am not sure that my successor has had the same pleasures. We faced locusts — many honourable members will remember the war on locusts; we had a mouse plague; and we had equine influenza, and I will tell members a short funny story in that regard. The government had to stop the movement of horses around the state to prevent the potential spread of equine influenza if it were to reach this state, and on one occasion Don, my driver, was driving me home. We were coming over a rise, and driving along in front of us was a horse float with a horse's bum sticking out of the back of it. We pulled the car over and I said to the driver, 'Have you been hiding under a rock for a while or just not picked up on the idea that you are not allowed to move horses?'. All the time I was talking to the bloke I was thinking to myself, 'What do I actually do here? I am not an authorised person to lock this buggger up'. I encouraged the person to travel back to where he came from, and I hope he did.

To those on all sides of the political divide who picked up the vibes that the last few years have been a bit dark for me, I thank you most sincerely for lending me a shoulder to lean on. To the dedicated staff, past and present, who make this place work, I thank you for everything you do. I have not encountered a more dedicated group of people. To the clerks the catering staff, grounds and maintenance staff, attendants and parliamentary service staff — all of you make our life possible here.

To my family — Julie, Megan and Patrick — thank you for the enormous support you have provided me during my parliamentary career.

I would like to share some of the truths I have discovered over my career. Firstly, one day's dim sum victory may well fall victim to another day's menu change, or to put it another way, don't count your dim sums before you have the soy sauce. Another pearl of wisdom that I have somewhat of a reputation for discovering is: it is best not to send an email response drafted late at night until one reads it in the morning, no matter how witty it may look through the bottom of a glass. A final point of wisdom is: if you seek to be expelled from the chamber under standing order 124, do not let the Speaker know, because they will keep you in.

I pay tribute to an important sector in this state — the timber industry. I single it out because, having been an advocate for it over my time in Parliament, I have become even more convinced that it is deserving of much more respect than it receives from some quarters. The hardworking men and women of this industry provide Victoria with a product we all love, yet others in our midst want to sacrifice the jobs of those workers on the altar of their self-indulgent ideology. Some of these workers put dinner on their family's kitchen table by making sustainable use of the state's timber resource grown on public land, yet there are those who want to take the 'public' out of public land.

By pursuing more and more restrictions on the use of public land these people, who generally do not have a direct or economic connection to the land, seek to have the value they place on the forest dominate at the expense of the values anybody else places on it. These people most arrogantly deride any evidence-based arguments in support of a sustainable forestry industry by building their case on the bastardisation of science until it suits their argument. I pay tribute to those who perform the hard jobs that make up the timber industry in the face of a most vicious and sustained assault on their right to work. I wish the industry every success in withstanding pressure from this class of people made up of indulgent, misguided ideologues, as well as those possessed by their lust for power over others. It is betraying the ideals of public office for anybody in this place to acquiesce to these people at the expense of the jobs of Victorians working in this sustainable industry.

I wish the people of my electorate a prosperous future. If I may dwell on some of the achievements that we have had in the rebuilding of Ripon, I would like to mention the return of passenger rail to Ararat and the return of passenger rail to Maryborough, and I urge the government of the future to improve services on that line. There is the rebuilding of the Maryborough, Ararat and Stawell hospitals, and I possibly left some out of that list; there is the Maryborough Education Centre, an

extremely transformative achievement in Maryborough. There are community facilities in just about every town in the electorate, and I thank my colleagues in the Brumby and Bracks governments for facilitating those investments in the community I love.

I hope the next Parliament will have the wisdom within it to govern well in the interests of all Victorians, and of course the best guarantee for that is the election of an Andrews government, with Daniel McGlone as the member for Ripon.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr K. SMITH** (Bass) — Twenty-six years and 16 days ago I made my entry into the world of the Parliament and of the Legislative Council. With the backing of my wife, Dawn, and my three sons, Matthew, Adam and Nick, I gave up my plumbing business to pursue life as a Liberal, representing my community, after six years serving on the Hastings council. I hope I have not let the community down over that 26 years.

What a life it has been — 14 years in the Legislative Council, 12 years and 16 days in the Assembly, seven Premiers, eight Speakers and six Presidents, and they have all served here in this Parliament in Victoria. But some things never change. We still have the opposition over the other side there — the pinkos, the commos, the puppets of the union movement, who serve their masters at Trades Hall.

I have enjoyed my involvement in being part of the making of laws to give us a better, safer Victoria, laws that govern our behaviour and give us all direction in our lives and the lives of our community, laws that look after the disadvantaged, the frail and the aged and laws that create the job opportunities for the people of Victoria. People in here create jobs for Victorians, for kids and for adults.

Over the time I have had some wonderful staff working for me in my electorate offices, both in Cranbourne and Wonthaggi. I would like to pass on my thanks to each and every one of them, particularly my current staff, Pauline, Bev and Shelley, who are probably listening to this, and Neville Goodwin, who worked as an electorate officer for me. He was a mate and a confidant and you need to be able to chat to those people from time to time. Another one of those good people is Louise Asher, who has been a great mate of mine in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. From time to time she has taken on the role of counselling me on what I should and should not do and what to expect and what not to expect.

I have also been involved in a number of all-party parliamentary committees. I have found that to be a very important part of our parliamentary life. A committee I had the honour to chair from 1992 to 1995 was the Crime Prevention Committee — I know I always mention this. We undertook an investigation into sexual offences against children. As a parliamentary committee we were the first to talk openly about the Catholic Church and the disgraceful predatory behaviour of some of its priests and the hierarchy of the church, which was not prepared to take action other than moving people to another part of the state or out of the state. The leaders of the Catholic Church were not prepared to do anything apart from covering up the sins of some of their members. The church later established the Melbourne Solution, a one-man band set up to pay off the victims of its priests and to make sure that the issues were not raised with the police. It is a pity that so many good priests in the Catholic Church have been tarred with the same brush as those paedophile priests that have been caught and named.

I was also very proud of being heavily involved in bringing to the Parliament legislation in relation to physician-assisted dying. We introduced legislation into the upper house, but unfortunately there were some people up there — and some of them are still there — who did not see that people who were dying from an incurable disease should have the right to die with some dignity. Perhaps as time goes on there will be enough people in Parliament who will allow that to occur, because the right of a person to be able to die with dignity is a very important thing. In fact I am going to devote a fair amount of my time to working with Rod Syme at Dying With Dignity Victoria, and I am going to continue to pursue this as long as I possibly can until I actually die with some dignity as well!

I enjoyed my time in opposition under former Premier Ted Baillieu as shadow minister for fisheries, gaming and local government. They are areas of importance to our community, and I helped prepare a couple of policies that were put before the community. I remember standing on the front steps of Parliament with Ted Baillieu when we were considering getting rid of a number of gaming machines in Victoria. We stood out there with a big sledgehammer and attacked a poker machine. We thought it was really good video, and in fact it was. It was the first item on the news and kept on being so for a few days because the gaming commission came looking for us, as we did not have a licence for that particular poker machine.

**Mr Baillieu** — They were looking for you, Ken.

**Mr K. SMITH** — You had the hammer, Ted, not me.

**Mr Baillieu** — If I had a hammer, Ken, you wouldn't remember.

**Mr K. SMITH** — They were always interesting times. Parliamentary committees are interesting, and they bring together members of both sides of politics. You have the opportunity to understand that they are not all crazy, pinko commos, and that some can actually think for themselves. Heaven forbid, you can actually become friends with some of them. I would like to name some of them here.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr K. SMITH** — No, maybe not. I would hate to ruin their futures. I think the most exciting time I had in my 26 years was under former Premier Kennett. When he was in office, each and every day you woke up to news on the radio that there was something positive happening in the state of Victoria. It was hard keeping up with it for seven years. Every day there was something new, whether it was CityLink, whether it was Jeff's shed, whether it was the casino or whether it was the Formula One Grand Prix coming back to Victoria. Money was being spent in rural Victoria, in the city of Melbourne, in Geelong, in Dandenong and in all of those areas which had been neglected for a number of years under the previous government.

Of course the difficulty that Jeff and the cabinet had at that particular time was that there was a terribly large deficit in the budget and also in the state's liabilities, which is pretty much what we got when the coalition government came to office. We faced a lot of debt and a lot of problems. I must pay credit to former Premier Ted Baillieu and former Treasurer Kim Wells for trying to get our finances sorted out, for retaining our AAA rating, which is very good, and to then give the opportunity to Denis Napthine and Michael O'Brien to be able to set our state up for having the biggest infrastructure program in Victoria's history.

I have enjoyed my time in Parliament. I think we are very fortunate. We are very privileged people to be able to devote our time to looking after our communities, which is a very important thing to do. I would like to thank all the staff at Parliament, particularly Ray Purdey and Bridget Noonan and all of the attendants. I would like to thank Peter Lochert for his professional help, particularly when I was the Speaker, and for the ongoing work in ensuring that this magnificent building is going to be standing in another 150 years so that

people can continue to look at and spend time in this building.

I would also like to thank my wonderful wife of 47 years, Dawn; my three boys, Matthew, Adam and Nick; their wives and partners; and my six grandkids for the fantastic support that they have given me over the period. Through good times and bad, you know you can go and talk to them and they will give you their undivided love and attention. I am a very fortunate person to have people like that.

I want to say to each and every one of you, thank you. Thank you for the enjoyment of spending time with you, having a drink with you from time to time and eating in our dining room here. It has been good, and I will not forget any of you, so thank you.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Ms BARKER** (Oakleigh) — During the time I have been a member of Parliament I have divided my time into three areas: my work as a local MP, my work as a member of the Parliament of Victoria and my private life. The division of that time has not often been equal, and in fact it has undoubtedly been allocated very unevenly. I will today make some remarks within those areas.

It has been a great privilege to have been the member for Oakleigh for the past 15 years, and I am very grateful that the residents of the Oakleigh electorate — or, rather, a majority of the residents of the Oakleigh electorate — continued to place their trust in me over four election periods. I have always tried to work hard to assist local residents and to improve the services offered in the local community. There is always more that can be done, and there always will be. I do not intend to list all of the improvements put in place during the Bracks and Brumby governments, but I am certainly pleased that during that time we began to upgrade in particular local schools and health services and had plans in place to continue those upgrades.

The establishment of some services in the Oakleigh electorate, though, came about through needs identified by the community, and I would just like to mention these, as I am very proud to have worked with the community to ensure that the services were established. While it was difficult and took some time, I am very proud that the old Oakleigh courthouse was returned to the community and is now managed by the New Hope Foundation as a community centre for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Despite the constant comments that this facility was not needed, the building is used to full capacity, and the reality is that

we could do with more space. Perhaps that is a challenge for the next member for Oakleigh. The old Oakleigh police station was saved from private sale and is now 11 units for older persons. New kindergartens were established at Oakleigh Primary School and Carnegie Primary School, arising from the closure of church-run kindergartens. The Oakleigh pool was saved after a long campaign and has undergone a wonderful upgrade. These are all very valuable community assets which will benefit many children and local residents into the future.

The Oakleigh electorate is very diverse, demographically and culturally, and it is constantly changing. While there are a number of emerging culturally diverse communities, the Greek community still plays a major part in the area. It has taught me a great deal about a culture of strong tradition and beliefs, with an extraordinary dedication to ensuring that the strength of the Hellenic culture is passed on to the next generation. I will always remember with great affection those in the Greek community who have taught me so much and who included me in this great family of Hellenic culture and tradition.

As a local MP you have a unique opportunity to meet and get to know a lot of people, and a number of them are very remarkable people who make our area a great place to live and work. I am grateful for the time they always provided to me and for their wisdom and experience, which helped me in my work. I particularly record my admiration and respect for two of the most dignified and sincere people I have ever come to know: Chrissie and Anthony Foster. Chrissie and Anthony have worked with me in the effort to obtain justice and support for victims of clergy abuse. Like them, I will not stop fighting for the justice and support that has been too long in being achieved.

As a member of the Victorian Parliament I have been pleased to take on some further duties on committees such as the Standing Orders Committee, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and more recently the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee. I enjoyed my time as Parliamentary Secretary for Training and Higher Education, as these are areas of strong interest to me. I did, however, find my time as Deputy Speaker the most interesting and enjoyable.

I have a very strong interest in the independence of the Parliament and the procedures through which it operates. I believe considered debate and the ability to put forward concerns and comments on legislation are extremely important, such as occurs during the consideration-in-detail procedure. This was most evident during the very lengthy consideration in detail

of two very controversial and important bills debated during my time as Deputy Speaker, and it was very satisfying to know that I chaired sometimes quite difficult debates and provided the opportunity for many members to put their concerns and comments forward, whether or not they were accepted in the end as amendments to the bills.

I will continue my involvement and interest in parliamentary change, accountability and transparency, as I believe that changes need to be made to ensure that we have a relevant, respectful and inclusive Parliament into the future.

I could not have been elected as a member of Parliament without a lot of support and help. I will always be very grateful to the many Labor Party members and supporters who gave their time and put in so much effort to assist me in getting elected and then re-elected. I thank the Communications Electrical Plumbing Union communications division, particularly for its help in the 1999 campaign, and I am very proud to be associated with the National Union of Workers, which has supported me over many campaigns. I have always been very fortunate to have dedicated, professional and caring electorate office staff members who not only assisted me but provided valuable advice, support and assistance to local residents. I thank my current staff members, Caroline Melzer, Kieran Boland and Charlotte Gray. I could not do my work without them.

I acknowledge the staff of the Parliament and the Department of Parliament Services, who have always been very helpful — past and present staff in the dining room and catering, building and gardens, the clerks, the attendants, Hansard, the library, electorate office support and particularly IT. My very sincere thanks to all for your expert advice, professionalism, efficiency, assistance and in many cases friendship.

My family has not always been given as much time as my work as a member of Parliament. They always have been and always will be the highest priority in my life, and they have unconditionally supported me and provided me with the opportunity to fulfil my ambition of becoming a member of Parliament. My children, Michael and Kirsty, are my pride and joy. I love them with all my heart, and words just cannot express how much I appreciate the love and unconditional support they have always given me. They have grown up, married and had children during my time in politics. My family now of Michael and Jacquie, Kirsty and Richard is my great joy, and they have given me the greatest gift of all — grandchildren. Bridgette, Jasmine and James are the lights of my life, and I certainly look

forward to spending a lot more time with them. To the rest of the strong and supportive Barker clan — Geoff and Carmel, Les and Jenni, Joy and Ian and their families — thank you also for your continual love and support.

My husband, Jim, and I have been partners in life for quite some time now — partners in family and political life. He is the centre of our lives with his love, patience and dedication to his family, providing all of us, and particularly me, with the calm in the middle of what is sometimes a bit of a storm. What we have done we have done together, and our new life after 29 November is one which we are very excited about. We have many plans, which we will no longer have to fit around Parliament sitting dates and electorate work. I could not have done this without him, and he remains the most important person ever in my life.

I wanted to be a member of Parliament to try to make a positive difference to the life of the community and to this great state of Victoria. I hope that those I have represented in this Parliament and the Parliament itself will consider that I have done my best and I have made that positive difference. I will miss the camaraderie of my colleagues. You do not spend 15 years continuously with a group of people, through happy and sometimes tough times, and not know that you will miss them. I wish all retiring members a fulfilling and joyful life after their parliamentary career, and I certainly wish my Labor colleagues recontesting and aspiring Labor politicians all the best for this election.

I love living in Oakleigh, and it will remain my home. I sincerely hope to see a Labor member elected to represent the seat. Steve Dimopoulos, who is the Labor candidate, is a friend of mine. I have known him for 20 years, and I know that if elected he will be a hardworking local member. He is honest and sincere, and he will bring a strong commitment to community, with experience and expertise in good public policy and good governance to his work as a state member.

I have also known Daniel Andrews for many years, and I have been very pleased and proud to work under his leadership for the past four years. We share the desire to have decent, caring government for the people of Victoria, and while I am retiring and will not contribute personally to the opportunity for him to be Premier, I will do all I can to try to make that happen.

I thank you all for the opportunity to make some final remarks in this great Parliament of Victoria. It has been a great honour and privilege to be the member for Oakleigh and to leave this Parliament at a time of my own choosing. This does not always happen, and some

in this place will experience that feeling. I can assure you I know what that is like.

Jim and I will always be involved in politics — Labor politics, of course — and I leave this place knowing that politics will not take as much of my time as it has for many years now. I have not regretted one minute of that time, but I certainly look forward to the next phase of our lives.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Dr SYKES** (Benalla) — I am a farmer by love, a veterinarian by training and a politician by an error of judgement. But having made that error of judgement, I have given it my best shot. In these few minutes I would like to take the opportunity to thank people who have helped me over the 12 years, reflect on some of the highlights, mention some lessons learnt and touch on what the future holds.

First of all I must thank my wife, Sally, a very tolerant lady. She has kept the home fires burning. She has kept an eye on the calving cows and done many other things to keep things ticking along at home as well as looking after our three children and helping them with our five grandchildren. I would also like to thank my neighbours and friends who have kept an eye on things while I have been away, in particular Norton and Jane Grimwade, who only last night rang me to tell me about a calf that was causing some problems, and Lee Davis next door, who with much love looks after our dogs Barney and Chocco.

I also wish to thank my staff. They are outstanding. They have provided excellent service because they care about our people and treat everyone with respect. I refer to Kerrie Facey, who has worked with me for the full 12 years; Rowena Sladdin, who has been there seven or so years; young Rachel Tharratt, an absolute delight; Shirley Swadesir, a very solid, helpful person; and Louise Armstrong, who has come on board more recently. We also have Peta Clark, who has spent a lot of time with me and worked under difficult circumstances.

I also thank the staff members of the other Nationals MPs and ministers, especially Tanya Pittard. She is fantastic. I also thank my Nationals colleagues, in particular Peter Ryan. As others have said, we are a great team. We are a loose coalition of like-minded individuals. I thank my Liberal colleagues and their staff, in particular Denis Napthine, Ted Baillieu and Louise Asher — although I am not so sure about the current seating arrangements for me, I say to Louise Asher.

There are many on the other side, the dark side, whom I have much respect for and a friendship with — the current and former members for Essendon; the member for Ripon, a good bloke; I even get on quite well with the member for Altona; the member for Yuroke has a bit of feist — oh, here she is; and I also quite enjoy the company of the member for Brunswick — the latte-sipping lefty that she is.

The parliamentary staff are fantastic. I thank them and really appreciate the work they have done, and also the people in our government departments, particularly the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and Regional Development Victoria, who are outstanding to work with, and our local governments. In the local area we have the wealth creators and the job creators; if we do not have them, things do not work. We have a lot of those people in my electorate. Of course we also have our volunteers — the glue that holds our communities together — particularly in the Country Fire Authority and the State Emergency Service, who have been called upon many times. We also have many other organisations such as the Country Women's Association, the Red Cross, our service clubs — the list goes on.

I particularly want to thank The Nationals party staff, our head office staff and others, and of course The Nationals members and my supporters in the electorate — in particular Davo, Cumo, Jimmy Johnson, Ken Terry, Brian and Reta Sheppard, David Evans, otherwise known as the deputy member for Benalla, Neil McQualter, Faye and Warren Medwell, Pat and Merryl McNamara, Frank Dean and my niece Farlie.

I mention some highlights. The highlight for me was — guess what? We plugged the pipe! The proposed construction of the north–south pipeline to take water from the severely drought-affected northern Victoria to meet Melbourne's water needs enraged country people. The election of our government and the plugging of the pipe was the most significant event in my 12 years in Parliament. It is a credit to many ordinary people who took up the fight, but there were two extraordinary ordinary people — and they are Jan Beer and Chris Harrison, otherwise known as Plugger. I say to all of those people: well done.

We also had a bit of a success with stopping a toxic dump coming up our way. On the other hand, we were not quite so successful with saving Lake Mokoan. A community member in the Lake Mokoan district, Doug Bain, and I were the last two standing before we nearly got knocked over by the then water minister on his Tonka toy as he breached the wall of Lake Mokoan.

There have been other highlights. We have made a difference in government. The \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund has provided me with the opportunity to make available funds for any community that put up a soundly based project. Every community that has put up a project has been funded, and that has made a heck of a difference to our communities. We have also replaced the inequitable fire services levy, which was insurance based, with a property-based levy. That was a core Nationals commitment going into coalition and into government. There has also been sound economic management and the cutting of red tape.

Something that goes under the radar a bit is the law and order reform that has achieved much in terms of making our citizens safe. I pay particular tribute to the Attorney-General, Robert Clark, who has an amazing work ethic and an amazing ability to get things done.

At a local level we had it pretty tough for 12 years. They were 12 tough years. We had an extended dry; three megafires — they were in 2003, 2006–07 and 2009 — and a fair-sized fire in 2013, and multiple floods. It was pretty challenging for everyone in our communities. A lot of us got close to the edge. We were nearly gone, and then the rains came and we got going again. In those difficult situations I felt very humble, I guess, to be able to help people. I was particularly pleased when the Deputy Premier was able to fast-track the funding of recovery works, which made it a lot easier, and at our ability to get the Great Alpine Road open after the fires. It went over very well. It made a difference.

Another highlight for me was my Weary Dunlop award. This is an award that recognises kids who had shown persistence and resilience to overcome a challenge. Boy, oh boy, kids out there are dealing with challenges. My staff and I were overwhelmed by the experience of seeing the parents and teachers tear up when the award was announced and seeing the kid beaming with excitement, often for the first time in their life, as they had some public recognition.

I am also overwhelmed by the carers of people with disabilities. They have unlimited, unconditional love and energy. If ever my batteries are running low, I can just go and touch a carer on the shoulder and recharge myself. The other thing I find very moving are the letters of thanks from the little people, the ordinary people. It is really touching. Often what we have done is very small, but we have helped them and they are grateful.

What are the lessons learnt? One of the key things is that you need to separate the issues from the way they

are raised. Sometimes people raise their issues rather passionately — I have been guilty of doing that myself. The challenge is to recognise the issue, separate it out and take a logical approach to solving it. The other thing I learnt a lot about is accepting that there is a wide range of values and there is not just your set of values. Having said that, you need to draw a line in the sand and something, such as domestic violence, for example, is one of those things that just cannot be allowed to happen.

What is the future? My first job is to ensure the safe transition of my electorate of Benalla, which will no longer be mine. I am looking forward to the member for Benambra looking after the Kiewa Valley. I am looking forward to the member for Murray Valley becoming the member for Ovens Valley and looking after the Ovens Valley and the King Valley. I am hoping that my colleague the member for Seymour will pick up Eildon, or if not, my other colleague, Nationals candidate Jim Child, will do the job.

I am particularly keen to make sure that my friend Stephanie Ryan gets up in Euroa and I can have a red-hot go at supporting that young lady. I will do that because she will just be so good. She will bring cultural and generational change to The Nationals party. It will be great to have her in this place. I will then be looking to doing my thing in my time, like reconnecting with family, friends and farm and being a better grandfather than I have been a father — that would not be hard! I also look forward to travelling. Sally and I enjoy travelling, particularly to developing countries. For those who have been to other places, the first thing you realise is that there is no place like home. The second thing is that you recalibrate the meaning of life, because those in other countries have nothing but they share everything. You need to think about that.

Finally, there are few parts of this job I will miss, but not many. I will miss working in this beautiful building and I will miss the wonderful help we have from the parliamentary staff. I will miss the mellow musings of the member for Melton. And as other speakers have said, I will miss working on committees because that is a really rewarding experience and you realise there are many people who have a range of values but you can get on with them, really enjoy their company and share conversations.

Finally, in the words of the great fighter but not so great orator, Jeff Fenech, 'I love youse all'.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Ms BEATTIE** (Yuroke) — We were permitted to read our first speeches in Parliament and I will read my last, but I certainly did not need glasses when I read my first speech — I should say, like many others in this place!

Firstly, I want to express my thanks and appreciation. For their unwavering support and loyalty I thank the members of the Yuroke branch and my many union comrades. I would like to thank the guys at the Gloria Jeans office in Broadmeadows, Ray Gorman and John Tasev, for their unwavering support. My thanks go to the ALP state office, particularly to Kosmos Samaras, now assistant state secretary, who worked on my first campaign in 1999 and was successful in delivering what the Liberals then called their safe seat of Tullamarine to Labor.

To the many local groups including the local police, the Craigieburn State Emergency Service unit, the local Community Emergency Response Team, the Country Fire Authority, the local bowling club and the many others who have supported me I say thank you. To my staff over the years, particularly Clare Malcolm and current staff members, Kristen Andreula and Kelly Moore, thank you. I will speak of some other staff members later in this contribution.

To Senator Kim Carr, thank you for your guidance, support and wise advice. I would also like to thank Kim for keeping the three-piece suit industry alive — although my colleague here is taking up the challenge with vests, so Kim has not got it on his own. To my dear friend Steve Herbert, who was my campaign manager in 1999 and is now the member for Eltham and soon to be a member for Northern Region in the Legislative Council, thank you for all you have done for me. To the many members in this place, both past and present, I thank you all for your friendship.

To my family: to Garry, Trudy, Emma, Jake and Tyler Clarke; to Kevin and Marina Beattie; to my dear friends Gail and David Cleland; and to Tony, Julie, Jessica and Emma Sheridan, thanks for your support through the tough times.

To the first woman Speaker of this house, Judy Maddigan, I thank you for your support and your mentoring. To all the staff at Parliament, thank you, and also thank you to the staff over at St Andrews Place, who do a great job. Thank you in particular to Ray Purdey and his team, and also thank you to the chamber attendants. I note that recently there were free hearing checks for all at Parliament, and I wish the attendants well. I know the chamber attendants in particular might have some problems with all the yelling and screaming

that goes on in here between 2 o'clock and 3 o'clock every sitting day. I think there could be a civil suit brought against the member for Melton and some other members in this place, but I will leave that to the attendants to take up.

Today we have heard much chatter about legacies. I am not a great believer in legacy, and I am not convinced that bricks and mortar make any kind of legacy, because they can be knocked down and gone in the blink of an eye. The things that really make a difference are those things that I think are intangible. Most people will struggle to remember the contributions I value most. Residents in Tullamarine and Westmeadows no longer have to put up with the foul odours and the transport of prescribed waste through their streets. Labor closed the Tullamarine toxic dump; the Liberal Party would have still used the northern suburbs as a dumping ground for prescribed waste.

Who will remember planning amendment VC30? The member for Hawthorn might, as he spoke on it at some length. That amendment was the enabling amendment for the Melbourne Airport environs overlay, which came into this place in 2007 after I chaired a committee to provide our airport with the certainty needed to plan for the future. The New South Wales government would give its eyeteeth to have a curfew-free airport. Those are two achievements of which I am immensely proud, along with many others.

However, going back to the staff members I mentioned before, they are my greatest achievement. Ros Spence, the Labor candidate for Yuroke, and our candidate for Sunbury, the irrepressible Josh Bull — he will grab that seat like a bull by the horns — as well as the mayor of Hume City Council, Casey Nunn, have all worked for me. They are my greatest achievement. These people will build on the work I have done since 1999, and I can leave knowing that Yuroke, Sunbury and Hume are in great hands.

It has been an honour and a privilege to work in this place — this building, which is arguably the most important building in Australia. It should not be that speakers and presidents have to go cap in hand to any government to obtain financial resources for the upkeep of this building, or that room names are changed unilaterally without consultation. My suggestion is that two former prime ministers — one Liberal, one Labor — be appointed as guardians of this building and work out a strategic plan for its preservation and restoration and that funds be provided accordingly. This building belongs not to us but to the people of Victoria and indeed Australia. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as the last member for Tullamarine

and the first member for Yuroke. I wish everybody well.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.00 p.m.**

**Business interrupted under standing orders.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Premier's office former adviser

**Mr MERLINO** (Monbulk) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to comments today from former senior government adviser Don Coulson that an organised pornography distribution ring was run out of the Premier's private office, circulating pornographic material amongst Liberal and Nationals staffers, members of Parliament and ministers. I also refer to further reports that this material included animal pornography. Today the Premier claimed that this material was not illegal. On what basis does the Premier make that claim?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Before calling the Premier I think it is my duty to advise members of the house to be careful of any sub judice issues when they are making comments about this, because there is a case before the courts.

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. The member quite rightly highlighted the fact that a person was sacked from the office of the Premier in March last year, some eight days after I was sworn in as Premier. When this person's office was being examined and cleared out as part of the process of him leaving the office, there was some inappropriate material found. I am advised that the government's legal team has checked this inappropriate material to determine whether the material was illegal under the Crimes Act. I am advised by the government's legal team that there was nothing unlawful. It was material that was inappropriate and unacceptable in the workplace, but the legal team said that there was nothing unlawful or illegal about the material itself.

### Economic management

**Mrs BAUER** (Carrum) — My question is to the Premier. How is the Victorian coalition government supporting investment in the state, growing jobs for Victorians and building a better Victoria, and are there any threats to this?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the member for Carrum for her question, and it is great to see the member for Carrum back in the house.

Through good management Victoria is the only state or territory with a AAA stable credit rating. We are the only state or territory that has a surplus this year and each and every other year of the forward estimates. We are state in which there is growth in business confidence, in which retail trade is at 6.5 per cent, which is the strongest in Australia. Building approvals are up 25 per cent in the past 12 months, food and fibre exports are up 12 per cent in the last 12 months and international goods exports are up 20 per cent since 2010.

This is the framework for strong growth in jobs, the economy and opportunities for each and every Victorian. The government is working with the Victorian community and Victorian business to grow jobs and opportunities. One of the things the government is doing is delivering on the largest infrastructure agenda in Victoria's history. In this budget alone, a \$27 billion investment has been made in infrastructure, like the east-west link stage 2, like the Melbourne rail link, like the airport rail link, like the Tullamarine widening and like the Pakenham-Cranbourne rail upgrade, which will provide 26 000 direct jobs and 60 000 indirect jobs.

The government is working to grow opportunities in this state through Asian engagement programs, through strategic partnerships with local industries and through the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, which is delivering jobs in regional and rural Victoria. The \$1.2 billion spending on vocational education and training is so that we can be confident in delivering on our commitment of 200 000 new jobs over the next five years. We will deliver 60 000 new apprenticeships over the next four years and 850 000 new training places over the next four years.

To back this up I refer to the last two weeks, when we have seen a number of positive job announcements in Victoria, including 150 new jobs at the Lockheed Martin Asia-Pacific hub and 190 new jobs at the CSL albumin production facility at Broadmeadows. This is a great new investment in Broadmeadows and is creating 190 new jobs. There are 550 jobs at Aegis for its Asia-Pacific hub in business processing and services. There are 100 jobs at LangTech International Pty Ltd food processing facility, as well as 200 new jobs at Australian Lamb Company, 45 jobs at Viplus Dairy and 50 at Cambridge Mercantile Group. Of course in Geelong 30 jobs have been created at Quickstep at

Waurm Ponds, 23 at Organic Dairy Farmers Australia and 27 at Farm Foods Australia.

What are seeing is a government that manages the economy well, has a sound budget and is investing in an important job-creating infrastructure that not only creates direct jobs for the supply chain but provides the infrastructure that allows businesses to have confidence to grow, develop and invest. We are attracting growth in local businesses. We are attracting overseas businesses to place themselves here to grow jobs and opportunities. Under a coalition government we have strong economic growth and strong jobs growth into the future. We are not a government that goes tearing up contracts. We are not a government that puts jobs at risk. We are a government that is about building infrastructure, building the economy, building the community and making sure that we build a better Victoria for each and every Victorian.

**Premier’s office former adviser**

**Mr MERLINO** (Monbulk) — My question is to the Premier. I again refer the Premier to the organised pornographic ring that was run out of his office, and noting his earlier claim, I ask: has the Premier sought advice from Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police to support his claim that pornographic material circulated amongst coalition staff, MPs and ministers, organised from within the Premier’s private office, was not illegal?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — Firstly, can I say that I reject the premise of the question. These are absolutely extraordinary and bizarre allegations made by a disgruntled, disaffected sacked employee who is now involved in legal action against — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Opposition members! I would hate to have to ask members to leave the chamber on this the last sitting day of the 57th Parliament. They will not interject in that manner.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — In relation to the specific components of the question, while inappropriate material was found in the office of this sacked employee when the office was being cleaned out, I am advised by the government’s legal team that the material has been checked and that — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — While the material was inappropriate, it was not illegal under the Crimes Act.

**Police and protective services officers**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. How is the Victorian coalition government’s investment in police helping to protect our families and communities and building a safer and better Victoria, and are there any threats to this?

**Mr WELLS** (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I thank the member for Gembrook for his question and for his absolute commitment to law and order. The Napthine government is very proud of what it has achieved in law and order. There is no doubt that Victoria is a safer place due to the policies of the Napthine government. In the run-up to the 2010 election we came out with a tough law and order policy due to 11 years of neglect in law and order by the previous government. We now have a record budget for Victoria Police — \$439 million more than in the last budget under Labor. In 2010 we promised 1700 extra police and 940 protective services officers (PSOs).

Today I would like to give the house an update on how we are tracking on those election commitments. Of the 1700 police we committed to, we now have 1818 police out on the beat. That is 118 more police than we committed to in 2010, but there is more good news. More police will be graduating between now and election day, with the overall number being closer to 1900 extra police out on the beat. This is just one more example of the Napthine government delivering on our tough law and order policy. I pay tribute to the Deputy Premier for the way we have been able to recruit these police.

Providing the Chief Commissioner of Police with more police means we have more police on the front line. It means we can make a difference when it comes to family violence. In 2004–05 there were about 30 000 family violence incidents. In just eight years that number doubled to 60 000 incidents, and in the last financial year that figure rose by another 5000 to 65 000. I pay tribute to Victoria Police for the work it has done to ensure that women and kids are able to come forward to report family violence. With the release today of the Victoria Police annual report 2013–14, the national survey of community satisfaction with policing reported that Victoria Police provides the most efficient service in the country.

What about PSOs? What an outstanding policy the PSOs have been. They are not plastic police, as was outlined by the state opposition. We promised 940 PSOs, and as of today we have 929 PSOs. With more graduations we will exceed the promise of 940. In

addition to that, we have 96 extra PSOs, and they will start to be trained in November. The Napthine government is very proud of its record on law and order. More than 1800 more police are out there on the beat, and there are 929 PSOs and tougher laws introduced by our hardworking Attorney-General. Under a Napthine government, Victoria is now a safer place.

**Premier's office former adviser**

**Mr MERLINO** (Monbulk) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to comments today from former senior government adviser Don Coulson that his office, in the Premier's private office, was a 'drop-off and collection centre' for pornographic material circulated among coalition ministerial staff, government members of Parliament and ministers, and I ask: has the Premier asked each and every one of his ministers and each and every one of his coalition MPs whether they participated in this pornography circulation ring, and if he has not, why not?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. These are bizarre allegations being raised by a disgruntled sacked employee who is currently involved in legal action against the state. These bizarre and extraordinary allegations are being made by a person who was sacked by me only eight days after I became Premier. This person is now suing me and the state with respect to his dismissal. He is claiming higher levels of payment from the state in relation to his dismissal than we believe he is entitled to under his contract, and we will be defending that matter vigorously in the courts.

Those matters are before the courts. Therefore I am limited in the further information I can provide, but what I can — —

**Mr Merlino** — On a point of order, Speaker, on a question of relevance, the issue before the courts is a civil matter regarding unlawful dismissal. The allegations of an organised pornographic ring in the Premier's private office is not the subject of court action.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence. I ask the member for Monbulk if he could stay within the forms of a point of order.

**Mr Merlino** — Indeed. I repeat: the Premier is not being relevant to the question. The proceedings in the court are civil proceedings in regard to unlawful

dismissal. The allegations of a pornographic ring are not the subject of those court actions. The question the Premier should be brought back to answering is whether he has asked each and every one of his cabinet ministers and each and every one of his — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Monbulk is repeating the question. I ask him to resume his seat. The member for Monbulk continually abuses the privilege of being able to take a point of order by repeating the question. I believe the Premier's answer was relevant to the question the member asked and also to my advice to members in this house to be circumspect about the words the used.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — I am outlining the background to these bizarre and extraordinary allegations. With respect to the specific issue, I am advised that the state's legal team has informed my office that this person's consistent position throughout this process when he has been asked a number times by the legal people involved in this legal case has been that no-one else would have been aware of the existence of this inappropriate material. In that context, Speaker, you need to make a judgement about these bizarre and extraordinary allegations in the circumstances of a disgruntled sacked employee who is suing me and suing the state.

**Regional Growth Fund**

**Dr SYKES** (Benalla) — My question is to the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. How is the Victorian coalition government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund growing jobs, creating economic opportunities and building a better regional and rural Victoria, and are there any threats to this?

**Mr RYAN** (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — I thank the member for Benalla for his very timely question. As the house knows, when the regions of Victoria are doing well, then all of Victoria is doing well. I was delighted to read a transcript, believe it or not, of an interview recently given by the Leader of the Opposition to ABC regional radio where he uttered those exact words, so I am pleased to see and hear that he knows that when the regions are doing well, all of Victoria is doing well. It is just a pity that the policy team he leads has completely forgotten it.

Be that as it may, I knew on this final day of the Parliament that the Parliament would be most anxious to hear about the progress of the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, so I take this opportunity to advise the house of it. We have as a government committed almost \$500 million — the first \$500 million of the

fund — to the initiatives the fund is intended to achieve. It was established in 2011, and since then it has supported more than 1700 projects. It has generated \$1.9 billion in total investment across the regions of the state, and the success of the fund is generating an enormous amount of employment and opportunity throughout the regions.

Just in one element of the fund, which is the economic infrastructure program, there has been over \$266 million in funding announced for a total of 105 projects. Those projects have generated just in themselves over \$1.2 billion of investment, and that investment has led to the position where, from the departmental calculations, it is anticipated that more than 6000 jobs are to be created, some 11 000 plus indirect jobs are to be created and just on 5000 jobs have been created during the construction phase or will be created as these various projects arise. This in turn will support the retention of something in the order of 8000 plus jobs. Accordingly, just that one element of it has been extraordinarily successful.

In relation to locally driven projects, through the Putting Locals First program there were 776 projects at a total cost of \$232 million through an investment of \$95 million. The local government infrastructure program has invested \$100 million in the 48 councils that comprise rural and regional Victoria, and we have seen more than 480 local infrastructure projects at a total cost of over \$290 million. A large variety of those projects deal with community facilities, such as road and bridge initiatives, open space projects, events and sports facilities. All of those were able to be achieved through the work of the Regional Growth Fund. Just last week, in company with the member for Mildura, we announced another \$300 000 going into the \$600 000 Murray River trail infrastructure project outside Mildura, which is but one of many.

Finally, one of the most successful elements of the Regional Growth Fund has been the Energy for the Regions program. That has been a wonderful component of the program where \$100 million has been invested through rural and regional Victoria in beautiful townships such as Huntly in the electorate of Bendigo East, which now has gas flowing to it in circumstances where it would never have happened under the Labor government. It would never have happened because the then Premier, John Brumby, together with the member for Bendigo East, made it very clear that it was never ever going to occur. We are proud now to see 18 additional towns enjoying the supply of natural gas. It has been another element of a wonderful program for rural and regional Victoria.

### Premier's office former adviser

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's statements that material circulated by an organised pornography ring, run out of the Premier's private office, was extraordinary, bizarre, inappropriate and lawful. Rather than the Premier calling this activity extraordinary, bizarre, inappropriate and lawful, will the Premier now join with me and call this for what it actually is — absolutely disgusting?

**Mr Ryan** — On a point of order, Speaker, with great respect to the member, although this is a very serious issue, it is clearly not a matter of government business. We are governed by standing orders — that is the fact — and questions must be put in accord with those standing orders. I put it to you, Speaker, very clearly, albeit this is a serious issue — and the member is entitled to rephrase her question should she see fit — the question in its current form is not in order.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Would the member for Bendigo East like to rephrase her question?

**Ms ALLAN** — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier is responsible for staff employed in the Premier's private office. Under the administration of acts general orders the Public Administration Act 2004 is an act that the Premier is responsible for, so the conduct of staff, the behaviour of staff in this instance, is directly the Premier's responsibility. I was seeking from the Premier a very clear position on what the Premier feels is the appropriateness of this material. It is the government's position we are seeking on this, and to try to manipulate a way out of answering this question represents a very serious representation of how this Premier views that sort of behaviour.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The reason I asked the member for Bendigo East whether she wanted to rephrase her question was that she was asking the Premier to agree with her statement, which I did not think was an appropriate question to the Premier. I was giving the member the opportunity to reword the last part of her question. It is entirely up to the Premier to answer, but I do not believe that question is suitable. I again give the member the opportunity to rephrase the question, although the Premier is prepared to answer it, but I still have doubts about it.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — Albeit that the question seeks an opinion, I am happy to answer it. As it seeks an opinion it is not really in order, but I am happy to answer the question.

**Ms Allan** interjected.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — No, I am not forced to answer; I am quite happy to answer the question. If the member is seeking my opinion on this matter, I am happy to give her my opinion. As I advised the house previously, when this person was sacked from my office, his office was cleaned out, as is appropriate for employees who are sacked, and it was determined whether material belonged to the office or whether it belonged to the person concerned. I am advised that at the time material was found which was described to me by the government's legal team as inappropriate and unacceptable material. I have also been advised by the government's legal team — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPTHINE** — They are independent legal advisers contracted for that work, but I am also advised that there was nothing unlawful about it. With regard to actually describing the material in my own words, I find it difficult because I have not seen the material. I did not ask to be shown all the material. I did not think that was very appropriate in the circumstances. I have not seen the material, and I do not wish to see the material, but I am receiving advice from people who are experts in the area, who tell me that it is inappropriate material, it is unacceptable in a workplace and it is material that they have advised me is not illegal under the Crimes Act 1958.

### Public transport

**Ms RYALL** (Mitcham) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. How is the coalition government's investment in Victoria's public transport system delivering benefits to tram, train and bus users, and are there any threats to this?

**Mr MULDER** (Minister for Public Transport) — I thank the member for Mitcham for her question and for her strong interest in public transport. As we draw to the conclusion of the 57th Parliament, I report to the house that it has been 910 days since I had a question from the other side on public transport. That is because the opposition is ashamed of its record on public transport.

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Speaker, clearly under standing order 58 the minister is not being relevant in that he is not answering the question within the confines of government administration. We have been very busy pursuing this government over TAFE cuts and the ambulance crisis. We haven't yet got to him.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East!

**Mr MULDER** — It is a bit like that scene from *Fawlty Towers*: 'Don't mention the war'. Don't mention public transport, because the opposition is ashamed of its record on public transport.

The member for Mitcham would know very well that a commuter from the Mitcham and Ringwood area would see the Ringwood station precinct project as they move into that area and have a look at that great development by the coalition government, which is a \$66 million investment. Then they would perhaps travel on one of our seven X'trapolis trains that were bought in 2011 at a cost of \$210 million, which was another great investment in public transport. They would pass the new Mitcham railway station and see those two great level crossing projects at Mitcham Road and Rooks Road.

Most likely that commuter would be travelling on a train running at a punctuality rate of 90 per cent plus. As I look at our punctuality for this particular week I see it is 93.7 per cent. They would be getting a smooth ride on the network courtesy of the millions of dollars we have put into maintaining the network as well. Of course on weekends they would benefit from the 10-minute daytime train frequencies on the Ringwood line. If they were fortunate enough to be on the Frankston-Dandenong line, it would be 10 minutes throughout the day during the week.

They would not be travelling on trains as overcrowded as they were under the former Labor government, when 44 per cent of trains were overcrowded. It is down to 22 per cent and will improve even further when we finish the regional rail link project. When this commuter returned home at night, there to greet them on the station would be protective services officers.

If they took a tram, they would most likely benefit from the 1600 additional tram services. If they had to take a bus and were heading to the railway station, with the great work that Public Transport Victoria has undertaken there is every chance that when they arrived there, the train would be waiting for them. Public Transport Victoria is another great initiative of the coalition government.

The people of Mitcham have a lot to look forward to as well. There is the \$8.5 billion to \$11 billion Melbourne rail link that will enable them to get from Mitcham out to the airport by train — under a coalition government and only under a coalition government. There is the \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion Cranbourne-Pakenham rail

project and a \$108 million public transport package as part of the east–west link. But there are threats to this. One of the greatest threats would be if the member for Lyndhurst ever got his hands on public transport again. He was the worst public transport minister in the state!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister will go back to answering the question.

**Mr MULDER** — The reports go on: ‘Underfunded’ Labor plan to remove level crossings’.

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Speaker, I am sure that you are very disappointed that the minister is completely flouting your previous ruling. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question within the confines of government administration.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do have a measure of disappointment. The minister will go back to answering the question.

**Mr MULDER** — Speaker, I was asked to comment on threats, should there be a change. ‘Melbourne Airport rail link not a Labor priority’; could you just imagine — —

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Speaker, it is very disappointing that the minister continues — —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms Allan** — Such charming behaviour! It is disappointing that we have to again raise a point of order. If the minister is unable to answer the question within the confines of government administration, perhaps he could stay seated.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister will go back to answering the question.

**Mr MULDER** — We are getting on with the job. We have made massive improvements to public transport, we have got the government bureaucracy working with us, we have got the operators working with us, we have got our hardworking ministerial officers working with us and we — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister’s time has expired.

### Government performance

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the fact that Victorian patients are dying waiting for an ambulance, Victorian workers are losing their jobs waiting for a jobs plan, our TAFE system is crumbling

while youth unemployment skyrockets, and I ask: do Victorians not deserve better than his chaotic, dysfunctional, sordid, sleazy government?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I advise the house in response to the question that we as a government have been getting on with the job of funding the services and building the infrastructure needed for a growing population, which was neglected and failed during 11 years of a Labor government. The Leader of the Opposition himself said that Labor failed the people of Victoria. It failed to invest in growth for the population’s needs.

In contrast we, as a government, have delivered a AAA budget, budget surpluses, positive economic growth, positive jobs growth, a record \$15 billion in funding for health and record funding for ambulance services. With respect to health, we are delivering a reduction in waiting lists rather than the increase in waiting lists under the four years that the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Health.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — There is a record \$15 billion for health, including over \$4.5 billion to rebuild our hospitals and rebuild the health services we need, whether it be the Frankston Hospital, the Box Hill Hospital or the Bendigo Hospital, which was ignored by the Labor government, or whether it be the Monash Children’s hospital, the recently announced MonashHeart, or the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. We are getting on and building the hospitals that people need for a growing population.

We are investing a record level of funding in education, including half a billion dollars for new schools in growth areas. We are investing in 1800 additional police and investing in 940 protective services officers, making it safer on our public transport services. When you catch one of the 10 000 additional tram, train or bus services delivered each and every week under a coalition government, you know that public transport under the coalition is more reliable. More services carry more people in a safer environment.

We have put an end to the soft-on-crime, revolving-door policy under the soft-on-crime Labor Party, and we are getting on with the job of building the key infrastructure the people of Victoria need. In terms of the regional rail project, we have turned it from a dog under the Labor Party into Australia’s infrastructure project of the year. We are building the Melbourne rail link, we are building the airport rail link, we are

upgrading the Pakenham–Cranbourne rail line, and we are proud to have signed the contract for east-west link, stage 1, and then we will get on and build east-west link stage 2, with the vital second river crossing.

We are widening the Tullamarine Freeway, we are upgrading the Western Highway and the Princes Highway east and west. We are fixing the most dangerous intersection in the road system in Victoria at Ravenswood in Bendigo, which was ignored by the Labor government. We are also fixing the Great Ocean Road. What we are doing is taking a comprehensive approach to grow jobs and opportunities, including another 200 000 new jobs in the next five years. A strong economy, strong investment, strong jobs growth — that is what you get under a coalition government.

### Economic management

**Mr TILLEY** (Benambra) — My question is to the Treasurer. How is the coalition government's strong economic management building a better Victoria by ensuring record investment in our schools, hospitals, roads and other vital services for all Victorians, and are there any threats to this?

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Benambra for this final question of the 57th Parliament. I am delighted to receive it. Just four short years ago Victoria's budget was in a structural deficit every single year, with expenses increasing higher than revenue. We had dud infrastructure projects selected like myki, like the desalination plant and like the north–south pipeline. We had money wasted in back offices and front-line services neglected. This coalition government has turned all that around. I pay tribute to the former Premier, the member for Hawthorn, and the former Treasurer, the member for Scoresby, for the outstanding work they did in the first two years of this term.

Just yesterday we announced a \$2 billion surplus for the state of Victoria. That is the best result in 15 years. We are the only state with a stable, AAA credit rating from Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service, with strong surpluses. A coalition government delivers a surplus with a purpose, and that is so we can invest in better services and better infrastructure, including the \$15 billion in health and hospitals, the \$12 billion in education and skills, and more than \$4 billion in community safety.

Then there are the 1818 new police and the 940 protective services officers (PSOs) — not plastic policemen, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition

referred to them. We do not think they are plastic police. We know they support us and protect us here in Parliament House. We know they support and protect the courts. We know they support and protect the Governor. We know they support and protect the Shrine. We know they support and protect Victorian train users as they go about their business. We respect their work. They are only delivered under a coalition government, and they will only remain under a coalition government, because we know Labor hates PSOs.

I was asked about the threats to this, and of course the threats come from those who would be in charge of the Treasury and who cannot add up. That is one of the key threats. The threats come from those who say that they would have ripped up the CityLink contracts, because where would we be without CityLink today? The same threats come from those who say they would rip up contracts for the east-west link. What have commentators said about that? One commentator said:

If the contracts are not honoured, taxpayers will be exposed to significant legal action and sustained compensation claims, you know it puts at risk our AAA credit rating ... We're not prepared to do that.

Who said that? That was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Another commentator said:

I've made it very clear that we're not about sovereign risk. We're not going to rip up contracts that are signed.

Who said that? It was on Jon Faine's program on 31 July, and it was the Leader of the Opposition. The fact is that this AAA credit rating that Victoria has is very hard to come by. It means that we borrow at lower interest rates. It means our finances are strong. It sends a message of confidence in the Victorian economy right across the world. If you rip up contracts, you may as well rip up our AAA credit rating.

### VALEDICTORY STATEMENTS

#### Statements resumed.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I call the member for Rodney.

**Ms Asher** — On a point of order, Speaker, the chamber is normally allowed to clear before members commence their speeches, and I was wondering if you would consider allowing those who wish to leave to do so.

**The SPEAKER** — I would have done but I had assumed everyone wanted to stay and listen to the member for Rodney. If members wish to leave, I am

sure the member for Rodney will wait a moment or two.

**Mr Ryan** — On the point of order, Speaker, I might say that those who are leaving the chamber will still be able to hear the member for Rodney.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Deputy Premier knows very well that is not a point of order. Has everybody who is going to leave left? I am eagerly awaiting my deputy's speech.

**Mr WELLER** (Rodney) — It is a great honour to speak here for the final time. Firstly, I thank the members of the Rodney branch of The Nationals who elected me in May 2006 as the candidate for Rodney. I also thank the constituents of Rodney who, through their wise choice, elected me to be the member for Rodney on the last Saturday in November 2010. In particular I thank the Labor voters who chose not to follow the instructions from the people of the Labor Party in Melbourne and put me before the Liberal Party candidate. I say thank you to them. To me, politics is local, and I must say it is a real honour to represent an area in which I have lived all my life and will continue to live for all my life.

I found it frustrating being in opposition. Take the north-south pipeline. I like to talk to people, so when the Labor government announced the north-south pipeline I went to the then Minister for Water, Tim Holding, and said, 'We need to have a chat because your bureaucrats have got this wrong'. He chose not to listen. However, it was probably a good thing because that got us elected into government. In government did we do some good things! One is the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund — and hasn't it been spent wisely in the seat of Rodney on many projects! The Leader of the Opposition was the health minister in the last government. I thank him. When he was a minister he would politely meet with me and politely say, 'No, we're not going to fund the Echuca hospital, Paul'. In government we have funded it, and I was there in July with the Premier and the Minister for Health and the member for Swan Hill, and we opened the first stage of the hospital.

Can I also say that things come back to bite you? I was having a cup of tea one day with the Leader of the Opposition when he was in government and I said, 'You know, I don't know why you ministers don't answer questions in question time'. He quite rightly said, 'Paul, it is question time. It's not answer time'. I have reminded him of that several times over the last four years. The Echuca-Moama bridge has been an issue. Eddy Hann mentioned it in his first speech, Noel

Maughan mentioned it in his first speech and I mentioned it in my first speech. I think there will be more news to come on the Echuca-Moama bridge before I finish, so watch this space!

The schools, the police stations and the fire stations we have delivered have all been very good for the electorate. I say, particularly to the member for Macedon, that by the end of 2016 the people of Heathcote will be cooking with compressed natural gas and so will the people of Nathalia.

**Ms Duncan** — Are you sure?

**Mr WELLER** — I am positive of that. It is anticipated.

I have enjoyed my time on the committees, particularly my time on the Road Safety Committee in the 2006–10 Parliament with the member for Geelong. He is a great man. He is on the wrong side, but he is a great man. In 2010 then Premier Ted Baillieu and the Deputy Premier saw fit to have me as the chair of the Rural and Regional Committee, and once again the member for Geelong was on that committee, along with the member for Ballarat East, the member for South Barwon and a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place, Damian Drum. We put out some very good reports on how to attract and retain young people in agriculture. That was a great one.

Then we had a bit of a reshuffle and the member for Evelyn became the Speaker and I became Deputy Speaker, and we had what we call a bloodless coup in the Rural and Regional Committee. Mr Drum moved on because he became a minister, and a member for Western Victoria Region in the other place, Mr O'Brien, joined the committee and knifed the chairman — and away I went. It was a pleasure still to be there and to work with them.

I had the pleasure of working on the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee, the oversight committee, with the member for Kew, the member for Bulleen, the member for Melbourne and the member for Altona. It was a pleasure. I did question the Leader of The Nationals when he asked me to be on the IBAC Committee. I said, 'Look, I'm no lawyer', and he said, 'Probably we'll need a bush lawyer'. I thought, 'Oh yeah, I'll accept that. That's fair enough'.

Firstly I thank the Leader of The Nationals, Peter Ryan, for having faith in me. He gave me a lot of good advice. The day I was elected as a candidate he said to me — and I think we all need to remember this, and it has probably played out in this term — 'If you've done something wrong and it comes up, you say, "Yep, I've

done it, but I was young, and I learnt, and all that’’. I said, ‘Peter, there’s nothing to worry about. My past is clear’. He said, ‘Paul, if it comes up, we’re going to admit it’. There was nothing to come up, and there is still nothing to come up. However, he did give me some good advice. Then it was over and done with, and nothing did ever come up, but the advice was if you are in the wrong, you admit it, deal with it and move on. If you look back on this term of Parliament, you see that it was probably good advice to everyone.

I thank the member for Swan Hill and the Deputy Leader of The Nationals. One day years ago at the Victorian Farmers Federation he said to me, ‘Have you ever thought about politics?’. He obviously had. I said, ‘Oh, yes. If Bill Baxter retires in the upper house, I reckon that wouldn’t be a bad job’. He said, ‘No, you need to be in the lower house’. So I gave my seat to him — but anyway.

I thank my staff — and there have been a few of them — Wendy, Leonie, Jacqui, Phil, Leanne, Mary, Libby, Christy, and of course I was the first in The Nationals to employ Steph Ryan. Steph, schooled in Echuca, was working at the *Riverine Herald* and had an obvious talent. I got her into my office when Leonie was on maternity leave. She was an outstanding young person, and the rest of the party agreed and took her on, which is good. Some people take Wendy for the local member sometimes, but part of my management skill is letting the workers feel as though they are in control when really I am.

I mention Joe Helper, the member for Ripon. Once when I was in the chair during debate on the ban-the-traveller bill, Joe got up and gave a passionate speech, as he does, and as I would have done had I been in opposition. Afterwards he walked past me and said, ‘Acting Speaker, don’t tell me you’ve never had a traveller’. That was a fact. I said to the member for Ripon, ‘I have never had a traveller. I always have two’. I also thank the member for Altona, the only member here who has referred to me, on one occasion, as an elder of the house.

I have worked very well with our coalition friends, the Liberals. I was disappointed that the Liberals agreed with the Victorian Electoral Boundaries Commission that Rodney should be done away with; I did not like that at all, but that is how it is. We have a bright future in The Nationals with Steph Ryan, Greg Barr and Emma Kealy, and there are other good candidates as well. To people who think The Nationals are finished just because the seat of Rodney is gone, I say that they are in for a rude awakening. I am not great on history, but I do like Winston Churchill, and as was said at the

start of the Second World War, ‘There will always be an England’. Well, there will always be The Nationals. We will fight them on the plains, we will fight them in the hills, we will fight them in the regional cities, but there will always be The Nationals.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Ms DUNCAN** (Macedon) — I am one of the very lucky ones who gets to deliver a valedictory speech, and I would like to pay tribute to the many who never got this opportunity. It is hard to believe it has been 15 years since I was elected to this place in that sweet victory of 1999, under the leadership of Steve Bracks. The issues we faced then are still very clear in my mind, and many of them still exist today — funding for public hospitals and schools, lack of infrastructure investment and ongoing threats to our environment, to name just a few. Having been preselected in very interesting circumstances, I became the unexpected Labor candidate, and 18 months later the unexpected winner, in the seat of Gisborne. I was the giant-killer, and I had my 15 minutes of fame in the first 15 minutes of my political career. It has been pretty much fame-free ever since, and thank goodness for that, because fame is very rarely a good thing in this place.

It has been a buzz and an amazing ride that I would not have missed for quids. I consider myself doubly lucky that I have had the opportunity to choose the time of my leaving. Four elections in a marginal seat has been a lot of work, and I am so grateful to the people of my electorate for giving me the opportunity and for re-electing me on each of those occasions. It is a very weird job, and it is hard to know what a job description would look like if you tried to write one. Kissing babies and cutting ribbons would have to be up there. While I have certainly cut plenty of ribbons and turned lots of sods — and met a few along the way as well — I can proudly say that in 15 years I have not kissed any babies that were not related to me.

In this job you meet so many people, each with their own story. These are people going about their business and supporting their families and communities. They are ordinary people, many of whom do extraordinary things. It has been my honour to meet them, to work with them and to be welcomed by them — members of groups like Rotary and Lions, the Red Cross, church groups, scouts and guides groups, sporting clubs, schools and kindergartens, friends-of groups looking after our environment and small businesses providing local employment. Then there are our emergency services volunteers, who are unbelievable in their service to our communities. Their efforts, commitment and professionalism are simply beyond words.

Working around the electorate, I have always been treated with respect and courtesy. Although many people are disengaged from the political process and cynical of politicians, I have found that many in our community are anything but disengaged. They are often looking for ways to be more involved in the things that are happening to and around them. We should all be concerned at the small number of people who are members of political parties and ask ourselves why this is the case. For many of us on the Labor side, we see a big role for government, with the potential to change people's lives for the better, and I believe this view of the role of government is one of the most defining features distinguishing the major parties.

For many casual observers watching question time is no doubt a spectacle and not likely to improve their view of us, but I have always enjoyed the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate, which is after all a vigorous exchange of ideas on important matters. The number of times I have been subject to standing order 124 is testament to how much cut, with perhaps a bit too much thrust, I have brought to this place. I do not apologise for that, but I am grateful to the Speaker that she did not pick me up on every interjection; otherwise I would have spent more time outside the chamber than I did in it.

It has been said that I am just a big mouth. I am offended by the use of the word 'just'. It is no small thing to have a big mouth, and I come from a long and proud history of big mouths. It has served me well in this job and in life generally. In contrast with the vigorous exchanges at a football match, where they are arguing over a piece of leather getting kicked through big sticks — or, as my tragic husband would say, through the tall timber — Parliament, while it may be no more edifying, is at least about more than a game.

As a political tragic, I never cease to be amazed at the level of analysis we give to football. If only some of that analysis were given to political debate, open discussion about policy, detailed explanations, presenting all sides of the argument and providing expert and informed commentary, what a wonderful thing that would be. But of course there is no stomach for such debate. Members of the public are generally not interested in that level of detail, or perhaps we are just bad at explaining things, and members of the media, who should have an interest in such things, are far more interested in the politics of personality — that 'gotcha' moment that every politician dreads is what they are looking for.

Of course being a member of Parliament is a team sport, and none of us would be here without the support

of our parties. While members of the public are cynical about the major parties, it is these parties that give our parliaments some discipline and continuity. Contrast this with parliaments around the world that are made up of disparate groups with little in common. They often lack focus, longevity and outcomes.

I would therefore like to thank the ALP for giving me the opportunity to be part of the Labor team and for its support and encouragement over the past 16 years. I would also like to acknowledge our party members — the men and women who hand out how-to-vote cards at elections, pay their membership dues, come to fundraisers and buy raffle tickets year after year. They are our true believers who support us and our parties and do myriad other things for us. We would be lost without them. Of course they are also our greatest critics, God love them, but they keep us honest and grounded and are critical to the survival of our parties.

I would like to thank my electorate office staff over the years: Shara, Jeremy, Aaron, Gail and particularly Christine Roussiyan, who has been with me for 15 years and who has worked hard and given wise counsel. Our electorate office staff are the first port of call for constituents. They support us in our work, and we are indebted to them. Many of us would be useless in our offices without them. I still do not know how to use that multipurpose device, also known as the photocopier, in our office.

I would also like to acknowledge the parliamentary staff, who are sensational. They are so friendly and professional and treat us better than we probably deserve. The Hansard reporters make us sound great, no matter how bad our speech is. I thank the catering and library staff, the clerks and the attendants for all their help. They are always ready for a chat or to help us in any way they can. How useless are we going to be when we leave here. To the gardens staff, the dogs and I have enjoyed it immensely!

One of the most informative and interesting parts of the job has been the work I have done on the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, which I have been a member of for all of my 15 years. These all-party committees enable us to investigate important issues and hear from experts from around the world and to write reports that will hopefully help inform policy developments in future governments. They should help to take the politics out of many of the issues. We also learn so much on these committees. I know a lot more about ovine Johne's disease and soil acidification than I ever imagined possible, and I know a bit more about water policy.

This government is able to pursue its current policy on water because of the security of supply Victoria now has — a supply that will cater for future droughts and will enable us to accommodate the additional 2 million people who are expected to call Victoria home over the next decade. While stormwater is useful for parks and gardens on a small scale, it is no substitute for a potable water supply that is independent of our highly variable rainfall. Of course the cost of stormwater capture, storage and re-use makes desalinated water look as cheap as chips.

The environment has been and remains one of my passions. I was elected in 1999, at a time when there was huge community angst about the level of logging in the Wombat State Forest. I am very proud of the work we did to bring that back to a sustainable level. I despair for the environment when it comes to the issue of climate change. How is it that we are going backwards on this? How is that we now scoff at climate science? How is it that politicians and shock jocks now know more than the best climate scientists in the world? We need to keep pushing this issue, and the media need to help inform the public on it, not muddy the waters with nonsense peddled by those with vested interests.

When I look back over my time in Parliament there are a number of things I am most proud of. Apart from our efforts with the forest, I am also proud of our efforts to remove cattle from the Alpine National Park and the bipartisan support we had with the abortion law reform. I am also proud of the regional rail project. Also seven towns in my electorate were connected to natural gas — really connected, not just pretend connected. I think the Minister for State Development has about 42 days to deliver to the 17 towns he claims already have gas.

Building the Kyneton hospital and the Sunbury day hospital will be lasting legacies for our community, and I am proud of those. It was at the opening of the Sunbury day hospital that I learned the difference between government and opposition. Listening to the then new health minister's speech, you would have sworn he had designed, funded and built it. But winners are grinners in politics and you just have to sit back and listen and hope someone remembers that it takes more than three months to build a hospital! There were other achievements along the way, and hopefully in the future someone might remember me for them, but it is the small things that make a big difference to the lives of many people.

I have been very lucky to have had a partner who is as politically interested as I am and who has always supported me in this role. I thank my sisters and

Suzanne Sandford in particular for their support. Suzanne was my first campaign manager and gave up a lot of her own life to help me win the seat of Gisborne. I will always be grateful.

I would like to pay tribute to my parliamentary colleagues. It has been a blast. I pay tribute to Karen Overington. The Birches were never the same without her. To Joan Kirner and Emily's List, I say thank you for your support. The only people I do not have anymore in my life are my mum and dad. Like most parents, their support for me was unconditional, and mum is still the best campaigner I have ever seen. I miss them dearly.

I wish my political colleagues all the best for the election — and Daniel, who I hope will be the next Premier of Victoria. I will be out there doing all I can to hold the seat of Macedon and to support our sensational candidate in Mary-Anne Thomas. I wish you all health and happiness. Thank you for this opportunity.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr TREZISE** (Geelong) — I thank the member for Macedon for making me cry before I even start. Firstly, I cannot help but say that it does not seem that long ago that I stood in this house as a new and nervous MP, who had scraped through an election by just 16 votes, to make my inaugural speech. But that was 15 years ago. From a personal perspective, to put that into context, my two daughters, Zoe and Laura, were then children of just nine and seven years. Today they are independent young women of 24 and 22 and getting on with their lives. I am very proud of them both.

In reflecting on those early years between 1999 and 2002 and my making contributions in this house, I clearly remember many Liberal MPs taunting me and others in this chamber that we were oncers — that is, here for one term only. Without wanting to gloat, let me say that here we are 15 years later, while most of those on the other side back then got swept away in the electoral landslide of 2002 and the rest were mopped up in 2006. That was thanks to great Labor governments led by Steve Bracks together with the likes of John Thwaites, as deputy leader, and John Brumby as Treasurer, who was later to become Premier, to name a few. To say they were the best days of my working life would be a vast understatement. The sense of achievement and the sense of belonging and contributing to a Labor government that delivered in bucketloads was so rewarding.

I will refer to some key areas. In education, the vast majority of schools in my electorate were subject to

multimillion-dollar upgrades, and the East Geelong campus of TAFE was built from the ground up. In health, the Geelong hospital and particularly the Grace McKellar and Andrew Love centres were transformed into 21st century world-class facilities. In transport it should not be forgotten that it was the then Bracks government that upgraded the Melbourne Road, where on average four people per year were dying beforehand, and, after decades of procrastination, also built the Geelong Ring Road. In the environment portfolio, locally we saved the Belmont Common from being engulfed by a concrete 1 kilometre rowing channel, together with establishing marine parks and saving the Otway forests, which were all magnificent initiatives. I will never forget the jubilation and emotion on the faces of those people connected with the Otways campaign on the day Premier Bracks made the cessation of logging announcement on site. There were obviously many other reforms that have been noted by previous speakers.

But being in government is not all plain sailing, especially in regional areas where people know who you are and do not agree with everything you do. Although many welcomed the marine parks, many hundreds of fishermen — and I say ‘men’ because they were all male; I can picture them now — were going to blow my political career out of the water in 2002. I can also recall the volatility of public meetings of people opposed to a power plant being proposed 5 kilometres out of Geelong. But I had instilled in me that you front up to these meetings, where usually you are on a hiding to nothing, you state your case, you fly the flag, you listen to people and you respect their concerns. People may not agree with you, but the vast majority of people respect the fact you have turned up. Like I said, the days of the Bracks and Brumby governments were unforgettable and I will until the day I die be proud to have represented the seat of Geelong in those governments.

Deputy Speaker, as you know, life as an MP and life around this Parliament is not all politics, either. There is also the personal side of things: the people you work with, the friends you make and the working relationships you form. One thing about being a politician is that no matter what side of the political fence you are on, to a large degree we are all in the same boat. When it comes to the vagaries of political life, we all live and die according to the whims of our electorate.

Although in this house you may hold most people at arm’s length, there are people you come to trust, and there are people who become friends and confidantes. I can proudly say that I have made some good friends on

both sides of the political divide in my time here. In regard to this, other members have mentioned the importance of the committee system that operates within this Parliament. It is a pity that people judge the operation of the Parliament by the 10-second grabs of question time they see on the nightly news. If the wider public saw the work undertaken by those on our committees, I know the reputations of politicians on both sides of the house would skyrocket.

In support of our committee system, I was disappointed when this government reduced the number of members on committees. This was a retrograde step, and I call on whichever party forms government in November to reinstate our committee system in full. Personally I was proud to have served on the Road Safety Committee with you, Deputy Speaker, as you mentioned in your contribution, and in this term of Parliament as a member of the Rural and Regional Committee.

From a personal perspective, as I mentioned earlier, you do establish working relationships in this place and you make some close friends and confidantes. Without them I do not think you would survive. But over 15 years things happen, and people get older. During my time here I have lost two very close political and personal allies. The first was my father, who served in this place for 27 years. The second was my close friend, as the member for Macedon mentioned, the former member for Ballarat West, Karen Overington, with whom I shared an office for, I think, four years, but believe me it seemed a lot longer.

I had never met Karen until just prior to the 1999 election, but I was privileged to be asked by her family to be one of the pallbearers on the day of her funeral. Karen Overington was a very good member of Parliament and a great local member who worked hard for her electorate. Although she may have appeared to be a rough diamond, I can assure you, Deputy Speaker, that she had a heart of gold.

I will never forget the support I got from members from both sides of the house on the death of my father and the kind words that were spoken across the chamber during his condolence motion. I owe my political career to my father and my mother. When we were kids they instilled into my sister and me the sense of a fair go, respect for others and helping people in their hour of need, because as my father often said when we were growing up, ‘There but for the grace of God go I’.

My father was also renowned for telling people not to talk too long and know when to stop. With those words ringing in my ears I would like to finish my contribution by saying a few important thankyou.

Firstly, I thank the great Australian Labor Party for providing me with the opportunity to represent it in this Parliament. In turn I thank my Labor Party caucus colleagues for the support they have given me and the work we have done over the last 15 years. If there was one key ingredient to the success of the Bracks and Brumby governments, it was the tight-knit team we formed as a caucus. I know that that close camaraderie and that commitment to the cause is well and truly alive in 2014 under the strong leadership of Daniel Andrews. With more hard work over the next six weeks I know all bodes well for the future; be rest assured.

Locally I acknowledge the Geelong West branch of the party, the executive and all its members. I also thank my loyal office staff who have been with me for the entire 15 years I have been in this house. To Christine Couzens, Justin Mills and Jeanette Johanson, I thank you for all your work. Christine, good luck to you on election day. It is not over yet. I also thank the parliamentary office staff.

I also thank my family for their support over the years. Personally, we have been through some hard times, and there are some regrets, but we have moved on. We continue to support each other, remember the good times and plan for the even better. In short, we get on with life.

I thank the people of Geelong for the trust they have shown in me by returning me to this house over a period of 15 years. Yes, there are people who will never vote for you — a bit less than 50 per cent, luckily. But in my time here I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to ensure that at the very least the concerns of my constituents and the voices of the Geelong people are heard in this Parliament.

Finally, I would like to wish every member of this house all the best, especially those who are leaving us today. It has been a privilege, and it has been an honour.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**Mr BAILLIEU** (Hawthorn) — Very few of my 45 predecessors as Premier have had the privilege of giving a departing address to the Parliament. It is a privilege; Premiers usually depart a little more abruptly than perhaps I have, and I thank both sides of the house for the honour and privilege of returning to the front bench, albeit just for a moment.

I leave as I arrived — a proud Australian and a proud Victorian. I leave as I arrived — very proud to represent the electorate of Hawthorn. I leave as I arrived — as a committed Liberal. I leave as I

arrived — in awe of the great architects, the builders and the civilisers who have graced this extraordinary chamber in the past in both its roles as Victoria's Parliament and for 27 years as our federal Parliament. I leave as I arrived — still learning and still willing to be amazed. I leave as I arrived — convinced that politics must be a quest for responsibility, not just a game about the pursuit of authority, power, position or privilege. I leave as I arrived — thankful indeed for the support of the people of Victoria and in particular the electors of Hawthorn.

It has been a singular honour to serve as the member for Hawthorn, as the Leader of the Opposition, as Minister for the Arts and as Premier. I will forever be appreciative for the trust and support I was privileged to enjoy. But above all, I leave as I arrived: deeply grateful for, with the unconditional support of and in love with my wife, Robyn, and of course our beautiful children, Martha, Eleanor and Robert. I am immensely proud of them all; they have faced challenges few could understand or appreciate. I have never been more proud of Robyn than when she represented this state internationally. I want to thank my extended family and all of my very close friends and colleagues — they know who they are — for their incredible support.

I want to thank the staff I enjoyed as minister and Premier, who are some of the most exceptional people I have known in my life. I want to thank my electorate staff, who have worked so diligently on behalf of the electors of Hawthorn on my behalf and on so many occasions and for so long, often in my absence. I particularly thank two close personal staff members who may as well be members of our family: Cathy, with whom I shared so many late nights in the Premier's office working past midnight and lately so many Anzac-inspired tears at the end of the corridor downstairs; and John, with whom I have shared so much time all over Victoria, but we never made it to Noosa. I thank my electorate team: Tim and the many others who have supported me, including John Pesutto. I trust and hope John will be able to succeed me as the member for Hawthorn.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal Party, and I thank the Liberal Party. I have enjoyed the honour and privilege of leading the Liberal Party and then the coalition in two elections, being successful in the latter of those. Before that I enjoyed the honour and privilege of being president of the party for an unprecedented four elections, three of which were successful. I also thank The Nationals for their support, and in particular I thank my friend Peter Ryan. I thank those on the other side, many of whom I have engaged with respect and, I believe, intelligence. I also thank all

those very special multicultural friends and arts industry friends. Where we share a look, a hug and a deep understanding, they are very special to me. I thank the community in Boroondara, the council and particularly the schools, with which we have so had so much to do in recent years.

I take this opportunity to thank the architects in my life who have kept me grounded and focused, as all architects are, on the future. I particularly thank the parliamentary staff. There are many versions of the parliamentary staff in the building, and I think I have a relationship with just about all of them. With most of them it is a quirky relationship. As a symbol of all the quirkiness, I want to mention Richard, who was an attendant in this chamber. I had the opportunity a few years ago — seven years ago, I think it was — of summoning Richard to my office as the Leader of the Opposition, and doing it sternly. He came as an apprehensive and nervous parliamentary staffer only to find me presenting him with a premiership cup in 2007. He was over the moon. I want to thank the extraordinary public servants with whom I have had the privilege of working, some of whom are here with us today. We are very fortunate in this state, and it is no surprise that so many of our public servants are poached to go elsewhere.

I leave as I arrived, committed to a phrase which my colleagues will know: put a priority on family, health and fitness. I leave as I arrived, with my family, I think with my health, although in recent days I have had some doubt about that as I have coughed my way around the corridors; and I think I have my fitness. I pay tribute in particular to my colleagues from lane four and the Bergers, with whom I have swum for so many years in so many different circumstances. If I leave with some advice, I would tell anyone here that the antidote to politics will always be a 2-kilometre swim in the middle of the bay wearing nothing but speedos in the middle of winter. It is impossible to think about anything else.

I arrived in this place in 1999, went straight into opposition and enjoyed my time as a shadow minister in a number of portfolios, particularly the planning portfolio. I was privileged to become the leader of the Liberal Party in 2006, before the election. I was honoured that we won several seats in that election, although not sufficient. I was then privileged not only to remain as leader but to re-establish the coalition in this state with my friend Peter Ryan. We both enjoyed the fact that we did that with calmness, certainty, the support of our teams and without anyone knowing until the announcement. We re-established the coalition. We set a sound and responsible agenda, and we

campaigned hard and consistently. I was very proud that, against the odds and with one of the largest swings in this state's history, we won sufficient seats for a majority in both houses and won government. I am particularly proud that I did so without ever being required to leave this chamber by someone else.

I will leave a little the wiser but otherwise as I arrived, but I leave also knowing this state is in much better shape than when we arrived in government in 2010. All governments have their trials. We have governed in difficult times, through natural disasters, financial constraints, massive cost transfers, unprecedented transnational industry restructuring and, let us just say, a parliamentary balance at the whim of the moment.

We set about doing what we promised we would do at the election, and we faced some pretty significant challenges. I do not want to dwell on them other than to mention them, because the names send a shiver still through the hearts and minds of many of the people who had to deal with those situations, and I do not attach any political interest to this other than the record: myki, the desalination plant, the Ararat prison, the north-south pipeline, some of the IT projects we faced, the completely inadequate health deal signed at the Council of Australian Governments before we arrived, smart meters, the fish market, the fruit and vegetable market, the staggering blowout in vocational education and its misdirection, the inadequacies of the regional rail link, the unbuildability of the metro rail project, the synchrotron, CenITex and, above all, a completely and utterly unsustainable budget. They were challenges we set out to address, and to the best of our ability and as far as possible we have addressed them.

First, and perhaps most significantly of all, we returned a sustainable base to the state's budget. We secured the strongest financial position of all the states — we are AAA stable rated and recognised internationally as such — by stabilising debt, reducing expenditure growth and maintaining a responsible wages policy.

Second, we delivered on our commitments: halving stamp duty for first home buyers, halving ambulance subscription fees, doubling the application of energy concessions, delivering extensive support through the Regional Growth Fund and much more.

Third, we expanded and improved service delivery, with a massive increase in transport timetables, thousands of extra services, improved punctuality, new trams, new trains and the expansion studies that we promised. In education we had a record budget of \$12 billion, with funding for 24 new schools, and we led the way on student outcome approaches across the

nation. Something that perhaps does not get the attention it deserves is the extraordinary commitment to autism schools. In vocational education there was a 50 per cent budget increase, a refocus of courses and a 50 per cent increase in enrolments.

We had a \$15 billion record budget in health and hospitals, and I note in particular the asset program in health: the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre at the top of Elizabeth Street; the eye and ear hospital, which many said could not be done; the Box Hill Hospital, above and beyond what we even committed to; Monash Children's; the extraordinary Bendigo Hospital; Ballarat; Geelong; Mildura; Echuca; Latrobe; and so many others. In the ambulance area there are more stations, more than 500 additional paramedics and an increased budget. In police, there are 1800 extra police and there are new powers. In mental health extraordinary new steps have been made, and I pay tribute to the minister in that regard.

Fourth, we committed to, delivered and pursued a more productive economy. We reduced WorkCover premiums, payroll taxes and business costs. We introduced a construction code that many said should not apply and would not make a difference, but I can tell you that on building sites in Victoria it has made a difference, and they are talking about it. We led the resistance to national attempts to increase occupational health and safety costs at a cost to business. We delivered extensive support through the Regional Growth Fund, and we rolled out natural gas, which many said could not be done.

Fifth, we worked to expand our economy through international engagement. We had trade missions of unprecedented size, reach and significance into China, India and Japan, and we expanded our markets in the Middle East, Indonesia, South-East Asia, the USA and Chile.

Sixth, we supported industries in transition as best we could: motor vehicles, aluminium, fruit packing, Qantas, the aviation industry and even the timber industry, as the member for Ripon talked about earlier today.

Seventh, we fixed, as I said, many of the problems as best we could. We introduced significant and complex reforms, many of which were forcefully resisted and many of which commentators and others said were not possible: the property-based fire services levy, which after years and years has been done; major taxi reforms, which many said could not be done but have been done; protective services officers on our transport system, which many argued could not be done, should

not be done and would not be done, and it has been done; sentencing reforms; moon laws; dog laws; many others; the establishment of Public Transport Victoria and IBAC, and I believe we have the balance pretty much right in regard to IBAC; and the establishment of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. They are just a few of the significant reforms. They may not make headlines, but they are the reforms of this government.

We revamped, planned and commenced the biggest infrastructure program in the state's history in order to build the future, as we committed to in 2010. I know that my successor, Denis Napthine, is as committed to that as I am. This infrastructure includes the east-west link, the Dingley bypass, the Koo Wee Rup bypass, the Melbourne rail link, the airport rail link and many other projects. There are extraordinary grade separations and level crossing upgrades, including the commitment to St Albans, which we made many years ago when others had not. There is over \$1 billion for the expansion of the port of Melbourne, and it is proceeding. Victorians do not walk past and say, 'Our port is getting bigger', but they need to know that it is, because freight drives this state. We need to ensure that we keep freight at the front end of our transport programs in Victoria.

We have taken a lead with responsibility for national reforms and issues including the national disability insurance scheme, and we have done that with a commitment to the detail and not just the headlines, as some would have preferred. We took a lead on construction costs, and that is still to be addressed nationally. We took a lead on the building industry code and on education reforms, and we took a lead on unsustainable spending commitments at a national level.

I note the comments John Pandazopoulos made in the house earlier. We have a bipartisan commitment to multiculturalism in this state. It is something we should treasure and something we should nurture, and when it is challenged we should stand up and push back, and we have. We have promoted it, and I have been proud to stand with members of both sides of the house to ensure that happens. Along the way, in championing that, we have also championed our own consular corps, and I thank its members for their extraordinary efforts not only in representing their native citizens but also in representing this state. We are a better state for our multicultural base, we are a lesson to the world and we should be very careful about it.

As Minister for the Arts I was very proud that we were able to significantly enhance our arts, our cultural and our major events offerings, including White Night.

Anybody who was in Melbourne in February among the 600 000 or 700 000 people enjoying the cultural and artistic delights of our city, without rancour, without drunkenness and without violence, could only be infatuated with our city and charmed by our state and by White Night. I pay tribute to those who put it all together.

We put a new home together for Circus Oz when some said it should not happen and could not happen. We built the pit at the Arts Centre, which allowed Victoria to take the lead again in the arts. We put together the cultural precinct master plan. We put the new tennis facilities and the revamped Margaret Court Arena together. We have championed the government architect, and I take the opportunity to continue to champion the government architect and the design review panels which have given councils in particular, and now the private sector, such an extraordinary opportunity.

The Small Towns Transformations project is operable across Victoria as we speak — next week Natimuk and Neerim South will reveal their transformations to the world. Those of us who visited Dookie last weekend or Avoca last weekend, or Ouyen, know how important that program has been. We have been very proud to put the Indigenous Honour Roll on the program for Victoria. I think everyone who has attended and been involved on all sides of that have been positive about it. We secured a richer living legacy for this state through our national parks, much fairer wind farm development rules, greater protection of our important landscapes and greater certainty for our residential areas and the Plan Melbourne program, which has been put together.

Frankly, I think we should be very proud across this chamber of the significant social issues on which we have taken a lead, often or sometimes against the cynics and the nay-sayers. Of course these include the child abuse inquiry, and I pay tribute to Mary Wooldridge, Georgie Crozier and all of those who were involved in that inquiry. We took the lead when many said it could not be done, and I think we got it right.

During the forced adoption apology — and I think that has been mentioned today already — there were many in this chamber, there were many in the gallery, there were many across the road. In politics there are not many rewards, but some of the rewards are actually tears. Some of them are just an arm around the shoulder. Some of them are a thankyou five years later from someone in the street. I say to some of those who expressed their gratitude, thank you.

It may have only been a little thing in our wider world, but if we were able to help Narelle Grech in her last days, with dignity and sympathy, then I am grateful for that. Many on our side of the house will know that I have often referred to the importance of the little things. They may have been little things, but they mean a lot to so many people. The little things are special.

I mentioned the emergency services workers before, and others have referred to the Black Saturday experience many in this chamber went through. I shared that experience, though was perhaps impotent, as the member for Kew said before, as you can be in opposition at those times, but we sought to provide whatever support we could. And when we arrived to find in government repeated floods upon our shoulders, we did whatever we could. I think we did things afresh and as well as we possibly could.

I am very pleased we have been able to implement and continue to implement all of the bushfires royal commission recommendations. There is one little thing though, a very little thing — it is a program which Peter Ryan and I were involved with. We committed to it before the election. We said we would deliver on it, and we delivered on it — that is, providing personal support for those communities affected. We stretched that program; it meant a lot to them. Again, the little things make a difference.

Since I stepped down as Premier, I have enjoyed the opportunity to embrace the Anzac centenary in a new and personal way, as we seek to encourage Victorians to embrace their many connections to the stories of our original Anzacs. This weekend, on Sunday, we will mark the centenary of the departure of the first convoy. It is an opportunity for Victorians to perhaps recreate in their minds and in their lives and in their hearts those moments down at Princes Pier and Station Pier when the first troops left — some 7900 of them with 3000 horses and lots of other animals. Streamers were thrown onto the ships that took our troops away. And when the streamers broke, those first disconnections took place. We ought to take this opportunity to show our respect to them.

I leave as I arrived, full of ideas for change. I will not bore the house with them, I will bore my colleagues, but there are still so many things we can do to improve our state. I leave as I arrived — indeed, as I arrived. I leave as I arrived, as a committed member of a coalition team led by Denis Napthine. After 15 years I find I have gone from frontbencher to backbencher, in that order. Of course in that time we have shifted from one side of the house to the other. As it happened in that time I had the honour to share the premiership with

Denis Naphine. Of course as two very enthusiastic Geelong supporters, we have shared the joy of premierships before. May there be many more. Denis, Peter, Michael O'Brien and the team have my full support in our efforts now to go back to back.

Finally, I leave as I arrived, undeterred and unwavering. And I leave with arms open wide. I leave as I arrived in 1999, with best wishes for each and every one of those who will serve in the Parliament ahead. May they truly be led by the best interests of our state. I leave as I arrived: very excited for the future.

*Honourable members applauded.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I would like to take a moment to wish all retiring members good health, happiness and fulfilment as they move into this new stage of their lives. I thank each and every one of them for their contribution to this place and their service to Victoria. I extend my thanks to all the staff who have looked after us so well in this place during the 57th Parliament. I thank Hansard staff, who somehow edit every speech into a masterpiece. To the staff at 55 St Andrews Place who look after administration and IT, I say thank you. I thank the clerks, especially Ray and Bridget. Their professional and expert knowledge cannot be faulted. Ray saved me from making a total fool of myself on more than one occasion this year. I thank all members for the respect they have shown to me as Speaker. In a perverse way I have enjoyed my time in this chair. To those who are standing for re-election, stay safe, look after your families, take a deep breath every now and then and smell the roses.

## JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SUCCESSION AND SURROGACY) BILL 2014

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr CLARK (Attorney-General).**

**Mr NEWTON-BROWN (Pahran)** — I rise to support the Justice Legislation Amendment (Succession and Surrogacy) Bill 2014. When there is a death in a family it is usually a time of great sorrow and distress. It is usually sudden, and if the situation in relation to wills and the administration of the estate is not clear, it can quickly add to that source of distress and conflict within families. This bill is about providing some changes which will make the law clearer and fairer and which will enable families to sort out the issues in relation to a deceased estate while containing costs and

keeping disputes about entitlements to an absolute minimum.

The current laws are complex and disputes can be time-consuming and can result in a significant proportion of a deceased estate ending up being consumed by legal fees and administrative costs. This bill has been drafted to implement a number of recommendations of the Victorian Law Reform Commission in its *Succession Laws* report of 2013. The bill also makes small but important changes to surrogacy arrangements in the state to allow parents to be registered on the birth certificate of their child even if the surrogacy treatment is undertaken outside of Victoria — although it must be in Australia — as long as certain other conditions are met.

In relation to succession laws, a key concern with the current laws is that they allow for family provision claims whereby the class of person who is able to make a claim has over time developed into quite a broad range of people. In 1997 the legislation was amended to remove any requirement for a specific relationship with the deceased. Instead a person's entitlement for a claim based on the family provision was rooted in demonstrating that the deceased had a responsibility to provide for them. However, the fact that there was no restriction on who could make a claim coupled with the broad nature of the test to be applied, in recent years led to a wide range of claims being made. These claims put pressure on executors, administrators and other beneficiaries to settle claims just to ensure that the estate was not consumed by legal costs. Claims were being settled even if these claims were quite dubious.

To reduce the potential for opportunistic claims and to better reflect the policy objectives of the family provision laws, this bill amends the family provision scheme to put some limits around who can make a claim on a deceased estate and the grounds on which they can make that claim. We only specify categories of people who will be eligible to make a claim — namely, the deceased person's children, stepchildren, spouses or domestic partners at the time of death, and former spouses and partners who have not had recourse under the Family Law Act 1975 may also apply for a family provision claim as of right.

However, there is a distinction between applications by a child or a stepchild who is under 18 or a full-time student up to the age of 25 who has a disability and one brought by a child or a stepchild who does not fall under one of these categories. Most adult children will fall outside these categories. In such cases the court must take into account, amongst other things, the degree to which the applicant is not capable by

reasonable means of providing adequately for their own proper maintenance and support. This is intended to reflect the position that parents should not usually be regarded as having a moral duty to make provision for their adult children who are capable by reasonable means of providing for themselves.

I have touched on the general basis of this bill. Other speakers have spoken in more detail about these provisions. I commend the bill to the house as a necessary and sensible progression of the succession and surrogacy laws in the state.

**Mr CLARK** (Attorney-General) — I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. It is an example of Parliament working well to deliver law reform for the benefit of the community, with bipartisan negotiation and cooperation. This bill arises out of a report by the Victorian Law Reform Commission that identified the need and opportunities for reform to, in particular, bring back provisions relating to family maintenance that start on the presumption that a testator may leave their assets as they see fit but also at the same time make provision for where testators have failed in their duty to look after those to whom they owed a duty.

I want to express appreciation in particular to the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Lyndhurst, for the cooperative way in which he engaged with me and the way in which we worked through some of the issues related to the bill. I believe the outcome we arrived at is a sensible compromise that balances competing considerations and arrives at a way forward that will lead to substantial improvements to the law for the benefit of families and testators. It will avoid, or at least minimise, the potential for intrafamily disputes and contention in what can often be a very stressful time — when a person passes away — providing greater certainty while also providing opportunities for redress when a testator has not done the right thing.

It has been pleasing that the outcomes that have been negotiated between the two sides of politics have been welcomed by commentators such as the Law Institute of Victoria, and I believe have produced a bill that will operate in the best interests of the community and hopefully serve the state well for many years to come.

The other significant aspect of this bill is the reforms to the law of surrogacy, in particular to deal with an anomaly where people have a child born by a surrogate arrangement where the surrogacy was initiated interstate but the child was born in Victoria. For one Victorian family in particular this is a very important measure because they have been waiting so that they

are in a position to have recognised in Victorian law their parentage of a child born of a surrogacy arrangement. That has awaited the passage of this legislation.

Once again I thank both sides of the house for the constructive and positive way in which the Parliament has engaged on this bill, and I commend the bill to the house.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time; by leave, proceeded to third reading.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crisp)** — Order!  
The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

## Ambulance services

**Mr SCOTT** (Preston) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Health, and it relates to a serious incident in relation to a delayed ambulance for an 88-year-old woman in the suburb of Preston. The action I seek is that the minister meet with the family of this woman, whose details I will provide separately to the minister in order to preserve their privacy, so that the minister can hear the dreadful details of this case and make an explanation to the family.

On 20 August at 6.00 p.m. an 88-year-old woman in the suburb of Preston sustained a fall in her home. She was in considerable pain, was bleeding and had hit her head. Her son, who happened to be visiting, did not feel able to move her, and she remained on the floor. He called an ambulance immediately and was informed that the ambulance would not be long. However, there was a significant delay. The son called again after 15 minutes and was told that an ambulance had been dispatched. Again there was a delay. After another 45 minutes he called again and was told that the ambulance would arrive in about 15 minutes. An ambulance finally arrived at 7.30 p.m., 90 minutes after the first call was made. There was then a further delay in the woman reaching hospital.

While the family is happy with the crew, who they regarded as highly professional, significant issues have arisen for the woman who turned out to have a broken hip and pneumonia. The pneumonia, while it has now passed, is a significant risk to health, and the family is concerned that it relates to the delay in her receiving treatment. It would be appropriate for the family to get an explanation for this terrible situation and for the minister to meet with the family in order to have this matter dealt with properly.

### **Caulfield Park conservatory**

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) — I rise today to raise a matter for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change in regard to the Caulfield Park conservatory. The action I seek is for the minister to allow me to lead and pursue some further discussions with Glen Eira City Council and the National Trust of Australia over the potential relocation of the conservatory.

On 10 June I raised an adjournment matter with the minister about consideration being given to moving the conservatory to the Rippon Lea estate, subject to an appropriate upgrade of the space in Caulfield Park. Caulfield Park currently has limited passive space, and we want to ensure that there is an ability for that, particularly for elderly residents. At this stage key elements of the structure are going to be salvaged as part of the relocation to Rippon Lea. Despite community consultation stating that there was strong support to have the conservatory repaired, there has been little work done; it has sat there. It is a great landmark, and it is very important that the conservatory, a structure with a great local history, be upgraded and made available for the public to continue to enjoy.

As I have said on many occasions, the city of Glen Eira, particularly the suburb of Ripponlea, has the lowest amount of open space in our community. I have fought very hard in this chamber over the last four years to ensure that the open space we have is updated and maintained — space such as Elsternwick Plaza, the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve and, just recently, the Booran Road Reservoir, with the \$650 000 injection from a grant by the Victorian government to upgrade that passive open space. We also funded an open-space strategy — a \$30 000 strategy for the council — to ensure that we maximise the space we have in the municipality and get the best out of it for our constituents and the community.

Last year I met with both the CEO of the National Trust, Martin Purslow, and the mayor of the City of Glen Eira, Neil Pilling, to discuss how we could utilise

some of the beautiful passive space in Rippon Lea gardens for local residents to enjoy and ensure that we have access to parkland. I understand that the National Trust has recently written to the council with an offer to open up a section of Rippon Lea gardens to the public and that the relocation of the conservatory to the gardens could play an important part in this strategy. The matter affects many residents who have written to me regarding preservation of the conservatory, including the Friends of Caulfield Park.

I would like to lead discussions to explore this great opportunity to get the best outcome for the community in increasing recreational open space in Glen Eira and to ensure that the conservatory remains a great local icon. I recently visited the conservatory with my son, and we saw the potential of this great place — the fernery, the gardens and nature. It is important for us to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to enjoy the area and at the same time ensure that we maximise parkland and open space within my electorate of Caulfield.

### **Mental health services**

**Mr EREN** (Lara) — I wish to raise an urgent matter for the attention of the Minister for Mental Health. The action I seek from the minister is that she address the concerns of residents in my electorate of Lara and the wider Geelong region in relation to the mental health crisis. As the minister would be aware, Victoria's mental health system is in crisis. Last year, on Christmas Eve, the Minister for Mental Health quietly tried to sneak out a scathing report from her own department in order to avoid scrutiny. Her own document entitled *Victoria's Priorities for Mental Health Reform 2013–15*, states:

Too many people who require mental health services do not receive timely or appropriate care. In some cases, people reach a point of crisis before they seek or are able to receive services.

The report goes on to raise concerns about 'sustainability and timeliness of access' — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! What is the action the member for Lara is seeking?

**Mr EREN** — Appropriate funding of mental health services.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! It is not possible to ask for funding.

**Mr EREN** — Resourcing. The report goes on to raise concerns about 'sustainability and timeliness of access' to mental health services and the large surge in

the number of mental health patients attending emergency departments due to lack of mental health beds and access to care in the community. This report shows what consumers, clinicians and carers have been saying for a long time — that the mental health system is in trouble. This report represents just one aspect of a problem-plagued period for mental health services in Victoria.

In relation to some of the funding cuts that have occurred, they have dramatically affected the services that are provided by this very important sector. It has been reported at some point that \$831 million has been cut from the health department's budget, according to budget papers, and unfortunately even more funding has been cut by the federal government.

The community visitors report from the Office of the Public Advocate, recently tabled in the Parliament, highlights several examples of the crisis, with reports of incidents of abuse, neglect and violence in mental health facilities over the two years from 2011–12 to 2013–14 having more than doubled, from 27 to 55. One of the reasons we are having so many problems in the system, and it has been acknowledged widely, is the increase in the prevalence of the use of drugs, particularly methamphetamines, which is causing real concern not only in Geelong but also in most regional areas.

Therefore the action I seek from the minister is that she address the concerns of the residents in my electorate of Lara and the wider Geelong region regarding proper resourcing and proper care in relation to mental health.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I clarify for the member for Lara that a member cannot request funding during an adjournment matter but can ask for adequate resources.

### **Robinvale library**

**Mr CRISP** (Mildura) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Local Government. The action I seek is for planning to commence for a combined school and public library in Robinvale. Robinvale is a proactive community that I have been assisting in the completion of its P–12 school and the co-location of a new kindergarten on its school site to take into account its growing population. The community would like to have a public library to cater for its growing population. Robinvale is currently served by a mobile library service, which the community has outgrown. An opportunity exists for a partnership approach to provide for a permanent library in Robinvale. There is room for the library in the next

phase of the redevelopment of the Robinvale P–12 College site, using funding from this government for a combined facility. The partnership to achieve this will be between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Rural City of Swan Hill, the Victorian government and the community. It will take some time to gain approvals and receive consent from the various bodies for this important project to take place. Robinvale has a significant culturally and linguistically diverse community and a significant Aboriginal community. Inherent in that mix is a high number of newcomers, and there are considerable synergies in having a public library for such a diverse community combined with the school library. Everybody in Robinvale is keen to learn, and a library is a vital part of that learning process. There has been a long history of this very resilient community working together and achieving much by spending time planning and working on particular issues.

I seek the minister's support in starting the engagement process to secure the partnerships necessary for a library on the P–12 site in Robinvale that will benefit the community.

### **Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE**

**Ms RICHARDSON** (Northcote) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, and it concerns the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) campus in Preston, just outside my electorate. The action I seek from the minister is a guarantee that he will not sell any land at NMIT or cut any more staff from NMIT. The story of the Liberal government's trashing of TAFE is a very sorry one indeed, and unfortunately NMIT has been at the front line in that assault on TAFE. In total we know there has been a \$1.2 million cut, but of course there is a human side to the sorts of cuts that have hit TAFE. No matter where we look right across the TAFE sector, no matter what institute we speak to, significant damage and in fact at times irreparable damage has occurred at the hands of the Liberal government.

The NMIT story is no different. I put on the record that two years ago it enjoyed \$50 million in cash reserves and it had an \$8 million to \$10 million operating surplus. Then at the end of last year it recorded a \$31 million loss, with no cash reserves. At that time it had already suffered a near \$30 million cut in funding. Back then the government threw in \$16 million as a line of credit to keep NMIT solvent at the urging of the Auditor-General, who expressed concern that it would no longer remain viable. The human face of this is that there are obviously staff losses. Perhaps I do not expect

those opposite to care about that so much, but I do expect them to care about the drop in quality in the courses. Course fees went through the roof, the Greensborough campus closed and the number of students taking up the opportunities at NMIT dropped significantly.

Now the government has stumped up another bailout of \$19 million for NMIT, but in the face of the car industry collapse clearly what is needed here is a rethink from this government about what the state needs — and it does not need a cut in skills training and apprenticeship training. It needs an injection of funds, it needs a change of focus and it needs in particular from this minister recognition of the important role that NMIT plays in Melbourne's north and for my community of Northcote. If the minister turns his attention to the importance of TAFE, in my view he will see the rewards for the Victorian economy and for the Victorian community in particular.

### **Sandringham electorate ministerial visit**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — During my time as the member for Sandringham every school in my electorate has been the recipient of federal and state funds. The matter I wish to raise today is for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for him to visit the Sandringham electorate to review the progress of funding commitments that have been delivered and the good work that has been undertaken in the past and to ascertain what some of the ongoing needs might be for the electorate.

I note from recent reports that there are some 27 000 school buildings in the state of Victoria that need to be maintained. In the Sandringham electorate there are some 11 school sites supported by the government — 7 primary schools and 2 secondary colleges. One is on a single site, and the great Sandringham College is on a federation of three sites comprising the one school that was part of what was described in 1988 by the then government as a 'flagship educational reform' that provided a breadth of curriculum and subject choice to students in the district.

In Sandringham in the present term some great work has been undertaken at Sandringham Primary School for the upgrade of student play areas. That particularly followed the extraordinary drought we had in this state. Prior to the current term there was also some outstanding work done by school councils at Sandringham. Jon Duggan, a school council president, won the award for school council president of the year in Victoria a number of years ago. He was an architect who was wisely seconded by the principal of the day,

and some tremendous work was accomplished. In addition, Sandringham Primary School had the ability to expand its playground envelope through an unexpected outcome when through representation it was able to acquire an adjoining property that had been recently sold at auction.

In the case of Cheltenham Primary School, the enterprise of a principal a number of years ago, Kim Brownbill, achieved the extraordinary in terms of making use of recycled building materials and expanding the built form on the school. So impressed at the time was the then education minister, Don Hayward, that he visited the school and paid the highest tribute to the principal of the day, Mr Brownbill.

At Mentone Girls Secondary College a gymnasium was developed through a collaboration between local government, the school council and the local member, where investment was leveraged. These are some of the things I would like to show to the minister.

### **Melton Highway, Sydenham, level crossing**

**Ms HUTCHINS** (Keilor) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and it is in relation to a significant traffic and safety issue at the Watergardens railway station, where the rail line meets and crosses the Melton Highway. The action I seek is for the government to commit to a grade separation at this location as a matter of priority.

To date I have already tabled petitions containing around 2500 signatures, and I have another petition containing 500 signatures ready to be tabled in the new Parliament. The reason it has become such a huge issue in my electorate is that the electrification of the line through to Sunbury has seen around 80 per cent more trains go through that level crossing where they once terminated. As a result of the boom gates staying down for an excessive period, we are seeing significant traffic problems on the Melton Highway. There is terrible congestion, and many residents have complained to my office about it. They have actually written, emailed, dropped in and taken it upon themselves to distribute the petitions in trying to get this level crossing fixed.

Another compounding issue of safety is the fact that there is a local school on either side of the railway line. With the boom gates being down an average of 52 minutes during a 2-hour peak period in the morning, in too many cases we have seen high school children in particular running across the tracks while the boom gates were down having thought the trains had left but with country trains still to come through. It is terrible to

see that happen, because it is only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs.

As I have said, many constituents have raised this with me directly at the office. One constituent, Nick, wrote to me and said he waited 15 minutes at the level crossing to move only 500 metres. He said there is a great amount of frustration in the community, and he knows he speaks on behalf of many people. I have had mothers complain to me that they are constantly late getting their children to exams because they cannot predict how long it will take to get through that crossing.

The situation is about to be compounded by the fact the around 30 000 homes are planned for new estates that sit just beyond this railway crossing. We anticipate 30 000 homes will mean up to an additional 70 000 cars will come into the area based on current car usage figures. Without a fix for this intersection and without a grade separation being high on the government's list of priorities, we are going to see more commuters and more pedestrians put in danger at this crossing.

### **Country Fire Authority Beaconsfield brigade**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — I call on the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to come to the Gembrook electorate to meet with the volunteers at the Beaconsfield Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade. The brigade has an ongoing issue with land in the area, and we need to find a solution.

Before the coalition was elected in 2010, I met with the volunteers and the brigade captain, Paul Hayes, who is still the captain there now. For the record, I congratulate Paul on having recently done a charity run up the stairs in full breathing apparatus gear. He is very committed to raising extra money for his community down there. In 2010 I met with him and his volunteers, and we discussed some of the issues of concern in the area. In opposition we had not committed to anything for the station down there, but once we got into government we started working with the local volunteers and discussing some of the issues they have.

As many would know, Beaconsfield was a lovely rural town not that long ago. As time has moved by and growth has occurred down there, up to five or six families a day have moved in. We have seen rapid growth in the urban boundaries and rapid growth in the urban residences around Beaconsfield station. This has meant that the Beaconsfield CFA brigade is now turning out to a lot more structural fires and to a lot fewer rural fires.

The present station is inadequate for the growth in the area over the past five or six years. We found some funding to purchase land, and we have found a block of land that suits the precise needs of the CFA, which is quite difficult in the area because land is being taken up at a rapid rate. Negotiations had begun with the owner of the land, but that person subsequently moved to Perth and there have been delays in negotiating with them in Perth since that time.

I ask the minister to come out to Beaconsfield to listen to the CFA volunteers and hear exactly why they need an intervention in this matter to get it moving forward, once we have the land settled. The CFA volunteers are turning out 200 to 300 times a year. They support Berwick, and they support Pakenham, which is an integrated station just down the road. At the moment they cannot get any more trucks because there is nowhere to put them. They have been operating in the same shed for 40 years, the only changes having occurred in that time being the addition of a meeting room and a kitchen area out the back — and I believe that at the moment even that is inadequate for their operations.

Beaconsfield is growing. It wants to attract more volunteers because they are needed, especially during the day, but there is no enthusiasm to join the local CFA in Beaconsfield because of the lack of facilities there. When people travel further down to Berwick, which was upgraded under this government, or look at Officer, which did its own upgrade prior to our coming to office, they see those two stations as preferable locations. I therefore call on the minister to come down to the Gembrook electorate, meet the volunteers and discuss their ongoing issues and concerns to see if we can put in place a plan for the future of the Beaconsfield station.

### **Wallan ambulance station**

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Health, David Davis. The action I seek is for him to keep his promise of four and a half years ago to build a fully equipped and staffed ambulance station in Wallan. With 44 days to go until the election, this minister has comprehensively failed the growing community of Wallan, whose lives are at risk. I have now raised this matter on eight occasions, and the outgoing member for Seymour has not asked raised it once. Not once has she asked what is going on or why it has not been delivered, but I will not be silenced on this matter.

We saw an unedifying display by the government yesterday when it refused point blank to debate Labor's

private members bill which would have ensured access for the community to response data. Thus far the government has denied freedom of information requests because it is worried that releasing that information would reduce people's confidence in its ambulance service, but in Wallan and in my broader community that confidence could not be any lower. Our hardworking paramedics have great support in the community, but they do not have the support of this mean, mean government.

From leaked information that does not break it down to postcode level, the data shows that code 1 ambulance cases are falling well short of the 15-minute time frame, and the leaked figures show that 90 per cent of code 1 cases in Melbourne's northern and the southern Hume region are among the worst in Victoria. In the north, which takes in the Whittlesea and Nillumbik local government areas, the code 1 response time average is around the 20-minute mark. In the Southern Hume region, taking in Mitchell shire and Wallan, the code 1 response time average is a staggering 32 minutes. Four and a half years after the minister made his promise, there is no ambulance branch and a response time of 32 minutes. It is a disgrace. You can get a pizza delivered to your home more quickly in the Yan Yean electorate than you can get an ambulance under the Liberal government.

When Labor was in office we delivered ambulance stations in Diamond Creek, Whittlesea, South Morang, Eltham North, and we reserved land in Mernda. We had an eye for the growing community, and we promised to build an ambulance station in Wallan — and if we had been elected we would have kept that promise. We will keep that promise if we are elected next time, and we will undo the damage done to the Wallan community, which has been failed by this government. In the remaining 44 days I urge the minister to pull his finger out.

### **Prahran secondary school site**

**Mr NEWTON-BROWN** (Prahran) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that the minister make a timely announcement on the government's preferred site for the new secondary school in Prahran, now that the community consultation has been completed and a recommendation has been made.

Prior to the 2010 election the coalition committed \$200 000 to a feasibility study, which was done in two phases. At the conclusion of that study the Napthine government went a step further and earlier this year delivered \$20 million in the budget for the construction

of a new school in my electorate. I note that Labor has yet to make any announcement in relation to building a new school in Prahran other than recognising that \$20 million has been locked into the budget by the Napthine government. However, the Leader of the Opposition has made announcements about schools in the surrounding areas, including a new school in Richmond and some refurbishments at other schools. My grave concern is that this \$20 million in the budget will be siphoned off to a school in Richmond, and it will then be recognised as the school for Prahran although it will not be in Prahran.

As far as the school the Napthine government is building in Prahran is concerned, it is desperately needed. We have some fantastic primary schools — Stonnington, Toorak and South Yarra — and several private and Catholic schools as well, and they are great local communities. However, at year 6 these communities get split up, and at the announcement of the \$20 million to construct a secondary school for this community the Premier gave me the task of chairing a community consultative committee to choose a preferred site. I recognise the contribution of the members on that committee. The committee is made up of principals Peter Clifton, Anne McPhee, Julie Manallack, Rochelle Cukier, Susan Higgins, Gerard Lewis and Francine Walsh; parents David Walker, Paolo Tombesi, Nikos Papastergiadis, Shane Rogerson, Liza Chancellor, Ben Pratt and Donna Martin; and council representatives Cath Harrod, Connie Gibbons, Janelle Bryce and mayor Adrian Stubbs.

The committee has reviewed 23 different sites in the electorate and has come up with selection criteria. It was narrowed down to four, and just this week the committee has finalised a recommendation to the minister for a preferred site. The community is now keen to get on with the delivery of this new school, and we look forward to the minister announcing as soon as possible the preferred location.

### **Responses**

**Mr BULL** (Minister for Local Government) — It is a pleasure to rise to respond to the very hardworking member for Mildura, who raised with me the issue of the Robinvale library. It was only relatively recently that I was in the electorate of Mildura. The member showed me around the township, at which time I gained a strong appreciation of the fact that it is very much a multicultural town and one with a high Indigenous population. I am aware that the town is serviced at present only by a mobile library. For an expanding town that is indeed inadequate. The member has also informed me that there are a number of groups in the

local community who are advocating very strongly for a new library presence on the P-12 school site, and I would be absolutely delighted to take up the member's request to further facilitate those discussions with the various community groups, along with the hardworking member for Mildura, to progress the proposition for a new library on that site.

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) — The member for Preston raised a matter for the Minister for Health regarding an ambulance incident and asked that the minister meet with a constituent family. The member for Preston has provided those details to the Minister for Health, but I will pass the request on to him nevertheless.

The member for Caulfield raised an issue for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change regarding the potential relocation of Caulfield Park conservatory and the leadership role the member for Caulfield wishes to assume in that. I will pass that matter on to the minister.

The member for Lara raised a matter for the Minister for Mental Health regarding mental health resources. I will pass that matter on to the minister.

The member for Northcote raised an issue with the Minister for Higher Education and Skills regarding the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE campus in Preston, and land sales and staff. I will pass that matter on to the minister.

The member for Sandringham raised an issue for the Minister for Education, asking him to visit Sandringham to review educational facilities and funding commitments. I will pass that matter on to the Minister for Education.

The member for Keilor raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport regarding a grade separation she requested for a crossing near Water Gardens railway station.

The member for Gembrook raised an issue for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services requesting that he visit Beaconsfield Country Fire Authority brigade and talk to the volunteers about their future needs. I will pass that matter on to the minister.

The member for Yan Yean raised a matter for the Minister for Health regarding an ambulance station in Wallan. I will refer that matter to the minister.

Is it appropriate at this juncture for the Minister for Education to respond to an adjournment matter raised?

**The SPEAKER** — I believe the minister can answer.

**Mr DIXON** (Minister for Education) — I thank the Speaker for her indulgence.

The member for Prahran raised with me an issue regarding the work that has been done in relation to the selection of a site for the proposed Prahran secondary college. He has been chairing a committee on this project and has done a lot of local community consultation. There is a \$20 million commitment in the budget, and I can advise the member for Prahran that the bulk of the work has been done in terms of looking at the site options. Together he and I will be making an announcement about the next important step, because I know the community is looking forward to seeing that Prahran high school being built with that \$20 million budget commitment.

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) (*By leave*) — On the last occasion on which I will do so in this Parliament I would like to, by leave, thank the clerks, particularly Ray Purdey for the role he has played in this Parliament, and all the other staff, including Hansard.

I wish the retiring members of Parliament well. I thank the whips, who receive very little thanks at all. I thank the member for Benambra but also the member for Kororoit and the two Nationals whips with whom I have worked, the member for Mildura and the member for Lowan.

This has been an incredibly difficult Parliament for both government and opposition, and I acknowledge and thank the manager of opposition business. Of course she and I have different perspectives on things, and there were some days when we had our moments, but overall I would like to thank her for her contribution in what has been an extraordinarily difficult Parliament.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The house is adjourned until the next day of sitting.

**House adjourned 4.33 p.m.**