

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION**

**Tuesday, 10 June 2014**

**(Extract from book 8)**

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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)

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

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

**Speaker:**

The Hon. 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)

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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)

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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
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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
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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
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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
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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
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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
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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



# CONTENTS

## TUESDAY, 10 JUNE 2014

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

<i>Standing orders</i> .....	1915, 1925
<i>Notices of motion</i> .....	1923
<i>Orders of the day</i> .....	1925

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

<i>Member for Frankston</i> .....	1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1920
<i>Family violence</i> .....	1915, 1916
<i>Major projects funding</i> .....	1918
<i>Student disability funding</i> .....	1919
<i>Government financial management</i> .....	1921

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND VICTORIAN

#### INSPECTORATE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014

<i>Introduction and first reading</i> .....	1923
---	------

### SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS

#### COMMITTEE

<i>Alert Digest No. 7</i> .....	1923
---------------------------------	------

### DOCUMENTS ..... 1923

### JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

<i>Legislative Council vacancy and Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation</i> .....	1924
--	------

### ROYAL ASSENT ..... 1924

### APPROPRIATION MESSAGES ..... 1925

### BUDGET PAPERS 2014–15 ..... 1925, 1933, 1938

### MEMBERS STATEMENTS

<i>Hamer scholarships</i> .....	1925
<i>Government business program</i> .....	1925
<i>East Gippsland bushfires</i> .....	1926
<i>Member for Frankston</i> .....	1926
<i>Omeo Highway</i> .....	1926
<i>Narre Warren South P–12 College</i> .....	1927
<i>Relay for Life Cranbourne-Narre</i> .....	1927
<i>Melbourne Vixens</i> .....	1927
<i>Casterton kelpie interpretive centre</i> .....	1927
<i>Nhill water supply</i> .....	1927
<i>Lowan electorate schools</i> .....	1927
<i>Stawell Airport</i> .....	1927
<i>Cranbourne Secondary College</i> .....	1928
<i>Ernie Merrick</i> .....	1928
<i>Protective services officers</i> .....	1928
<i>Dutch immigrants</i> .....	1928
<i>Southland railway station</i> .....	1928
<i>Kangan Institute merger</i> .....	1928
<i>Regional Growth Fund</i> .....	1929
<i>John and Lina Pallisco</i> .....	1929
<i>Parliament House incident</i> .....	1930
<i>Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker services</i> .....	1930
<i>Mitcham Primary School</i> .....	1930
<i>Heloise Clarke</i> .....	1930
<i>Charlotte Mears</i> .....	1931
<i>Mount Pleasant Road Primary School and Kindergarten</i> .....	1931
<i>Anthony Attard</i> .....	1931
<i>Sea Lake Mallee Rally</i> .....	1931
<i>Samoan Independence Day</i> .....	1931
<i>Manangatang health services</i> .....	1931
<i>Calder Highway, Red Cliffs, speed zone</i> .....	1931
<i>Bowel cancer awareness</i> .....	1931

<i>Sri Lanka</i> .....	1931
<i>Barwon Water</i> .....	1932
<i>Reconciliation in the Park</i> .....	1932
<i>LEAD Barwon</i> .....	1932
<i>Kindergarten funding</i> .....	1932

### APPROPRIATION (2014–2015) BILL 2014

<i>Second reading</i> .....	1933
<i>Third reading</i> .....	1935

### APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2014–2015) BILL 2014 and BUILDING A BETTER VICTORIA (STATE TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT) BILL 2014

<i>Second reading</i> .....	1935
-----------------------------	------

### BUILDING A BETTER VICTORIA (STATE TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT) BILL 2014

<i>Second reading</i> .....	1936
<i>Consideration in detail</i> .....	1936
<i>Third reading</i> .....	1937

### APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2014–2015) BILL 2014

<i>Second reading</i> .....	1937
<i>Third reading</i> .....	1937

### TREASURY LEGISLATION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014

<i>Second reading</i> .....	1978
-----------------------------	------

### ADJOURNMENT

<i>Keeping It Together program</i> .....	1979
<i>Caulfield Park conservatory</i> .....	1980
<i>Cranbourne electorate bus services</i> .....	1980
<i>Visionstream</i> .....	1981
<i>Isla Avenue Community Respite Care Facility</i> .....	1981
<i>North-eastern Victoria investment</i> .....	1982
<i>Vocational education and training</i> .....	1982
<i>Bowel cancer awareness</i> .....	1983
<i>South Melbourne Life Saving Club</i> .....	1983
<i>Badger Creek hall</i> .....	1984
<i>Responses</i> .....	1984



## Tuesday, 10 June 2014

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Christine Fyffe) took the chair at 2.04 p.m. and read the prayer.**

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

#### Standing orders

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

That so much of standing orders be suspended such that would prevent the house — —

**Leave refused.**

**Mr Andrews** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The house will come to order. Points of order — —

**Mr Merlino** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I advise the member for Monbulk that that is unparliamentary language. I ask him to apologise and withdraw.

**Mr Merlino** — Apologise and withdraw, or withdraw, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! It would help me if the member for Monbulk were to actually apologise for that unparliamentary language and to withdraw.

**Mr Merlino** — I withdraw.

**Mr Andrews** — On a point of order, Speaker, whilst it is in the gift of the government to grant leave, and I am not for a moment reflecting on your conduct, surely the Premier would need to hear the notice of motion before he could shut down debate on it? What an act of fundamental weakness — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that that is not the way to take a point of order.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### Member for Frankston

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

comments last Tuesday night that the member for Frankston had made an ‘outrageous’ and ‘extreme’ demand regarding a judicial appointment that would ‘not be tolerated’, and I ask: who did the member for Frankston ask him to appoint?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. The issue he raises results from a discussion I had with the member for Frankston earlier this year.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — The member for Frankston expressed disappointment with the judicial appointments made under the previous government and said — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Monbulk will refer to members by their correct titles.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — In a wide-ranging discussion the member for Frankston said that we should make more appropriate appointments to the bench. I said to him at the time that I would not countenance that. That is not the way we make appointments to the bench. We do them through the proper process and that would not be countenanced at all.

### Family violence

**Ms RYALL** (Mitcham) — My question is to the Premier. What action is the coalition government taking to reduce the incidence of family violence in the Victorian community?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for her question and for her interest in the scourge of family violence across our community. Every member of our community must join together and say no to family violence. For too long society has turned a blind eye to what has been happening behind closed doors. Family violence in all its forms cannot be hidden, and it cannot be swept under the carpet. Physical violence is assault, it is illegal, it is criminal behaviour and it can and should be dealt with using the full force of the law. But family violence also includes psychological violence, emotional violence and financial abuse, all of which are totally unacceptable and wrong.

Our government understands that a whole-of-government approach is needed to tackle family violence, to deal with incidents of family violence and to prevent family violence in our

community. That is why this government has increased funding for specific family violence measures by over 40 per cent since it came to office to now more than \$100 million a year. But that is only part of what we do in dealing with family violence. As I outlined before, you need a whole-of-government approach. It involves education, including education in the schools, and it involves programs that support victims of family violence, particularly regarding housing and support through the judicial process. It also involves our traditional police and justice systems. Those systems under our government are taking a stronger and tougher approach to dealing with perpetrators of family violence.

In a recent judgement of 22 May Justices Marcia Neave and Emiliios Kyrou said the only way to protect victims of family violence is to let the abusers know they face lengthy jail terms. Our government makes no apology for introducing tougher sentences for those who perpetrate family violence and for introducing baseline sentences and higher penalties for breaches of family violence orders. We have abolished home detention and suspended sentences, which often contribute to family violence. We have also made it an offence to breach bail conditions. We have 1500 extra police out there dealing with crime, particularly family violence. We have increased the number of family violence response units from 10 to 30.

On 29 May the *Age* said this was:

... a clever and important form of community police work.

Recently I was able to be in Bendigo announcing \$3 million for the Annie North refuge in that city. This is a very important piece of infrastructure to assist workers in family violence to provide the necessary facilities for victims of family violence and their families so that they have a safe place to go if they need to. We also announced recently \$124 million as part of the national partnership agreement on homelessness, and a significant portion of that is for family violence response.

At the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) summit I announced a further \$30 million to strengthen our family violence services. In response to that VCOSS said:

VCOSS welcomes the \$30 million in new funding ...

...

Today's announcement is a good step towards improving the safety of women and children.

Domestic Violence Victoria said:

We are encouraged that this announcement has come from the Premier. It is heartening to see his recognition that family violence is completely unacceptable and one of the state's major social and economic issues.

Berry Street said:

Today's announcement by Premier Napthine and community services minister Wooldridge has shown their commitment to Victoria's most vulnerable children ...

We are tackling family violence.

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

### Member for Frankston

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his comments last Tuesday night that the member for Frankston had made an 'outrageous' and 'extreme' demand regarding a judicial appointment that 'would not be tolerated', and I ask simply: exactly when did the member for Frankston make this demand of the Premier?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I outlined to the house in a previous answer to a question that earlier this year was when I had discussions with the member for Frankston, and in part of those discussions he outlined his concern about the judiciary in this state and particularly the appointments made under the Labor government.

**Mr Andrews** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question is a very simple one: when did the Premier have this discussion with the member for Frankston? It is very simple and one which the Premier ought to answer.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows that he cannot repeat the question when raising a point of order.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — In answer to the question, earlier this year. When it was raised I made it very clear immediately to the member for Frankston that this was unacceptable, it was unreasonable and it would not be countenanced in any way, shape or form by me as Premier or by my government.

### Family violence

**Ms WREFORD** (Mordialloc) — My question is to the Minister for Community Services. How will the new funding committed by the coalition government

help address the serious issue of family violence and its impact on women and children?

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Minister for Community Services) — I thank the member for Mordialloc for her question and for her long-held and deep interest in the issue of protecting women and children in the community. There has never been a greater focus on family violence than there is now — the government is focused, the police are focused, the family violence and broader human services sector is focused, and importantly the whole community is focused. That is because violence against women and their children is unacceptable in any form at any time in any circumstance and in any community.

As a government we are committed to preventing violence from happening, to identifying and working with women and children who are at risk, to holding perpetrators to account and to making sure that we support those women who experience violence. Back in 2012 seven ministers from this coalition government together released *Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children — Everyone Has a Responsibility to Act*. This action plan is an integrated, coordinated and whole-of-government approach that addresses all forms of violence against women and children and, especially because of their prevalence, family violence and sexual assault. It is built from over 130 submissions and conversations and consultations with over 260 people, including women who had experienced family violence who bravely told their stories.

Since the action plan was published the coalition government has been getting on with the job. Last month I released an implementation bulletin on the plan, which listed dozens of programs and initiatives across the state in schools, health services, local government, the media and a range of different groups, including multicultural and Aboriginal communities. One particular highlight was the establishment of the Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children here in Victoria because of our leadership on a national basis.

Over the past month the Victorian government has announced \$55 million in new funding to strengthen our efforts. A significant part of that funding goes towards effectively keeping safe women and children who are at high risk of experiencing violence. This is a program that this coalition government established, trialled in Geelong and Hume, evaluated and is now rolling out statewide. These models use risk assessment management panels to bring together the right people — family violence services, family services,

police, corrections, the courts and a key worker who coordinates better protection for women and children at high risk. The risk assessment management panel evaluation has shown a 70 per cent reduction in risk of further violence compared to the traditional family violence response — a very significant improvement for their safety and wellbeing. This will make a difference for hundreds of women and children right across the state.

We are also providing post-crisis flexible packages of up to \$15 000 to help get women and children back on their feet, housed, in school and employed. We are training our health and human services workforces through our common risk assessment framework. We are fast-tracking women and children referred by the police through their reports and referrals into family violence and human services. We are also expanding sexual assault counselling services, which will go into Melbourne's west and other parts of the state that need additional support.

We are getting on with driving the change and investing in innovative and practical support and solutions for women and children to keep them safe. This is headed up by strong leadership under the Premier, and it recognises that a coordinated and integrated approach is absolutely necessary to tackle this issue. The coalition government will invest over \$100 million, as the Premier has said. We have a plan, all of government is engaged, and the sector and the broader community were part of developing, refining and now implementing it. As the Chief Commissioner of Police, Ken Lay, said:

I was very welcoming of the investment by government ... it will make women and children safer.

That is the point.

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

### Member for Frankston

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the transcript of his press conference held on 3 June at 7.15 p.m. where, in response to questions about demands made by the member for Frankston, the Premier said:

From time to time Mr Shaw has made other demands of the government. An example was Mr Shaw has previously and again has made demands recently for a particular judicial appointment. That is outrageous. That is extreme. That is ludicrous. That is not tolerated by me as Premier.

I ask: why did the Premier not refer this attempt to influence a particular judicial appointment to IBAC or Victoria Police?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. As I have outlined in the house and I have outlined publicly, I have had a number of discussions with the member for Frankston in recent times, particularly relating to the bills before the house, as the government has sought to work with an Independent member to make sure that the Independent member is fully informed of the decisions that have to be made by this Parliament with regard to important legislation about growing and building a better and stronger Victoria.

**Mr Andrews** — On a point of order, Speaker, on any reading this answer is not relevant to the question that was asked. The Premier cannot run from his own words ‘a particular judicial appointment’.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Andrews** — That is what he said.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that he cannot use the taking of a point of order to repeat the question.

**Mr Andrews** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Not only has the Leader of the Opposition not taken a point of order correctly but he is also being disrespectful to the Chair by interjecting while I am speaking.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — As I was outlining, I have had a number of discussions with the member for Frankston, particularly regarding legislation before the Parliament. As part of those discussions, the member for Frankston has raised the issue of judicial appointments. When he has raised that issue the member for Frankston has been told that that is not the appropriate way to — —

**Mr Andrews** — On a further point of order, Speaker, the question related to action not taken by the Premier. I will not repeat the question, but clearly it did not relate to the subject matter that the Premier is covering. Why did he not take action? That is the question, and he ought to answer it. They are his own words; he ought to answer the question.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier was setting a context for his answer, and he is well within his rights to set a context for his answer. I

ask that you rule the point of order taken by the Leader of the Opposition out of order.

**Mr Merlino** — On the point of order, Speaker, the preamble referred to comments by the Premier and discussions about a particular judicial appointment. That is what the discussions were about. The question was why these were not referred to IBAC or Victoria Police. If the discussion — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Monbulk knows very well how to take a point of order.

**Mr Merlino** — If the discussion was notable enough and significant enough to be — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Monbulk will resume his seat. I advise the house that if points of order are not raised in the correct form, I will not hear them.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — In those discussions this matter was raised, and it was ruled out immediately. The member was told that is not the way this government makes judicial appointments. It is totally unacceptable. It is totally over the top. It was ruled out immediately. It was made very clear that this government makes judicial appointments in the appropriate way, using the appropriate mechanisms.

### Major projects funding

**Mr NEWTON-BROWN** (Prahran) — My question is to the Minister for State Development. How is the coalition government building a better Victoria, creating more jobs and transforming Melbourne through its plan to develop the Richmond to Footscray rail corridor?

**Mr RYAN** (Minister for State Development) — I thank the member for his very important question. Our government, this coalition government, has a vision to transform Melbourne and the CBD by unlocking underutilised land along the Richmond to Footscray rail corridor. This entails a suite of very exciting projects, and it represents an opportunity for the investment of billions of dollars, particularly by the private sector, and the creation of literally tens of thousands of jobs over a period spanning many years.

Recently I had the great pleasure, together with the Minister for Major Projects, to announce \$8 million of funding in the current budget — the budget that is presently before the house — which would enable the further development of these wonderful projects. This money is to be expended over the course of the next two years. There are four projects that are of particular

note. One of those is Federation Square East, then there is E-gate, the Flinders Street station redevelopment and finally Richmond station. Of necessity we are taking a very considered approach in relation to the development of these very important projects.

In terms of Federation Square, through that project we are looking to fill what is presently a hole in Melbourne's landscape by creating a new commercial, residential and civic precinct connecting the CBD to the Yarra River. In 2013 we asked the property development industry to give us feedback about the proposals that they thought were appropriate to the development of this 3.3-hectare site, which is of course right in the heart of Melbourne. The feedback from the market was that the development of the site could be undertaken on a basis of little or no cost to the government if sufficient development density could be achieved on that site. The project has the potential to generate enormous business investment, significant construction jobs and ongoing employment. It is but one of the projects currently under careful consideration by the government.

In terms of E-gate, this magnificent site — 20 hectares in area — is located only 2 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. It has the potential for anything up to 5000 dwellings and about 10 000 residents over the course of the next 15 to 20 years. Work is continuing to determine the appropriate planning and development controls for this site. Not surprisingly it is of enormous interest both domestically and internationally as to its future development opportunities.

Flinders Street station is of course of enormous architectural, historical and social significance to Victoria. Also very important is the fact that from a functional point of view it is one of the primary hubs of activity for our public transport system in Melbourne and indeed for all Victorians.

In 2012 we invited local and international architects and designers to participate in an open two-stage design competition. Ultimately the winners of that competition were HASSELL + Herzog & de Meuron. I am pleased to say that following the conclusion of the station design competition the government requested Major Projects Victoria to do more work on that project, and part of this \$8 million will go to that important initiative.

The Richmond station precinct is of course vital to all of us who move back and forth, across from the G in particular, to Richmond station. We intend over the course of the next weeks and months to do further development of the potential of this site. These are four

great initiatives for the city of Melbourne and for Victoria at large.

### Member for Frankston

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the discrepancies between his comments in the house today about a general discussion with the member for Frankston and his comments last week about a conversation with the member for Frankston about 'a particular judicial appointment'. I ask the Premier: who did the member for Frankston want appointed and to which court?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I do not accept the premise of the question at all.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPTHINE** — I do not accept the premise of the question. There is no discrepancy.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The house will come to order.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — I have been consistent, full and frank in providing information.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Whilst I realise my doctor wants me to have more exercise, having to stand to restore order is not the exercise he intended. I ask the house to come to order.

**Dr NAPTHINE** — As I have said time and again, there were discussions with the member for Frankston. He raised the issue of judicial appointments, and I advised him very clearly that is not the way I as Premier or this government goes about making judicial appointments. We go through the appropriate process to get the right people appointed to those positions.

### Student disability funding

**Mr ANGUS** (Forest Hill) — My question is to the Minister for Education. How is the coalition government investing in school education that will benefit young Victorians with a disability?

**Mr DIXON** (Minister for Education) — I thank the member for Forest Hill for his question. This year's budget was about building a better Victoria for all Victorians. What we saw in the education budget was an extra \$1.6 billion of expenditure in the forward

estimates for Victorian schools, building on top of the \$1.2 billion already in the forward estimates. That means that next financial year a record \$9.2 billion will be spent on school education in this state, which incidentally is \$1 billion more than when we first came into government.

A key area of our additional investment is students with a disability. In this year's budget, as set out, we are delivering \$305 million of additional investment in the forward estimates for students with a disability, and that will mean in the next year a record \$710 million will be spent on students with a disability in Victorian schools. That \$305 million is made up, firstly, of \$273 million for the program for students with disabilities. That means that the actual expenditure on that program next year will be \$642 million. That will be spent on 23 500 students with disabilities in mainstream schools and specialist schools in Victoria. Secondly, there will also be a further \$32 million for the program for transport for students with a disability. That means about 8800 students will be entitled to free travel to and from their special school.

That builds on a lot of work that we are doing in programs and facilities right throughout the state. Probably the highlight is our ABLES program. ABLES is an acronym for the abilities-based learning and education support program, a world-recognised program that looks at children's ability, not their disability. It builds on the child's ability with an individual learning plan and takes away that stigma of a disability.

In infrastructure we are building on our first budget, in which we delivered the highest capital investment in more than a decade in one single year. We build on that in this year's budget with \$4 million for the Sale Specialist School, which the Deputy Premier was very pleased about, and \$2.5 million for the Frankston Special Developmental School. One of our 11 public-private partnership projects will be a special development school in North Geelong. We have got the runs on the board in terms of delivering infrastructure for specialist schools right throughout Melbourne and Victoria.

It does not matter where these students are; we are delivering for those special students. For example, we have \$15 million for Officer Specialist School, which is in a growth area of Melbourne neglected by the previous government. That school started operation this year. Out in the west we are the government to deliver the first P-12 autism-specific school for students with autism in the western suburbs. Up at Wodonga, Belvoir Special School will receive \$12 million. Out in the west

in Footscray there is \$9.5 million for the Rosamond Special School.

In Broadmeadows, Hume Valley School will receive \$9 million. Out in the east the Eastern Ranges School will receive \$8 million. Up at Horsham probably one of the best designed schools I have ever seen, Horsham Special School, will receive \$7 million. Out in the north, Broadmeadows Special Developmental School will receive \$4 million and the Northern School for Autism will receive \$3 million. What this budget has shown is that no matter where a student lives, no matter what their ability is and no matter what their disability is, this government is delivering for all students.

### Member for Frankston

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's comments, where he said that the member for Frankston had made demands for a 'particular judicial appointment', but the Premier cannot tell us who was to be appointed; that the demands were 'extreme', but the Premier did not bother to tell IBAC or Victoria Police; that the demands were 'outrageous' and 'would not be tolerated', but the Premier kept on texting with the member for Frankston and meeting with him — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! What is the Leader of the Opposition's question?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — What is funny about it? Your story changes every 5 minutes. You could not lie straight in bed.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition had got to 'and my question is'.

**Mr ANDREWS** — My question is: why should the Victorian community believe that the Premier will not be held to ransom by the member for Frankston when for three and a half years he has run a protection racket, and he continues with these answers today to run a protection racket, for the rorting member for Frankston?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — Can I say that I do not accept the premise of that very long-winded, rambling and blundering question. As I have consistently advised — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked his question. I ask him to listen to the answer.

**Mr Madden** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Essendon! That is unparliamentary language. I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr Madden** — I withdraw.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — I have been very consistent in my advice to the house and to the Victorian community. When the member for Frankston raised with me the issue of judicial appointments I made it very clear to him that that is not the way this government operates and that is not the way I operate as Premier. We go through a proper process to make important judicial appointments. That is the way we operate. It was rejected absolutely out of hand.

**Mr Andrews** — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the story has changed again. Now it is judicial ‘appointments’ — plural!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition knows very well that that is not the way to start a point of order. There are forms in this house in the manner that points of order are taken, and the Leader of the Opposition knows very well how to take them. I ask him to rephrase his point of order.

**Mr Andrews** — In this answer there is no relevance to the question that was asked about a protection racket that the Premier is running.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, page 144 of *Rulings from the Chair — 1920–2013*, December 2013, says:

Points of order must not be used to deliberately disrupt the proceedings or to respond to debate.

The Leader of the Opposition was responding to debate. The ruling states that points of order must not be used to respond to debate. The Leader of the Opposition was seeking to respond to a question. That is not an appropriate use of a point of order, and I ask that you rule him out of order.

**Mr Merlino** — On the point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was making the point that the Premier was not being at all relevant to the question. We are talking about repeated demands for judicial appointments and the protection racket by — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Monbulk starts off so well and always — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to stop interjecting, in particular when I am trying to assist the member for Monbulk in making his point of order, which he has great difficulty in doing. I do not uphold the point of order; the Premier was being relevant to the question that was asked.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — When the issue of judicial appointments was raised by the member for Frankston I made it very clear that I as Premier and this government have a proper process for making judicial appointments.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — We go through a proper process of making judicial appointments, and we will continue to do so.

### Government financial management

**Mr GIDLEY** (Mount Waverley) — My question is to the Treasurer. Why is good financial management important for all Victorians, how do Victoria’s state finances compare to other Australian jurisdictions and are there any threats to our strong budget position?

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The house makes it very difficult for the Chair to hear. If any members of the opposition would like to take a point of order, I will give them the call.

**Mr Nardella** — On a point of order, Speaker, that is three questions. I ask you to rule the other two out and just have the first one as the question.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! For the benefit of the Chair, I ask the member for Mount Waverley to repeat the question.

**Mr GIDLEY** — My question is to the Treasurer. How do Victoria’s state finances compare to other Australian jurisdictions, and are there any threats to our strong budget position?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The first time the question was asked I could not hear clearly because of the level of noise, and I did say I could not hear. I uphold the question; I do not see anything wrong with it.

**Mr Nardella** — On a further point of order, Speaker, the question that the honourable member for Mount Waverley repeated was not the question that was initially asked. I ask you to ask him to repeat the initial question or table the piece of paper with the original question on it, because he has done a disservice to this house in restructuring and rephrasing his question to one that was not a part of what I raised in my original point of order.

**Mr Gidley** — On the point of order, Speaker, I anticipated that you were asking me to rephrase my question, and that is what I was doing in line with the standing orders of this house. I do not appreciate the reflection cast on me by the member for Melton; I find it offensive and ask for it to be withdrawn. If you would like, I am happy to repeat my rephrased question in line with standing orders.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The house has brought this confusion on itself by the continual high level of noise, which makes it extremely difficult for me to make a ruling. I am going to accept the second question that was asked because I did not hear the first one.

**Mr Andrews** — On a further point of order, Speaker, the right to rephrase the question is in your gift, and on occasions when I might have been keen to do just that, you have not allowed me to. But we are not looking back; we are looking to the future. I ask you to reflect on the ruling you have just made. Is it up to the individual member to rephrase any question as they see fit, or will you continue to provide that opportunity at your discretion? This is an important matter, Speaker, and with respect I ask you to reflect on it.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! It is an important matter and, as I said, I have made a ruling.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has raised a point of order in relation to questions that have been ruled out of order completely because they do not comply with standing orders — I think that was his reference — versus questions that may be in a slightly grey area, which the Speaker often invites a member of Parliament to rephrase. Indeed the member for Mount Waverley has indicated to the house that he was of the belief that he would be asked to rephrase his question. He has modified his question, you have accepted that question, Speaker, and I ask you to ask the Treasurer to give the answer to that very good question.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East! As I have already said, I did not hear the

question the first time it was asked by the member for Mount Waverley. I asked the member for Mount Waverley to repeat the question, and I now call on the Treasurer to answer the question.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I hope it is worth the wait. I thank the member for Mount Waverley for his question and for his interest in Victoria's finances. I am pleased to inform the house that after more than three years of hard work by the coalition government, Victoria's finances are without doubt the strongest in the nation. We are in substantial surplus now and will be every year over the forward estimates — the only state to be so. We are the only state with a stable AAA credit rating from both major credit rating agencies. This is not just a sign of confidence in our financial management; it means that we pay lower interest rates than those paid by other jurisdictions. If having a AAA-rated surplus budget were easy, every state would have one. The fact is that Victoria stands alone because of this coalition government's strong financial management.

You cannot have a AAA budget if you are making billion-dollar blunders over the numbers. You cannot do that. When you look around the states, you see a continuous tale of Labor governments messing up the finances and coalition governments stepping up to fix those messes created by Labor. Last week the Queensland Treasurer handed down that state's budget. I do not envy the task of my colleague Tim Nicholls, who has been left with the job of cleaning up the Bligh-Beattie Labor mess.

This is what Moody's Investors Service had to say about the Queensland budget:

... the state has made concerted progress in slowing its rate of current expenditures in line with its fiscal strategy ... including a delay in payroll tax reductions, an increase in the insurance tax ...

So while the Queensland government is delaying cuts to payroll tax and increasing duty on insurance, the Victorian coalition government is cutting payroll tax and abolishing stamp duty on life insurance — at least, it will do that once those opposite stop playing games with the budget and pass the three budget bills that cut payroll tax and abolish stamp duty on life insurance.

It is time for this Parliament to get on with it and pass the budget, pass it in full, and let Victorian businesses have those payroll tax cuts from 1 July. It is time to let the Victorian community have the benefit of the abolition of stamp duty on life insurance products from 1 July. It is important that Victorians get the benefit of \$27 billion worth of new infrastructure. We want those

tens of thousands of new jobs to start on 1 July. We want to see the airport rail link. We want to see the Melbourne rail link. We want to see east–west link stage 1 and stage 2. We want to see the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail upgrade. We want to see the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening. We want to see the Murray Basin rail project.

There is \$27 billion worth of new infrastructure projects, tens of thousands of new jobs, payroll tax cuts, record investment in schools, record investment in hospitals, record investment in disadvantaged and vulnerable Victorians and record investment in community safety — and only the games being played by members opposite are standing in the way.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND VICTORIAN INSPECTORATE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014

### *Introduction and first reading*

**Mr CLARK** (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011 and for other purposes.

**Mr PAKULA** (Lyndhurst) — I ask the Attorney-General to provide a brief explanation of the bill.

**Mr CLARK** (Attorney-General) — The principal purpose of the bill is to provide for the appointment of two assistant freedom of information commissioners. The bill also makes a range of technical amendments to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read first time.**

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of motion

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Notices of motion 9 to 18 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 6.00 p.m. today.

## SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

### *Alert Digest No. 7*

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 7 of 2014* on:

**Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**  
**Native Vegetation Credit Market Bill 2014**  
**Private Health Care Facilities Bill 2014**  
**Road Safety Amendment Bill 2014**

**together with appendices.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be printed.**

## DOCUMENTS

**Tabled by Clerk:**

*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* — Report 2013 on the operation of the Act — Ordered to be printed

*Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984* — Notice under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to the Waste Management Policy (Storage of Waste Tyres) (*Gazette G23, 5 June 2014*)

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

Banyule — GC6  
Boroondara — GC6  
Brimbank — GC1, GC6  
Cardinia — C171, GC6  
Casey — GC6  
Darebin — GC6  
Gannawarra — C38  
Glen Eira — GC6  
Glenelg — C55 Part 1, C69  
Golden Plains — C69  
Greater Dandenong — GC6  
Greater Geelong — C291, C293  
Greater Shepparton — C140  
Hume — GC6  
Kingston — C133, GC6  
Knox — GC6

Manningham — GC6  
 Maribymong — GC6  
 Melbourne — GC6  
 Melton — GC1, GC6  
 Mitchell — C96  
 Monash — GC6  
 Moonee Valley — C136  
 Moreland — C155, GC6  
 Mornington Peninsula — GC6  
 Port Phillip — C141  
 South Gippsland — C80  
 Southern Grampians — C29  
 Surf Coast — C80, C88  
 Victoria Planning Provisions — VC106  
 Whitehorse — GC6  
 Whittlesea — GC6  
 Wyndham — GC1, GC6  
 Yarra — GC6

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

*Child Employment Act 2003* — SR 43  
*Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987* — SR 40  
*Crimes Act 1958* — SR 42  
*Road Safety Act 1986* — SR 46  
*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994* — SR 45  
*Supreme Court Act 1986* — SRs 47, 48  
*Transfer of Land Act 1958* — SR 44  
*Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* — SR 41

*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994* —

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46

Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Road Safety Act 1986* — Declaration of a class of motor vehicles to be tractors.

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

*Sustainable Forests (Timber) and Wildlife Amendment Act 2014* — Remaining provisions — 28 May 2014 (*Gazette S159, 27 May 2014*)

*Travel Agents Repeal Act 2014* — Whole Act — 1 July 2014 (*Gazette S170, 3 June 2014*)

*Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Act 2014* — Whole Act — 2 June 2014 (*Gazette S159, 27 May 2014*).

## JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

### Legislative Council vacancy and Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:

That the Legislative Council acquaint the Legislative Assembly that they have agreed to the following resolution:

That this house meets with the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the vacant seat in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Candy Broad and elect a member for appointment to the Victorian Responsible Gaming Foundation board and proposes the time and place of such a meeting be the Legislative Assembly chamber on Wednesday, 11 June 2014, at 6.15 p.m.

with which they request the agreement of the Legislative Assembly.

**Ordered that message be taken into consideration immediately.**

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

That this house agrees to the Legislative Council's proposal for a joint sitting on Wednesday, 11 June 2014, at 6.15 p.m. in the Legislative Assembly chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the seat in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Candy Broad and to elect a member of the Parliament to the board of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Ordered that message be sent to Council informing them of resolution.**

## ROYAL ASSENT

**Message read advising royal assent on 3 June to:**

**Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Bill 2014**

**Victoria Police Amendment (Consequential and Other Matters) Bill 2014.**

**APPROPRIATION MESSAGES**

**Messages read recommending appropriations for:**

**Native Vegetation Credit Market Bill 2014  
Private Health Care Facilities Bill 2014  
Road Safety Amendment Bill 2014.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Standing orders**

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

That so much of standing orders be suspended so as to allow ministers' second-reading speeches, in relation to the bills listed on the notice paper for this sitting week, to be incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BUDGET PAPERS 2014–15**

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

That this house takes note of the 2014–15 budget papers.

In brief explanation, should the budget pass, this will allow members of the house who have not had the opportunity to speak on appropriation bill to speak on budget papers. As I said last year, I firmly believe it is the right of every member of this place to contribute to debate on the budget. This mechanism will allow that to happen.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Orders of the day**

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

That the following order of the day, government business, be read and discharged:

That this house takes note of the 2013–14 budget papers — Resumption of debate.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing orders**

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

That so much of standing orders be suspended so as to allow each member to speak on the motion in relation to the 2014–15 budget papers for a maximum of 15 minutes.

The motion before the house to take note of the budget papers would allow members to speak for 10 minutes, whereas members are allowed 15 minutes to speak on the budget bill. That is the explanation for the moving of this motion.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MEMBERS STATEMENTS**

**Hamer scholarships**

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) — The government is strengthening business and cultural ties with South Korea as part of its \$62.6 million Victorian international engagement strategy. Last week I announced the second round of the government's Hamer scholarships program, which will enable eight Victorians to study in South Korea. Our first round of South Korea Hamer scholars are currently in Seoul, where they are improving their Korean language skills, building relationships and gaining invaluable insights into Korean culture. These young Victorians are also acting as ambassadors for Victoria, with several involved in the recent Victorian government food and beverage trade mission to Seoul, which took place last month.

I also announced that the new Victorian government business office would open in Seoul, and again that will happen shortly. South Korea is already an important trade and investment partner for Victoria, and the Victorian government business office will help to strengthen ties and enable local businesses to capitalise on opportunities. Many of those opportunities will arise from the recently signed Korea-Australia free trade agreement that our federal counterparts have negotiated. South Korea was Victoria's fifth-largest merchandise export market in 2012–13, with exports valued at more than \$1 billion. As I have already indicated to the house, the free trade agreement negotiated by the commonwealth will provide Victoria with a range of opportunities to seek further investment, and again we hope the new government business office and the Hamer scholarships being applied to Korea will be beneficial.

**Government business program**

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — Let us be absolutely clear about what we have just witnessed from the Leader of the House and this failure of a Napthine government. We have just seen a great act of cowardice performed by this pathetic, chaotic, desperate government. It does not even have the courage to put forward its government business program. Two weeks

in a row now we have seen this government admit that it cannot control this Parliament. It cannot put forward a business program, and it is too scared to even test its performance on the floor of this Parliament.

We have just been dared by a pathetic, whimpering Treasurer — as he now flees the house — to pass this budget. We are more than prepared to pass this budget. Be in no doubt about that. If there is one thing that has been absolutely clear and consistent for the past seven days, it is the position that has been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition that we will pass the budget. We will put these budget bills through this week, but we think that the privilege matter — the protection racket that is protecting the rorting member for Frankston — is well and truly over. It has had its day, and that must come to pass today.

We have seen government members wanting to scurry away from this chamber and not see this matter put before the house, because they are more interested in propping up the member for Frankston and propping up their desperate government than testing this issue on the floor of the Parliament.

### East Gippsland bushfires

**Mr WELLS** (Minister for Bushfire Response) — Last week I visited East Gippsland to meet with fire-affected communities to directly listen to feedback and concerns on the management of the bushfires during the recent fire season. Joining me on this visit was the member for East Gippsland, who has consistently been working with local residents on issues related to the bushfires. We met with the communities of Bendoc, Bonang, Goongerah, Orbost, Lindenow and Glenaladale. The Victorian coalition government will continue to listen to the concerns of these local communities, and that is why I visited East Gippsland to meet with residents last week.

While visiting far East Gippsland we also met with Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) staff in Bendoc, who played a significant role in preparing for and responding to these fires. It was also an opportunity to hold a thankyou barbeque in Orbost for the area's emergency services personnel, who did such a fantastic job during the recent bushfires. The government appreciates the hard work and commitment of Country Fire Authority, DEPI and all other emergency services personnel who fought these fires and their work to prevent further damage to property and other assets.

Victoria, including East Gippsland, experienced the worst bushfire conditions since 2009, and I recognise

this has been a very difficult time for local residents and surrounding communities. The fire services commissioner, Craig Lapsley, will be preparing an end-of-fire-season operational review, which will include a review of the circumstances around the East Gippsland fires. I have requested that upon completion of this review the fire services commissioner report back to me on any systemic issues relating to the East Gippsland fires. Those issues will be looked into by the — —

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

### Member for Frankston

**Mr MERLINO** (Monbulk) — The Premier said in his press conference, 'We will not be held to ransom by Mr Shaw and his antics'. Yes, he will be held to ransom. There is no government business program and no debate about the Privileges Committee report into the rorting of the member for Frankston — no debate. We have said quite clearly that the opposition will not stand in the way of the budget; the budget will be passed. We are not going to stand in the way of wages for firefighters, teachers and nurses. We are prepared to pass the budget today and get on to the debate around the rorting member for Frankston.

This is a government absolutely held to ransom by the rorting member for Frankston. It does not want the debate now, because it does not have the member for Bass in the tent. The member for Bass agrees with Labor that the member for Frankston ought to be expelled and kicked out of this Parliament. Anyone outside of this place doing what the member for Frankston did would be sacked. We should get on to the debate and sack the rorting member for Frankston out of this chamber.

### Omeo Highway

**Mr TILLEY** (Benambra) — Recently I held an event at the Walnuts rest area on the Omeo Highway to celebrate the completion of the sealing works. I was joined by councillors from both sides of the hill — Towong councillors Fraser and Scales, and Gippsland East councillors Buckley and Neal — and importantly a significant number of locals.

In 2005 I met with a group of locals, including John Scales, Mark Smith, Tom Walsh, Peter Beggs, John Cardwell and Russell Kelly, who had a vision for the Mitta Valley which began with sealing the remaining sections of the Omeo Highway — a \$14.9 million project. A bullock trail and coach service founded by

our forefathers was Victoria's first gazetted highway, and is now a year-round tourism and economic driver for the future of the Towong and Gippsland East region. I first secured a commitment to seal the highway in 2005, with no thanks to the Labor government, and recommitted to the project in 2010. Now the job is complete.

The North East Maintenance Alliance is a partnership between VicRoads and Downer EDI, with the support of many specialised subcontractors including Tallangatta Construction & Maintenance; Jackson's Earthmoving, Border Tree & Stump Services, Lima South Quarry and Harris Haulage. These great local businesses made the commitment a reality. The remaining 28 kilometres have been sealed using 80 000 tonne of crushed rock, the equivalent of filling 128 Olympic swimming pools.

### **Narre Warren South P-12 College**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — Recently I had the privilege of working in partnership with the Student Voice Group and teachers from Narre Warren South P-12 College to raise vital funds for breast cancer research and support. The group raised \$1780 for Breast Cancer Network Australia, a truly sensational effort. To witness the enthusiasm and support displayed by the students was truly inspirational. I was also invited to the school to participate in a group conversation with senior female students and staff. Students asked me questions, and I drew on my own experience with breast cancer to answer them. They were very interested in learning more about the early detection of breast cancer and about positive ways in which they can become involved to fight for this important cause.

Special thanks go to their teacher, Diane Parkinson, and voice group members Brooke Augustus, Rebecca Fischer, Shihan Izzedeen, Janine Jaramillo, Shari Hunter, Anais Seerungen, Atifa Ashgari, Arnhie San Juan, Pabasari Fernando, Sitarah Mohammadi, Lima Ashori, Brooke Ladds, Amira Sabrova, James Veitch, Jesse Morris, Salamasina Ausage, Joshua Hoxha, Chloe O'Reilly, Shaz Shariff, Dinura Balalla, Painuulasi Bartsch, Tylah Crichton, Joel Rogerson, Garry Ford, Marwa Hassanzada, Majda Stanikzai, Stephanie Wulf, Temor Foryabee, Melinda Rogerson, Daniel Krstev and Cassandra Richards. A brilliant effort.

### **Relay for Life Cranbourne-Narre**

**Ms GRALEY** — Last weekend I also saw the official launch of the Relay for Life Cranbourne-Narre, a fundraiser that raised over \$67 788 last time. Good

luck, ladies. I am sure it will be a tremendous success. A special thankyou to Jenny Black. My dear friend, keep fighting and be well. We are all looking after you, and I hope to walk with you.

### **Melbourne Vixens**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Lowan) — Congratulations go to the Melbourne Vixens, who defeated the Queensland Firebirds yesterday and will go on to play in the trans-Tasman netball grand final in Melbourne in two weeks time.

### **Casterton kelpie interpretive centre**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — On another matter, last week I hosted a visit to Casterton by the Deputy Premier, who announced \$15 000 in funding from the Regional Growth Fund towards the Casterton kelpie interpretive centre feasibility study. This is great news for the Casterton district, which hosted the annual Kelpie festival over the long weekend and was again a huge success. I take this opportunity to congratulate all involved in the Kelpie Muster.

### **Nhill water supply**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — On another matter, Nhill has a permanent drinking water supply for the first time. Last Thursday I was delighted to be with the Minister for Water, The Nationals Lowan candidate Emma Kealy, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water officials, the Hindmarsh Shire Council mayor, councillors and staff, and Nhill and district residents to officially celebrate Nhill's connection to world-standard quality drinking water.

### **Lowan electorate schools**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Over the last couple of weeks I have had the opportunity to visit a number of schools in the Lowan electorate to announce grants from the Advance program, a program which supports secondary students to develop and implement volunteering programs. Baimbridge College in Hamilton and Hamilton Special Developmental School, along with schools in Balmoral, Casterton, Dimboola, Edenhope, Goroke, Horsham, Lake Bolac, Kaniva and Nhill, have been successful in obtaining grants.

### **Stawell Airport**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Last Thursday the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry officially opened stage 3 of the Stawell Airport and announced \$215 000 for stage 4 of the ongoing development. The Stawell Airport development is a great example of how the

coalition government is revitalising our state's aviation industry by improving facilities and enhancing the operation of — —

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

### **Cranbourne Secondary College**

**Mr PERERA** (Cranbourne) — In government Labor funded over \$8 million for the completion of stages 1 and 2 of Cranbourne Secondary College's modernisation. In 2005–06 we announced, funded and completed stage 1, which involved the modernisation of the college's administration building, information technology area, general purpose room and music room. In 2009–10 we announced, funded and completed stage 2, which involved the modernisation of the college's library, canteen, home economics facilities and arts facilities, the provision of additional staff administration facilities and the completion of the music room.

The Brumby government was planning to deliver stage 3 in the new term after November 2010. Three budgets have been handed down by this government, and none of them included any money for the much-needed stage 3 works of Cranbourne Secondary College. The college has made headlines in the local media, including the following recent report in the *Cranbourne Leader* of 4 June about the failure to deliver stage 3 of the school:

Cranbourne Secondary College student slams dilapidated sections of school, calls on education minister to fund final works.

The article states that Georgie, a 15-year-old student, said:

'I love school, but these classrooms are absolutely disgusting ...

Cupboard doors have fallen of their hinges, half the gas and water taps don't work ...

The art room roof leaks every time it rains ...

The state Liberal candidate for Cranbourne declined to comment — —

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

### **Ernie Merrick**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — I pay tribute to soccer coach Ernie Merrick on the recent awarding to him of the Medal of the Order of Australia. Ernie

achieved greatness as the coach of Melbourne Victory in two of its great premiership victories.

### **Protective services officers**

**Mr THOMPSON** — Last week I had the privilege of attending an event at the Highett railway station, which marked the induction of protective services officers completing the location of protective services officers on all stations within the Sandringham electorate. They have been greatly welcomed by the local community, and they provide an enhanced sense of safety for railway commuters between 6.00 p.m. and the last train on both the Sandringham and Frankston lines.

### **Dutch immigrants**

**Mr THOMPSON** — On 2 May I had the privilege of representing the government at an event at the Abel Tasman Club in Carnegie, which marked the Dutch king's birthday. I pay tribute to generations of Dutch immigrants to Australia in the post-war period who have made an outstanding contribution to the economic, cultural, social and sporting life of the state of Victoria and the Australian nation. I acknowledge particularly the great work of Mr Ype de Bruin and his wife, Gre.

### **Southland railway station**

**Mr THOMPSON** — Recently the Premier and the Minister for Public Transport attended an event marking the commencement of a range of works at the site of the future Southland railway station on the Frankston line. There is over \$100 million worth of investment in upgrades, including the \$21 million station.

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

### **Kangan Institute merger**

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — I condemn the Premier for failing to reinvest in Kangan Institute in Broadmeadows, which is vital for training and jobs in a community suffering the decline of local manufacturing and high youth unemployment. The federal Abbott coalition government's cruel cuts to the Hume Whittlesea local learning and employment network (LLEN) have exacerbated difficulties for some of our most disadvantaged and disengaged children. The demise of local manufacturing underscores the need for Kangan Institute and the Hume Whittlesea LLEN to continue providing pathways to employment. Ford Australia has brought forward 300 redundancies in its Broadmeadows and Geelong plants to within weeks,

and while the company intends maintaining Australian production until October 2016 it is not guaranteed.

The Victorian coalition government gutted Kangan Institute with \$25 million in cuts on the cusp of Ford's announcement that it would cease Australian production. Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey added to the folly by baiting GM Holden to leave Australia, and then Toyota withdrew, marking the demise of our once iconic automotive industry. On 27 May I called on the Premier to confirm that Broadmeadows will not be duded again and that the planned merger between Kangan Institute and Bendigo TAFE will not see further cuts to funding, courses, students or staff in Broadmeadows.

Instead of making cuts, the Victorian government needs to reinvest in Kangan, given the employment predicament in Broadmeadows, and also reinvest in the Hume Whittlesea LLEN, which may be forced to cut programs and will struggle to make it to Christmas because of the previous funding cuts. Such a failure to invest in our human capital would be a waste of life and ultimately prove to be a waste of money. These matters are too important for politics — —

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

### Regional Growth Fund

**Dr SYKES** (Benalla) — Over the long weekend I attended a number of significant events in the Benalla electorate. On Friday the member for Murray Valley and I attended the opening of a \$1 million upgrade of Boynton's Feathertop Winery, to which the Liberal-Nationals government's Regional Growth Fund contributed \$150 000. The upgrade is fantastic, and it reflects the design skills of Janelle and Kel Boynton, the innovation and workmanship of local businesses and the commitment of winery staff. All up, 10 new full-time jobs have been created and 10 casual jobs are now full-time jobs.

On Saturday, along with Stephanie Ryan, The Nationals candidate for Euroa, I visited Tatong, where the local community commemorated the end of an era, the 100-year history of the Tatong Football Netball Club. I am confident that the strong community spirit in Tatong will see new community activities evolving and making good use of the new community facilities being constructed with the aid of an approximately \$270 000 grant from the Liberal-Nationals coalition's Regional Growth Fund.

I attended the opening of the snow season at Mount Buller on Saturday evening and Mount Hotham and Dinner Plain on Sunday. These openings highlighted the importance of alpine resorts and the high country to our local economy. That is why the Regional Growth Fund has contributed \$300 000 to the construction of the EPIC mountain bike trail at Mount Buller and \$100 000 to the development of an all-year-round play area at Dinner Plain. In addition, around \$6 million has been provided for infrastructure upgrades at Mount Hotham. I am proud to be part of the Liberal-Nationals coalition government, which is providing such strong support to the social and economic development of north-east Victoria.

### John and Lina Pallisco

**Mr CARROLL** (Niddrie) — I rise to congratulate popular menswear retailer John Pallisco and his wife, Lina, who after 44 years of trading on Keilor Road, Niddrie, have decided it is time to retire and embark on a new chapter in their lives, which will include some long-overdue travel.

John and Lina both have much to be proud of, from their shop's humble beginnings in 1987 to where it is now. In fact John began a hairdressing business in the shop in 1970. Then when Opal Male Fashion closed in 1987 he took over the menswear shop, renaming it Tuscany Menswear. He has since been a respected trader on the popular Keilor Road shopping strip and worked with the traders association committee for 44 years before being elected president last October. The shopping centre's growth has been due to a small group of committed local traders like John and Lina.

Since my election a little over two years ago I have appreciated getting to know both John and Lina, who are held in high esteem by their fellow traders and loyal customer base. John in particular is admired and respected for the workload he has taken on, spanning more than four decades, on behalf of the Niddrie traders. John can take pride in the continuing success of the Keilor Road shopping strip. In fact it was John who was an integral part of my campaign for the upgrade of the much-neglected Niddrie toilet block located not far from his shop on the corner of Keilor Road and Matthews Avenue. We featured together in an article dated 18 March 2013 in the *Moonee Valley Weekly* titled 'Keilor Road traders demand council spends a penny'.

Fittingly, as John and Lina depart, the City of Moonee Valley has recently announced that \$220 000 has been set aside in the 2014–15 budget to upgrade the notorious toilet block — one last gift from John to his

fellow traders. John and Lina retire later this year with many great memories and having made many great friendships.

### Parliament House incident

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) — On 27 May this year the member for Bendigo East raised a point of order regarding a hearing of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. The member referred to evidence given by the President of the Legislative Council regarding the release of parliamentary security footage. Some minutes after the member raised the point of order I received, in the house, a letter from the President, addressed to me as chair of the committee, clarifying his answer, which was provided on the basis of a misunderstanding of the question asked.

The letter says in part:

In an answer to Mr Pakula, I responded to the effect that former Speaker Ken Smith had released ‘both’ security tapes to media representatives in respect of an incident involving the member for Frankston on the front steps of Parliament.

In my response, I was referring to the initial video coverage of the event and to the video footage subsequently released to the police and at a press conference ... It did not occur to me that Mr Pakula’s question sought a response on the release of additional video footage in February this year ...

...

My response to Mr Pakula’s question was not intended to convey that the —

former —

Speaker was responsible for the unauthorised release of the security footage in February ...

I raise this matter in the house today because the allegation that the member for Bass released the footage in February was repeated in the press this morning. The President’s letter makes it clear that the member did no such thing. For accuracy, the *Hansard* record should be read in conjunction with the President’s letter. Both are available on the committee’s website.

### Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker services

**Mr LANGUILLER** (Derrimut) — Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are finding it harder to access important government services. An Auditor-General’s report said bureaucratic confusion and gridlock under the Napthine government has overwhelmed the migrant support system, creating a barrier for thousands. Under the Premier the support

system is inefficient and newly arrived families are not getting the help they need.

The focus of the report was on the delivery of services across departments and agencies responsible for multicultural affairs. It says the Napthine Liberal government has failed to coordinate vital service delivery between departments. In particular the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship and the Victorian Multicultural Commission are not being used to their full potential. The report says that for improvement to occur there needs to be greater collaboration, better data collection and stronger oversight. The result is, according to the report, a significant gap in the monitoring and reporting of government service accessibility, responsiveness and effectiveness. Departments were not even able to give assurance that their services are actually meeting the needs of clients.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are some of the most vulnerable people in Victoria, especially those with low English proficiency. Our most important services need to be available for those in our community who rely on them. In Victoria diversity is our strength and the Victorian government must do whatever it can to preserve it. The Auditor-General has confirmed that this government is failing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

### Mitcham Primary School

**Ms RYALL** (Mitcham) — I was honoured to open the Mitcham Primary School media and broadcasting studio and the Steve McVeagh Chess Centre on 23 May. The studio was built to engage the students in their learning, with a focus on working together, building interpersonal skills and reinforcing much of the English curriculum areas through the production of films and media. Former school council president Steve McVeagh suggested an old shelter shed become the chess centre. It is already in high demand, with two clubs and a waiting list. Chess assists the students with developing their analytical skills and decision making. It also helps to build confidence, recognise patterns and develop thinking and visualisation of possibilities. I commend Mitcham Primary School on its innovation and creativity in providing the media and chess facilities to advance the learning opportunities of students.

### Heloise Clarke

**Ms RYALL** — Congratulations to Whitehorse Primary School’s Heloise Clarke. Heloise’s outstanding leadership, creativity and work ethic saw her awarded

the much sought after award of Aussie of the Month in front of her peers, teachers and parents.

### **Charlotte Mears**

**Ms RYALL** — Congratulations to Mount Pleasant Road Primary School's Charlotte Mears. Charlotte's outstanding leadership, creativity and work ethic saw her awarded the much sought after award of Aussie of the Month in front of her peers, teachers and parents.

### **Mount Pleasant Road Primary School and Kindergarten**

**Ms RYALL** — Congratulations also to the school council and fundraising committee of Mount Pleasant Road Primary School on the school's sell-out trivia night. Huge preparations meant top questions, great audiovisual effects and a great array of silent auction items. Well done on an outstanding night and a great school community.

### **Anthony Attard**

**Ms HUTCHINS** (Keilor) — I would like to pay tribute to the life and mourn the death of Mr Anthony Attard, a Taylors Hill resident, who died in a workplace accident on board the *Tasmanian Achiever*, a ship docked at the Toll Shipping facility in Port Melbourne. He was loading cargo in the company of his brother and best friend at about 1.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 May, when the accident occurred. Ambulance Victoria treated him at the scene, but he could not be saved. Anthony leaves behind his wife, Sandra, three children and many loving family members. Members of Mr Attard's extended family have asked me to remind the house that he was someone's husband, father, brother and son. He was not just a number or statistic. He should have been able to go to work and come home safely to his family. He was loved. He also loved life and had so many more plans for the future that now cannot be fulfilled. His avoidable death has affected not just his immediate family but an entire community — the community I represent in this Parliament. Everyone who knew him loved him.

I also want to read some of the tributes paid to him by some of his friends and colleagues. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) said that Anthony was well liked by all and was a staunch member and delegate of the Victorian branch of the MUA. High school friend Michelle Renda remembered a funny, charming man with a heart of gold. A member of his extended family, Deborah Clowes, said that Anthony was the most beautiful husband, father, brother, uncle and friend.

### **Sea Lake Mallee Rally**

**Mr CRISP** (Mildura) — The Sea Lake Mallee Rally is the oldest off-road event in Australia and runs around Lake Tyrrell. Racing occurs over two days, with Saturday being for qualifying and a 'dash for cash'. Sunday is race day. This is a major event for Sea Lake and the Mallee, with over 100 volunteers engaged in running the event. I commend the organisers on their efforts, in particular Loris for the guided tour. The rally is unique in many ways, none more notable than the commentary box — a header, strategically placed for a grand view of the day's events.

### **Samoan Independence Day**

**Mr CRISP** — Samoa's Independence Day was celebrated in Mildura on Saturday, 7 June. A highlight was the cultural display of dancing and singing. Well done to Tommy and the Samoan community for organising an event that was attended to by the islander community and other organisations.

### **Manangatang health services**

**Mr CRISP** — I visited Manangatang over the long weekend and was spotted by one of the locals. I wish to thank Sharon and other members of staff for their tour of the health campus. 'Manang' will become part of the Mildura electorate, and I appreciate the time the staff spent to help me understand local health issues.

### **Calder Highway, Red Cliffs, speed zone**

**Mr CRISP** — I wish to thank the Minister for Roads on behalf of the Red Cliffs Primary School community for the 40-kilometre-an-hour signs on the Calder Highway. The school council has persisted and insisted through me and the minister, and VicRoads has delivered.

### **Bowel cancer awareness**

**Mr CRISP** — This week is part of Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. I encourage everyone to seek good health and be checked. Early detection ensures a greater chance of survival.

### **Sri Lanka**

**Ms BEATTIE** (Yuroke) — Having again visited beautiful Sri Lanka earlier this year, travelling its breadth and speaking to many of its people, I wish to place on the record my views on the recent resolution at the United Nations. During my travels I spent time in Jaffna in the north and visited settlements where I spoke with the local community, largely made up of

women and children. They spoke of issues around sanitation and the need for improvements in this area, but they also spoke positively of the progress of the reconciliation and their hopes for the future. This hope for the future was a feature of my interactions with people, whether they be Tamil, Singhalese, Muslim or Christian. There were former Tamil Tiger cadres who openly expressed their gratitude that the war was finally over and peace had arrived. They said that the opportunities afforded to them for rehabilitation and reintegration into the community as trained, skilled workers was the best possible outcome for them and their families.

The government of Sri Lanka continues to work on the process of reconciliation. After more than 30 years of tragic civil war the progress is clearly making a tremendous difference throughout the island. The Sri Lankan people have the will, determination and commitment to implement the findings of the 2011 Commission of Inquiry of Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation. I pay tribute to them for all they have achieved and strongly encourage the international community to support these efforts and allow the ongoing processes which are under way to continue to improve the lives and opportunities of the Sri Lankan people.

### **Barwon Water**

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) — I was delighted to join the Minister for Water on Friday, 30 May, when he announced that Barwon Water customers will receive reductions in their water bills. Barwon Water has identified efficiencies in its operations that translate into average household water bill savings of \$80 per year for the next four years. This is welcome news for the Geelong region, as the Fairer Water Bills initiative is the next logical step in ensuring that the water sector delivers for the Victorian community, following on from the clear direction the government set in its Melbourne's Water Future policy. Fairer Water Bills is a positive initiative that has seen the water sector working together to make major improvements in operational and capital management, which ultimately benefit the hip pockets of consumers.

### **Reconciliation in the Park**

**Mr KATOS** — I was pleased to attend the opening ceremony of Reconciliation in the Park in Geelong on Sunday, 1 June, in Johnstone Park. I joined elder David Tournier, members of the Geelong One Fire Reconciliation Group and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, along with members of the community, to celebrate and recognise our unique Australian

Aboriginal culture. The event was a great opportunity to come together with a shared interest and respect for our Indigenous community and raise awareness about our Indigenous history in order to assist in bridging the gap.

### **LEAD Barwon**

**Mr KATOS** — Last Thursday, 5 June, I was delighted to join the Minister for Disability Services and Reform to congratulate 19 graduates of the Victorian coalition government's LEAD Barwon — leading, educating, advocating for disability — program. This is an excellent collaborative program run by the Committee for Geelong, with \$400 000 in funding from the Napthine government, that has recruited people with a disability and the parents of people with a disability to be part of an innovative leadership program which will inform the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme in Victoria.

### **Kindergarten funding**

**Mr BROOKS** (Bundoora) — I rise today to call on the dysfunctional Napthine government to stand up to the Abbott government's cuts to Victorian preschools. Members will be aware that the Abbott government has shamefully refused to fund its share of the 15 hours of kindergarten that is currently available to four-year-olds. The Liberal Party's and Nationals' disregard for Victorian families and for the development of preschool-age children has been laid bare for all to see. It has been reported that this cut could see families slugged up to an extra \$1000 for four-year-old kindergarten. In my community Banyule City Council has reported that fees would rise by a staggering 129 per cent. Alternatively we could see cuts to kindergarten provision and dedicated early childhood educators lose their jobs. Either way the outcome is disastrous for children and families.

The Napthine government should be fighting hard to ensure that this funding is delivered, but instead it is more interested in protecting the Liberals and Nationals in Canberra and clinging to power here in Victoria. Families in my community — indeed all Victorians — would expect the Victorian government to be camped on Tony Abbott's doorstep, demanding that this vital funding be delivered. Unfortunately, however, once again we see that the Napthine government puts the Liberal Party's and Nationals' interests ahead of the interests of Victorian families. Whether it is the Liberal Party's and Nationals' kindergarten cuts, the \$800 million cuts to school education or the disastrous \$1.2 billion cuts to TAFE — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The time for statements by members has now expired.

### BUDGET PAPERS 2014–15

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I advise the house that, in relation to the question that the house take note of the budget papers 2014–15, I incorrectly put the question when I should have sought an opposition member to adjourn debate. With the leave of the house, I will resubmit the question and ask an opposition member to adjourn debate.

**The SPEAKER resubmitted question.**

**Debate adjourned on motion of Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

### APPROPRIATION (2014–2015) BILL 2014

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 29 May; motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Treasurer).**

**Mr ANGUS** (Forest Hill) — I am pleased to resume my contribution on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. When we last debated this bill, I was talking about table 1.1 on page 5 of budget paper 5, which shows the budget surpluses over the forward estimates period. In 2016–17 there is an expected surplus of \$3183 million, and in the 2017–18 year of the forward estimates there is an expected surplus of \$3329 million. We can see from that that in terms of financial management the state is heading in the right direction. Victoria is the only economy in Australia with surpluses in the current year and all the years of the forward estimates and which also has a AAA credit rating and a stable outlook. These things sound easy, but they are not easy. It takes very good management, discipline and outstanding financial understanding to run the state's economy in that fashion. Planning for surpluses like these allows future infrastructure funding to be paid for from surpluses rather than borrowings.

Chart 4.2 on page 50 of budget paper 2, which is reproduced on page 4 of the budget overview document, shows graphically the level of infrastructure investment in Victoria since 2000–01. I will take a moment on that. The graph headed 'Net infrastructure investment' shows quite clearly that the average level of infrastructure investment during the reign of the Labor government was \$3.4 billion per annum. Under the coalition government so far it has been \$5.4 billion per annum. In the forward estimates it is \$6.8 billion

per annum. This shows a very significant and important level of infrastructure investment. To be able to fund that from the operations of the state and from the surpluses that are generated, so that we do not have to keep borrowing, is one of the key requirements of any good government.

As I said, this is an outstanding position to be in, particularly when compared to the extraordinarily difficult financial position of the commonwealth, which has resulted from the hopeless and irresponsible financial management of the former federal Labor Treasurer and prime ministers. The decisive and responsible action taken early on by the incoming state coalition government of reducing overheads to enable more to be invested in front-line services and infrastructure has again borne financial fruit, as can be clearly seen in this budget.

Average annual expenditure growth in the budget and forward estimates is 2.6 per cent. This is in stark contrast to the 8 per cent annual expenditure growth over the decade to 2009–10 under Labor. This is shown graphically in chart 1.2 on page 9 of budget paper 2, which is reproduced on page 2 of the budget overview document. Again we can clearly see the out of control growth in the level of expenses during Labor's reign and how the decisive and responsible action taken by the coalition upon its election to government has enabled that issue to be dealt with in the most comprehensive way. Expenses growth outstripped revenue growth year after year during the Labor government. That is clearly an unsustainable position, yet it was allowed to continue.

Before moving on, I once again note the great Labor white elephant: the desalination plant. The fixed cost to Victorian taxpayers of approximately \$1.8 million per day for around 27 years, excluding water, is a financial millstone of enormous proportions. That equates to at least \$54 million each and every month, or \$657 million per annum. The question that members on this side of the chamber can ask all Victorians is: what else could this money have been used for? How many schools, hospitals, roads et cetera could we have built with that unbelievable, shocking and shameful financial legacy of the previous government?

It is also worth noting that the forecasts of GST revenue payable by the commonwealth are included in table 4.6 on page 166 of budget paper 5. This clearly shows the inequity in the GST distribution to Victoria, with our 2014–15 share of GST being 22 per cent of the total, despite Victoria having 24.8 per cent of the population. This results in our relativity declining from 90 cents in the dollar in 2013–14 to 88 cents in the dollar, which is

roughly \$1.5 billion per annum, which is a situation that must be addressed. Both the Premier and the Treasurer have spoken eloquently about those things in recent weeks.

I now want to turn to some of the specific announcements contained in the budget. I will look firstly at the health portfolio. There have been a range of terrific announcements. An additional \$1.4 billion over four years has been allocated to support hospitals. That includes an additional \$156 million over four years to better support Victorians with a mental illness or drug and alcohol addiction. It also includes \$200 million over four years to provide support for people with a serious disability. Investment in disability services for 2014–15 is now \$300 million more than when the coalition came to government. We are also spending \$73 million on the Latrobe Regional Hospital redevelopment.

These great announcements and initiatives build on the great announcements from previous years, such as the \$630 million for a new state-of-the-art regional hospital in Bendigo, the largest regional health-care project currently under way in Australia; \$250 million for Monash Children's hospital; and particularly out in the eastern suburbs, of course the outstanding progress of the Box Hill Hospital redevelopment. This is a classic example of how the coalition government runs infrastructure projects. We have a project where, under responsible financial and project management, we have a building that was budgeted to be a 9-level building now having 10 levels for the same price, and the project is still on time and within budget, which is a concept virtually unknown to those opposite. I was pleased to be out there at the Box Hill Hospital recently with the Minister for Health, my colleague the member for Mitcham and many Eastern Health and other representatives to inspect the progress of this great project, which will result in 200 additional beds.

The budget provides for up to \$27 billion worth of infrastructure. There have been a range of terrific announcements again: \$8.5 billion to \$11 billion for the Melbourne rail link, including the airport rail link, generating an estimated 3700 jobs; \$8 billion to \$10 billion for the east–west link western section, generating an estimated 3000 jobs; \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion for the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project, resulting in a 30 per cent boost to services, with an additional 4500 passengers during peak periods; and \$685 million to remove an additional four level crossings. This also includes provision for the east–west link eastern section. This huge project has an estimated cost of between \$6 billion and \$8 billion, and it is

another project that is great for Forest Hill residents. It will create around 3200 jobs during construction.

There are so many terrific initiatives that I could go into, including those in transport. We have allocated \$390.4 million for free tram travel in the CBD and travel in zones 1 and 2 for the cost of a zone 1 fare; \$43.8 million for safety upgrades in the city loop; and on and on it goes. We have allocated \$50 million for the Great Ocean Road upgrade; and the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening will generate an estimated 700 hundred jobs. Last year we allocated \$15.6 million for the duplication of High Street Road in Wantirna South, just east of my electorate. The coalition government has completed the removal of several level crossings across Melbourne, including ones in Mitcham, just to the north of my electorate, at Mitcham Road and Rooks Road. I alert members to page 6 of the budget overview document, which diagrammatically outlines the 32 level crossing removals and grade separations that will be undertaken by this coalition government.

In education we are spending \$2.8 billion over five years for our schools, including 12 new schools. We have allocated \$271 million for school upgrades and improvements. Funding for skills amounts to \$1.2 billion per year. Under community safety we continue to fund the recruitment and training of an additional 1700 members of Victoria Police and 940 protective services officers, and that is going on splendidly. We have record funding for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the Country Fire Authority, which receive increases in their budgets.

In terms of local matters and budget initiatives for Forest Hill, I am delighted to advise that there are a range of important infrastructure projects that Forest Hill families and businesses need, and this budget delivers the services to build a better and more connected Victoria. The Victorian coalition government has invested in significant projects in the 2014–15 budget which will help to strengthen the Forest Hill community. They include the removal of the Blackburn Road level crossing as part of the \$457 million level crossing removal blitz — that is just north of my electorate, but it will cut congestion for local families; as I said before, the zone 1 and 2 travel for the price of a zone 1 fare, saving those who commute daily into the city around \$1200 per year; a \$2.7 million redevelopment of Vermont Secondary College, incorporating a new science wing and new administrative facilities; a \$2.1 million redevelopment of Forest Hill College to revamp various classrooms, administrative facilities and recreational areas; and \$100 000 to finish the upgrade of Burwood Heights Primary School.

Most important is the fact that the coalition government is keeping the economy strong, which of course fundamentally assists businesses and helps provide jobs for local residents. We will continue our proud record of investing in the upgrade of our local schools for students. We are cutting payroll tax to 4.85 per cent from 1 July 2014. That will benefit some 39 000 Victorian employers. We are supporting businesses. All these terrific new initiatives build on the local initiatives already announced that are being delivered by the coalition government. As I said before, they include the \$447.5 million Box Hill Hospital redevelopment and the \$12 million for the construction of a new 24-hour Forest Hill police station.

In conclusion, this is certainly a great budget for Victorians. It is a result of responsible economic management. Just one example that I want to digress to quickly is the fact that as a result of this strong management Melbourne households are having \$400 slashed from their water bills over the next four years. That is the way you can assist with cost of living pressures; that is the way that you can help families in the east, in my electorate and in other electorates, with the ongoing challenges of cost of living pressures.

What a stark contrast this demonstrates between the coalition and the opposition, when the shadow Treasurer, the member for Tarneit, cannot even read and understand the budget papers. That is a quite frightening matter. An article that appeared in the *Australian* on 28 May under the headline ‘Budget blunder to hurt Victorian Labor’ states:

A \$1 billion budget blunder has exposed Victorian Labor to months of pre-election questioning over its financial credibility after it falsely claimed the 2013–14 budget was in ‘tatters’.

What a frightening situation it is for the people of Victoria to have a shadow Treasurer who unfortunately just cannot understand the budget papers and has been the subject of a press report on that.

I commend the budget to the house and to all Victorians. It is a very strong document. It is an important financial blueprint for the next four years for this government. It deals with so many of the needs in the community in terms of infrastructure, cost of living and other matters. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms DUNCAN** (Macedon) — Under standing order 155, I move:

That the question be now put.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! I am prepared to accept the motion. A motion has already been moved to take note of the budget papers, and that will allow

members who have not spoken on the appropriation bill to speak on the budget.

**Ms Duncan’s motion agreed to.**

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT  
2014–2015) BILL 2014 and BUILDING A  
BETTER VICTORIA (STATE TAX  
AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT) BILL 2014**

*Second reading*

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — I desire to move, by leave:

That this house authorises and requires the Speaker to permit the Appropriation (Parliament 2014–2015) Bill 2014 and Building a Better Victoria — —

**Leave refused.**

**Ms ALLAN** — Deputy Speaker, I am trying to move that it be listed on the notice paper. It is well within my rights to do this.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Leave has not been granted, so we move to the next order of the day.

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the motion that has been denied leave — —

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East would be well aware that the time for members to give notice of motions is at the start of the day. Leave has not been granted, and we are moving on to the next order.

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, there are two matters that I wish to raise. The first point is that motions by leave can be moved at any change of business. We are currently within a change of business environment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East is quite right. They can be moved if leave is granted, but leave has not been granted.

**Ms Allan** — The second point is that I am now seeking that my motion for which leave has been denied be allowed to be placed on the notice paper for the next day of sitting.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Leave has been refused.

**BUILDING A BETTER VICTORIA (STATE TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT) BILL 2014**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 28 May; motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Treasurer).**

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — Under standing order 155, I move:

That the question be now put.

**Ms Allan's motion agreed to.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Consideration in detail*

**Clauses 1 to 34 agreed to.**

**Clause 35**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Before calling the Treasurer I advise that if amendment 1 is not agreed to he cannot move his remaining amendments, as they are consequential. Accordingly I advise the Treasurer to address the principles of all his amendments when speaking on amendment 1.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I move:

1. Clause 35, line 29, before "A *leviable*" insert "(1)".

This amendment and the ones which follow are about ensuring that the Building a Better Victoria (State Tax and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2014 has the intended effect in relation to providing for appropriate levies to fund the Metropolitan Planning Authority. This is an important authority which will assist the Victorian government, and indeed the Victorian community, to have better planning functions. We believe it is appropriate that the development industry make contributions towards the funding of the Metropolitan Planning Authority, and amendment 1 and subsequent amendments seek to achieve that very laudable and important aim for Victoria.

**Amendment agreed to.**

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! We will have respect for the Chair. If we have cooperation, we will actually get through this. I seek the cooperation of members, or they may leave the chamber.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I move:

2. Clause 35, line 34, omit "\$1 million" and insert "the threshold amount".
3. Clause 35, page 27, after line 3 insert —
  - (2) The *threshold amount* is —
    - (a) in the financial year beginning on 1 July 2015, \$1 million; and
    - (b) in the financial year beginning on 1 July 2016 and each subsequent financial year, the CPI adjusted amount calculated in accordance with section 96R."
4. Clause 35, page 27, lines 5 to 16, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert —
  - (1) The amount of the levy is \$1.30 for every \$1000 of the estimated cost of the development for which the permit is required."
5. Clause 35, page 27, line 28, omit "L" and insert "T".
6. Clause 35, page 27, lines 31 and 32, omit "rounded up to the nearest 2 decimal places".
7. Clause 35, page 28, line 1, omit "L" and insert "T".
8. Clause 35, page 28, line 3, omit "\$1.30" and insert "\$1 million".
9. Clause 35, page 28, lines 28 to 31, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert —
  - (2) On or before 31 May each year, the Commissioner must —
    - (a) notify each responsible authority and planning authority in metropolitan Melbourne of the CPI adjusted amount for the following financial year; and
    - (b) publish the CPI adjusted amount for the following financial year on an appropriate website."
10. Clause 35, page 28, line 34, omit "96Q" and insert "96P".
11. Clause 35, page 31, after line 23 insert —
  - (c) if, at the time the permit application is made, the threshold amount has increased from the threshold amount at the time the levy was paid; or".
12. Clause 35, page 31, line 24, omit "(c)" and insert "(d)".

These refer to the same principles I enunciated on the previous amendment, which was, I am glad, unanimously adopted by this house.

**Amendments agreed to; amended clause agreed to; clauses 36 to 40 agreed to.**

**Bill agreed to with amendments.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT  
2014–2015) BILL 2014**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 28 May; motion of  
Ms ASHER (Minister for Innovation).**

**Ms ALLAN** (Bendigo East) — In speaking on this bill, let it be absolutely clear that it is the Labor opposition that has facilitated the passage — —

**Ms Asher** — On a point of order — —

**Ms ALLAN** — I am speaking on the bill, so calm down.

**Ms Asher** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, we have — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition! The house knows that points of order will be heard in silence, so I ask for silence for the Leader of the House on a point of order.

**Ms Asher** — My point of order is that this is a narrow bill on the appropriation for the Parliament for 2014–15, and the member for Bendigo East is entitled to speak on that bill and not to make another point.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The Leader of the Opposition! The member for Bendigo East is to continue on the Appropriation (Parliament 2014–2015) Bill 2014.

**Ms ALLAN** — The Appropriation (Parliament 2014–2015) Bill 2014 is, as we have been reading about in the press, one of three bills that make up this government's fairly ordinary, disappointing budget that is before this Parliament. Let me be absolutely clear

that it is the Labor opposition that has facilitated — indeed been the initiator of — this bill and the two preceding budget bills being moved, considered and passed by this house. It was not the heavy lifting of the government that got this bill considered by the house.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East is speaking on the Appropriation (Parliament 2014–2015) Bill, and I ask her to confine her remarks to that bill. It is a narrow bill, and I ask members to confine their remarks to the bill.

**Ms ALLAN** — I am pleased that the opposition is supporting this bill. We have supported the two other bills that make up the package of budget bills. We would like to see this bill, as we have seen with the other two bills, pass as a matter of urgency. That is why I move under standing order — —

**Ms Asher** — Sit down and we can pass it.

**Ms ALLAN** — That is a bit shrill.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Albert Park is well aware that when the Chair is on their feet he should not speak. We will have order in here, and we will not have interjections.

**Ms ALLAN** — Under standing order 155, I move:

That the question be now put.

**Mr Morris** — On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Bendigo East spoke on the bill and then sought to move a procedural motion. She cannot do both.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have been alerted to that by the Clerk. Given that is the case, does the member for Bendigo East wish to continue speaking in the debate?

**Ms ALLAN** — No.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Are there any other members who wish to speak on this bill? I will put the question.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

## BUDGET PAPERS 2014–15

### Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms ASHER (Minister for Innovation):

That the house takes note of the 2014–15 budget papers.

**Mr CLARK** (Attorney-General) — I am pleased to speak on this take-note motion and make some remarks regarding this year's budget papers, particularly as they relate to my portfolios and to my electorate. There are a number of important items in the budget papers that relate to the Attorney-General's portfolio, in particular the provision of funding for the construction of a new Shepparton court complex, which will transform the provision of justice and be a substantial boost to the provision of court services in the north-central region of Victoria. It is a \$73 million project that will provide a new multi-jurisdictional court building in Shepparton as well as additional staff to meet growing demand and expanded service needs across the Hume region. The redesign will also address a range of prisoner movement and security issues of the sort that were ignored by the Labor government for more than a decade.

The budget will also fund the long overdue consolidation and upgrade of the Office of Public Prosecutions building in Melbourne, which will bring the office's operations under a single roof, enhancing collaboration and boosting productivity. The government has also allocated an extra \$1.2 million to provide additional ongoing staff to assist with personal safety intervention order applications in the Magistrates Court.

The commitments in the current budget come alongside previous commitments that the coalition government has made to strengthen our justice system and to strengthen community safety, including the largest single boost to Victoria Police numbers in the state's history, the rollout of protective services officers at train stations, significant reforms to the management of parolees, increased prison capacity and a new GPS monitoring system to name just a few. I am also pleased to be able to say that the funding provided in previous budgets has allowed work to get under way on the construction of a new freestanding Children's Court building in Broadmeadows. This will provide a significant boost to the capacity of the Children's Court. It will also incorporate innovative new case-management models and less adversarial trial processes.

That is not all. In Bendigo the government has committed around \$12 million to a new justice service centre and secure court facility for the Magistrates

Court, which will significantly improve access to that court complex in the city and again address serious security and prisoner movement issues at the court that were long neglected by the previous government. There will be new secure holding cells, a secure courtroom and accommodation for justice agencies, including sheriff's officers, community corrections officers and justice service centre staff. That comes on top of other reforms and initiatives, including an upgrading of the court complex at Wangaratta, the establishing of a new mega-trials venue in Melbourne at the William Cooper Justice Centre and the remedying of serious defects at the William Cooper Justice Centre that were left by the Labor government. In relation to the Attorney-General's portfolio and the enhancement of justice more generally, this budget is building on the initiatives undertaken in previous budgets.

One particular matter that is worth remarking on in relation to this year's budget papers is the fact that for the first time the budget papers provide for and classify Victoria's courts separately from the Department of Justice and other departments that are part of executive government. That reflects a very important change to the way in which administrative support and funding are to be provided to the courts, effective from the establishment of Court Services Victoria, which is set to commence on 1 July this year. Although the judiciary has been independent of executive government since the foundation of Victoria, it is a surprise to many to discover that administrative support to our courts has in fact been provided not independently of government but through the Department of Justice. This is unsatisfactory in principle and unsatisfactory in practice. It is unsatisfactory in principle because it detracts from the independence of the judiciary and unsatisfactory in practice because it leads to extended decision-making chains and means that the courts do not have direct control of their own administration. The Court Services Victoria Act 2014 will establish Court Services Victoria as a separate legal entity under the governance of a Courts Council made up of the heads of jurisdiction, which will provide administrative services, facilities and support to our courts. This is a very significant initiative reflected in this year's budget papers.

Alongside the physical facilities and expanded services that are being provided, this budget will also support the ongoing work of the government to bring about stronger and more effective sentencing and reforms to criminal law that will better protect the community. Already a substantial number of those reforms have been put in place, including the abolition of suspended sentences, which will come into complete operation from 1 September this year for any offences committed

after that date; the introduction of community correction orders, which will put real teeth back into community-based sentencing and allow conditions to be imposed that will better protect the community; the introduction of a statutory minimum non-parole period sentence of four years for offences involving gross violence; legislation to provide that those who are found guilty of alcohol-fuelled assault will be excluded from licensed premises for two years; and stronger sentences for serious and repeated breaches of family violence intervention orders, which reverses a reduction in sentences for repeat breaches under the previous government and which sends a very strong message that violence in the home against members of the family is just as much a crime as violence against strangers on the street and that that offence will be treated very seriously not only by Victoria Police but by the sanctions that are on the statute book.

We have before the house legislation in relation to baseline sentences which will further strengthen sentences for a number of very serious offences and give Parliament a greater say on behalf of the community in relation to the average sentence that applies to those offences as well as the maximum sentence. These reforms to sentencing sit alongside a range of other reforms to criminal law that the government is undertaking, and they are being supported by previous budgets and by the current budget. The government has already delivered substantial law reforms relating to bail to create two new offences, where an accused breaches a condition of their bail that has been imposed to protect the community as well as where an offender is found to have committed a further indictable offence while on bail.

We have introduced and the Parliament has passed move-on laws which will ensure that police have the powers they need in a far wider range of circumstances to act against those who are engaging in unlawful conduct or who are blockading the reasonable access and egress from premises by others seeking to go about their lawful business. We have introduced reforms to the Crimes Act 1958 that have dramatically simplified the processes and procedures police follow in relation to the taking and processing of DNA evidence, making that evidence more widely available. This yet again strengthens the tools available to our police force.

We have introduced laws to reform double jeopardy. We have introduced laws in relation to criminal bikie and similar gangs. We have moved to strengthen in favour of victims, the arrangements for the making of compensation orders against offenders. We have introduced legislation to establish three additional

offences in response to the *Betrayal of Trust* report by the Family and Community Development Committee. There is more to come. The government has publicly indicated that things are in progress, including in relation to defensive homicide, reform of sexual offence laws, asset confiscation, unexplained wealth, attacks on emergency workers, the coward's punch and similar attacks, and reform to the law of committals. These are a range of valuable reforms to criminal law that have been undertaken and are supported by this budget.

Significant reforms have also been undertaken in relation to civil law and the law relating to the courts, including the Open Courts Act 2013, which consolidates the laws relating to the suppression of information and the closing of courts. The reforms establish the presumption that information will not be suppressed and will be open. Also undertaken has been far-reaching reform to the Fences Act 1968, a law that is very important to those who have neighbouring fencing disputes. This reform provides much clearer rules and ways to facilitate the resolution of those disputes.

We have acted to abolish the positions of acting judges and magistrates that were put in place under the previous government and strenuously opposed by the legal profession for very good reason. We have introduced and the Parliament has passed legislation to allow judges to act on a part-time basis. We have introduced journalist shield laws. We have introduced new laws providing legislative backing and protection for the role and work of honorary justices. Currently before the Parliament is legislation to establish a new regime to deal with issues arising from vexatious litigation. That is not to mention the far-reaching reform to the regulation of the legal profession in Victoria under the uniform legal profession reforms that Victoria and New South Wales are putting into place.

There is more work to come, which has been publicly foreshadowed, including in relation to powers of attorney and guardianship, information privacy and data security reforms, reforms to succession laws, further legislation responding to the *Betrayal of Trust* report, reforms to civil appeals and consideration of potential changes to the Wrongs Act 1958. Under the Attorney-General's portfolio a huge amount has already been put in place. Further reform measures are on their way, and they will add to that. That work will be supported and strengthened by the budget.

In relation to my other portfolios, there is legislation before the house to reform a wide range of aspects of the law relating to domestic building insurance and

protection, to establish a domestic building consumer protection fund and to make a range of other related reforms. The budget will also continue to support the very fine work that is being undertaken by the construction code compliance unit (CCCU) under the government's guidelines for the building and construction industry in Victoria. This is a measure that this government is committed to, even though those on the opposite side of the house are committed to scrapping both the CCCU and the guidelines in support of their union mates and in support of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. That will be a clear point of difference between this side of the house and the other side of the house and will provide Victorians with a clear choice as to where they want to go in future. This government is working to ensure law-abiding, safe and productive workplaces in Victoria. The alternative is a government that would scrap all of those reforms and return us to the bad old days that we saw under the Labor government here in Victoria.

Finally, in relation to the electorate of Box Hill, which I have the honour to represent, I am pleased that the budget papers have provided additional funding for Koonung Secondary College — \$1.2 million — to enable that school to undertake important enhancements to its facilities. Within the new boundaries of the Box Hill electorate, as they will take effect at the next general election, is the funding to undertake the grade separation in Blackburn, which, along with a number of other key grade separations being undertaken by this government, will greatly facilitate the movement of road traffic and trains along the rail system. There will also be an upgrade to Blackburn railway station.

In the Box Hill electorate, as across the rest of the state, this government is getting on with delivering record infrastructure spending and a record commitment to services, be it in health, education or community safety. This is a strong budget which comes on the back of the hard work that the coalition government has undertaken since it was elected to office. I am pleased to commend the budget papers to the house.

**Mr R. SMITH** (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the budget. This is a fantastic budget, and I think we can all agree that it delivers a great deal for Victorians. I know that members of the opposition have a role to play in criticising the budget, but having listened to much of the debate during the previous sitting week, I have to say that when members of the opposition criticise various aspects of the budget their hearts are not in it.

How can you criticise a budget that delivers a \$1.3 billion surplus in the current economic environment right across this country? There are jurisdictions that would love to be in similar circumstances. The \$1.3 billion surplus will rise to \$3.3 billion over the forward estimates period. How can you criticise a budget that brings a record amount in health and education spending? How can you criticise a budget that delivers a stable AAA rating from both of the rating agencies? How can you criticise a budget that delivers \$27 billion in infrastructure, a budget that delivers the Melbourne rail link, the airport link, both the eastern and western sides of the east–west link, a widening of the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway and the level crossing removals we have committed to? How can you criticise that? How can you criticise the jobs those projects will bring?

It is amazing that those opposite, despite passing the budget today, have opposed every one of our infrastructure projects. It is amazing that opposition members who complain that the government does not have a focus on jobs are opposing every single infrastructure project we are doing that will deliver enormous numbers of direct and downstream jobs for this state. It is extraordinary that they would criticise that. But as I said, I know they have a role to play, and I know equally that their hearts are not in it.

I turn to aspects of the budget that relate to my specific portfolios. Firstly, there is the environment and climate change portfolio. I would like to first of all bring to the attention of the house the money this government is putting towards the mitigation and suppression of fire. I want to quote to the house a passage from the report of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission just to give the house some context for why this government is so committed to ensuring that we have a very solid focus on fire mitigation. The royal commission said:

The commission is concerned that the state —

and this is under the previous government —

has maintained a minimalist approach to prescribed burning despite a number of recent official or independent reports and inquiries, all of which had recommended increasing the prescribed burning program. The state —

under the previous government —

has allowed the forest to continue accumulating excessive fuel loads. Not dealing with this problem on a long-term and programmed basis means that fuel levels continue to increase, adding to the intensity of bushfires ...

The previous government had absolutely no focus at all on ensuring that fuel loads were reduced. What is most damning is that in the ALP policy platform which was

released recently there was only a very short passage on fire mitigation efforts. In the two points that were laid out in that policy platform the ALP does not mention any focus at all on ensuring there was going to be a planned burning program and certainly there is no commitment at all to the bushfires royal commission's recommendations, which is frightening for people who live in country communities. Victorians should be very concerned about the opposition's complete lack of commitment to ensuring that we have a fire mitigation program in place.

By contrast, this government has burnt over 600 000 hectares in the last three and a half years. We were fortunate to be able to rely on some very good burning conditions in the first three years, but it has become a little more challenging in this burning season. We usually have the opportunity to do a lot of those burns during spring and autumn, but we have unfortunately had an increase of about 20 per cent to 50 per cent in rainfall in many parts of the state, which has hampered our efforts somewhat. However, we have still done the hard work. We have prepared over 380 000 hectares for burning when the temperature is right, and we will be able to mobilise when we need to.

In this budget the government has committed \$10 million to help the fuel mitigation and fuel suppression effort. We have committed that \$10 million over two years to upgrade some key firefighting bases. We have previously funded the upgrade of five bases in Bairnsdale, Mansfield, Linga, Stawell and Casterton, and this budget will be used to upgrade fire bases in Victoria Valley, Corryong and Hamilton. Those fire bases play an important role, particularly in fire suppression periods, in turning around those aircraft quickly, making sure they are loaded up with the retardant that is needed and getting them back out again as soon as possible. As part of that \$10 million we are increasing the size of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries firefighting vehicle fleet. We are also improving our forest tracks and bridges to ensure that we can get heavy machinery like bulldozers in as part of our fire suppression effort during the fire season.

There is a very strong commitment from this government around the issue of fire, and we continue that commitment and funding with our preformed incident management teams (IMTs). These preformed incident management teams are about having a team in place so that on extreme fire days when we know fires are coming those teams can be in the incident control centres right across the state to ensure that we have a ready force available to be mobilised when we have these fires. This stems from recommendation 8 of the bushfires royal commission. The previous government

put the first IMTs in place, but unfortunately because of a lack of foresight or commitment to the royal commission recommendations these IMTs were only funded for four years, after which there was no more funding left.

By contrast, this government is committed to implementing all of the royal commission recommendations. We are not only committing \$11.6 million to these IMTs over the next four years, we are also providing recurrent funding for what is an important part of the fire suppression effort. You have only to look back to 9 February, when Warrandyte experienced fires and there were around 600 fires right around the state. On the Friday before that we had very strong advice from the Bureau of Meteorology that 9 February was going to be extreme, and we had preformed incident management teams in place the day before the extreme fire day. As a result, although they were fast-moving fires, we were able to save ourselves considerable time. Risk assessments were done very much on the ground, and we were able quickly to get suppression into the areas that needed it the most. These IMTs, particularly the one in Kangaroo Ground, had a very material effect on the ability of local teams to fight the Warrandyte fire and subsequently direct a lot of the firefighting effort over to the east.

I turn to another area to which this government is very committed — that is, Landcare. While the coalition was in opposition, the federal Labor government cut funding to Landcare facilitators. We as a government made a commitment to fund Landcare facilitators when we came to office, and indeed we have done so. We committed \$12 million to fund 68 facilitators, and we ensured that those facilitators were on the ground helping local Landcare groups do their work.

We have gone further in this budget by committing an additional \$5.5 million. We have committed that money to ensure that coordinators are in place right around the state, usually located in the offices of catchment management authorities. The coordinators will assist the facilitators and make sure that the facilitators can administer the further funding we are committing to support these Landcare groups on the ground. The government is aware of the contribution of the tens of thousands of volunteers — Landcare groups and friends groups — that do incredible conservation and environmental work around the state. We are putting our money where our mouths are by supporting Landcare, and we will continue to do so.

I turn to this state's great natural assets, which Victorians, people from interstate and people around the world come to visit. National parks and other public

areas are the biggest tourism pull we have in this state. This government is committing \$13.35 million to ensure that we maintain these parks. The popular parks will be the focus in this budget, and we have been able to allocate \$3 million towards fire recovery in the Grampians. I take this opportunity to thank the 17 Parks Victoria staff who did so much to protect Halls Gap. We are helping them to direct funds to ensure that the recovery is such that people will continue to visit the area and continue to support the local economy.

With time against me, I turn to some other initiatives. We are committing funding towards the Environment Protection Authority Victoria's illegal dumping strike force. This strike force is about ensuring that we crack down on individuals who dump industrial or other sorts of waste around our municipalities. This strike force has had considerable success in the past, and this funding will ensure that another part of our waste package — Getting Full Value, our waste and resource recovery policy — is supported in many ways. This is just one way of ensuring that we crack down on those people. Illegal dumping is a blight on our communities, and members of this government are very proud of the reforms we have made in that space.

There is other funding directed at preserving our biodiversity and at setting up the Yellingbo Conservation Reserve, which will protect the helmeted honeyeater and the lowland Leadbeater's possum. That funding comes on top of the \$11 million this government committed towards protecting the Leadbeater's possum more broadly and making sure that future logging practices will not only provide for a sustainable timber industry but also significantly support the recovery of the Leadbeater's possum.

Although there are many other great initiatives, I turn to my youth affairs portfolio. This government has had a very strong focus on helping young people create enterprise, giving them employment skills into the future and making sure that they have a range of opportunities that will assist them in getting work for the long term. This government has previously set up initiatives around helping young Victorians to establish social enterprise operations as well as their own businesses. We continue to do that going forward. We are allocating \$400 000 in this budget towards designing and delivering a program that will assist young Victorians to acquire enterprise and finance skills that will be invaluable to them in the future. We are also allocating \$200 000 to deliver the Foundation for Young Australians schools-based Worlds of Work project, which will assist many young Victorians in getting the skills they need for the future.

I will quote some of the people in the youth sector who have commented on our approach to helping young Victorians get the skills they need. Dr Jan Owen, the chief executive officer of the Foundation for Young Australians, said:

Young people need an integrated education and career pathway that doesn't leave them in limbo when transitioning from one to the other and that will equip them to adapt to whatever tomorrow's labour market throws at them. It's fantastic to see the Victorian government's commitment to preparing young people to tackle the challenges that lie ahead of them.

David Brookes from Social Traders said:

As leaders supporting social enterprise development in Australia, the Victorian government has partnered with Social Traders to launch the New Gen youth-led social enterprise initiative. This initiative is groundbreaking in its support for young Victorians to start up and grow social enterprises throughout Victoria.

The chief executive officer of Melbourne City Mission, Ric Holland, said:

The state government is to be commended for the investments it is making in programs that create pathways to employment for young Victorians.

We are certainly on track with regard to helping young Victorians get the skills they need. Of course it is always hard for young Victorians to get into employment, but through the youth affairs portfolio we are making sure that we establish skills, help them gain their contacts and give them opportunities to get into long-term sustainable work.

I turn to my electorate. Under the previous government, when I was in opposition, not one of my state schools received any sort of funding for any sort of works, and as a consequence many were in a very poor condition. This government has worked to address a number of the maintenance backlog issues that the previous government left. I am very pleased that in the last few years we have been able to allocate funds to both Ringwood Heights and Ringwood North primary schools.

This budget delivers for my electorate by allocating over \$800 000 to Warrandyte Primary School. Warrandyte Primary School has been in need of maintenance and redevelopment for quite some time. It is a shame that the previous government did not see fit to allocate funding to that school. In fact it is a shame that the previous government let something in the order of 200-plus schools go to rack and ruin, not allocating the maintenance that was needed. This government is addressing that issue, and I am very pleased that Warrandyte Primary School has been allocated those

funds. When I was helping the school at the local IGA fundraising barbecue, a number of parents expressed support for this government and said they are very grateful for the funding that we have been able to put forward.

There are other items in the budget that will help my constituents. Work at Ringwood station will begin in just a few months. The policy to allow zone 2 travellers to travel into the city on zone 1 fares is another great initiative that my constituents are extremely supportive of. For local businesses our moves to reduce payroll tax will be very welcome. This is a great budget. It is a shame that others are speaking against it when they know it is a good budget, but this budget delivers, and I am very proud to commend it to the house.

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — It is a privilege to rise to speak on the motion to take note of the budget papers. I first entered this chamber in 1992, which marked the commencement of work on a number of major infrastructure projects that are evident in Melbourne today. Freeway linkages through the CityLink project significantly reduced freight costs and commuter travelling time across Melbourne. There was the development of the Melbourne Docklands, which we take for granted today — a vibrant part of the city of Melbourne where there is further scope for growth. There was the investment in the Melbourne Museum, the State Library of Victoria and the National Gallery of Victoria — all measures that provided employment.

In 1992 the Victorian unemployment rate was some 11.3 per cent. One was struck by the impact of it when one went door to door and spoke to family members of people who had lost jobs in middle management and migrant parents of children who had completed tertiary studies and subsequently had to go overseas to gain employment. There were the financial measures introduced to help retrieve the State Bank, Tricontinental and Victorian Economic Development Corporation losses. There was the good work done to help develop Melbourne's investment and exports overseas with the strengthening and further development of trade offices in Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Germany and England, which was directed towards assisting Victorian companies to expand export markets.

In relation to the Sandringham electorate there have been a number of important initiatives in the budget, including \$4.6 million as part of the budget announcement to redevelop Sandringham East Primary School, with an immediate \$250 000 to begin works and a subsequent sum of money — \$4 350 000 — upon the re-election of the coalition government. There is the

\$21 million allocated to build the new Southland railway station, which in late April was marked by a visit to the area by the Premier and the Minister for Public Transport, where immediate works were announced. This new station is predicted to cater for up to 4400 commuters a day. Then there is the investment of \$10.6 million for the planning of the Mordialloc bypass — the Mornington Peninsula Freeway extension — which, upon its completion, will provide benefits to the region in terms of a reduced volume of vehicle traffic along the Nepean Highway and Beach Road, as commuters exercise different options.

A significant achievement in the budget process was the announcement that zones 1 and 2 travel would be available for the price of a zone 1 fare. This will save regular commuters \$750 a year and daily commuters into the city around \$1200 a year. This is a major reform which will be of benefit to residents of the middle ring of suburbs of Melbourne. In my own electorate it will also facilitate bus travel from places such as Beaumaris and Black Rock to Sandringham railway station or from Beaumaris, Cheltenham and Mentone to the Mentone and Cheltenham stations with some ease for the price of a zone 1 fare. In the future planning will be required to better manage car parking with the extension of the zones now that commuters will predominantly seek to park around Sandringham railway station and other local stations rather than driving to stations at the start of zone 1. This forward-looking government will need to cater for parking around railway stations as well as allowing for better bike parking within this precinct.

Then there is the outstanding vision of the Napthine coalition government in relation to the Melbourne rail link and airport link. This will provide important infrastructure in the case of the Frankston line. Commuters will travel to South Yarra station and then go via Domain and Montague stations into Southern Cross station and the city loop. It will provide a different course for some commuters who seek to go to Flinders Street, where a change will be necessitated at the South Yarra station, but as I travelled to work today I had to change at Richmond station to catch a loop train to come to Parliament. The impact upon commuters will not be unduly significant in contrast to the benefit of having a more reliable service with a dedicated track.

Then for the price of this project there is the airport rail link, which will be an important outcome for a city with a population that is projected to grow by 2 million people by the year 2050. It is significant too that since my time in Parliament began Melbourne's population has grown by well over 1 million people.

The impact of this upon infrastructure is a significant issue that we as a community need to manage wisely and well so that we have continuing sound access to hospitals, schools and public transport and accessibility across the metropolitan road network.

Another great achievement in the budget process has been the allocation of funding for the provision of protective services officers, in the case of the Sandringham electorate, at Highett, Sandringham, Cheltenham and Mentone railway stations. The presence of protective services officers from 6.00 p.m. until the last train will greatly enhance the sense of safety and security for a wide range of travellers on those lines, and it will also increase public transport patronage. People will opt to enable family members to commute by train from city sporting events or evening activities in the city by train with that enhanced level of security.

Recently the Minister for Ports visited the Sandringham electorate to announce \$276 000 for the Half Moon Bay boat ramp. Recreational boating is a major aspect of recreational bay activity in Victoria, and the provision of an upgraded boat ramp will be of great benefit to regular fishers on the bay. There have been some difficulties with boats being stranded at low tide, which have caused some inconvenience to recreational anglers. With an increasing number of anglers on the bay, it is important that the government maintains good access to boat-launching infrastructure.

The boating industry is of great significance to Victoria and also Australia. That expertise undergirds in part the achievements of Australians at the Olympics through the Sandringham and Black Rock yacht clubs, where Olympic gold medal winners have been trained and around-the-world sailors have commenced their journeys.

There is the \$8 million redevelopment of the Linton Street, Moorabbin, community reserve as the new headquarters for the Southern Football League. The numbers involved in local clubs mean they are among the largest clubs in Australia. The Beaumaris Football Club has over 30 junior teams. I am pleased also to note in this context that there has been the allocation previously of \$650 000 to fund the development of a new pavilion at the Banksia Reserve in Beaumaris, which will bring together in one clubhouse complex the tennis club, the cricket club and the football club and provide a great vision for the future. The Beaumaris Football Club is doing an outstanding job in the amateur football A grade or premier competition, and the momentum towards the development of a new clubhouse will further consolidate the efforts of club

administrators, coaches and parents. It will be a great meeting place within the Beaumaris community.

The budget provides infrastructure investment in the previously announced bayside rail improvement project, which will enable X'trapolis trains to travel on the Frankston line. This involves station improvement, and included in that element, as I alluded to earlier, is the \$21 million to build the Southland station, which will provide ease of access to an important regional shopping complex for residents in Bentleigh, Mordialloc and different parts of Melbourne, who will be able to feed directly into that railway spine and into the shopping centre.

There is also the earlier funding of \$284 000 for the coastal erosion project for Mentone beach, which is an important enhancement to coastal amenity. The littoral or shoreline movement of sand is a natural feature of our coastline, and replenishment of lost sand maintains important beach areas for recreational swimmers as well as those engaged in the sport of lifesaving. The numbers in lifesaving clubs in the Sandringham electorate have in recent years reached over 1000 members, and they represent an important area for the development of sporting skill in the art of lifesaving, first aid and competitive boating events.

One of the great achievements of the coalition government has been the reopening of the New Street railway gates, which has better dispersed the movement of traffic within the bayside region and has meant that the impact of vehicles clogging up the Hampton Street shopping precinct is not deleterious to the commercial outcomes of the business enterprises in that area. Of all the projects that have been undertaken by the government in recent years, the reopening of the New Street railway gates has been one that has been widely applauded by Sandringham electorate constituents from Beaumaris, Black Rock, Sandringham and Hampton.

When the coalition came to government, it encountered the Labor failures of myki, the pokies licence shortfall, the failure of HealthSMART, the desalination plant, which is costing over \$1.8 million a day, the ICT cost overruns, including projects such as the ultranet, which was recently abandoned for a loss of \$180 million of investment, and the inaction of Electronic Conveyancing Victoria, which at my last count saw an investment of over \$50 million investment for no effective outcome or return. If I had \$180 million for my electorate today, much could be done to improve government-funded infrastructure not only within the electorate but also within the region. Then there was the investment in the north–south pipeline of \$760 million,

a sum that would eliminate the maintenance backlog in Victorian schools.

In broad terms the budget will deliver a surplus of \$1.3 billion in 2014–15 financial year, building to a \$3.3 billion surplus in 2017–18. It will also undergird strong employment growth and see a reduction in state debt. In relation to higher education and training, the budget has seen a \$1.2 billion investment, which is 50 per cent higher than the funding committed by the opposition when it was in government. The number of people undertaking training in identified skill shortage areas has increased from 49 per cent under the former government to 70 per cent under this government. That is critical when there are workplace shortages in a range of skills that are otherwise made up through a change in the migration intake parameters, which we have seen a debate on in the media in recent times.

It is pleasing to note across the state the reinvestment in hospital infrastructure: the rebuilding of the Box Hill Hospital; the building of the Monash Children's hospital; the development of the Ballarat hospital and the investment in the Geelong Hospital; the building at the Frankston Hospital, Northern Hospital and Werribee Mercy Hospital and also the Latrobe Regional Hospital; and even in regional Victoria at the Boort hospital. Investment in hospitals is a great commitment on the part of the coalition government and will deliver better services.

In relation to school education, there has been an investment of \$9.2 billion in 2015 and over \$500 million in capital funding for new schools and refurbishment of schools. I note that this is a continuing project, and it was only in the last week that I was at Beaumaris North Primary School, where the school principal indicated to me the areas of need. There has been a lot of continuing work and representations by the Sandringham electorate in relation to further reinvestment in school infrastructure. As the economy grows there is scope to derive the tax revenue to better distribute taxpayers dollars to build valuable infrastructure, and school infrastructure is certainly very important.

I am also pleased to note that for people who are carrying the burden of excessive water bills there will be a cut of \$100 per year to benefit Melbourne residential water users. It was only two weeks ago that I visited a pensioner in my electorate who had a penalty water bill as a result of there being an appliance where the water continued to run and the person was not aware of it. She had incurred a bill of \$1200. A saving of \$100 a year will benefit her in her immediate circumstances, along with many other people across the

state of Victoria. These are just some of the measures that will be of benefit to constituents in the Sandringham electorate and other people across Victoria. It is a privilege to note the continuing investment in infrastructure in this state.

**Mr BURGESS (Hastings)** — It is a great pleasure to rise and speak on this take-note motion on this year's coalition budget. It is difficult to start with anything other than the enormous gaffe made by the shadow Treasurer, the member for Tarneit, who is the alternative Treasurer. No-one in the house has looked up, because clearly everyone is well and truly aware that it was an enormous gaffe: a \$1 billion gaffe, in fact. The member for Tarneit said in a press release that:

The Abbott government is planning to hand over \$1 billion of the \$3 billion contribution to the east–west tunnel before 30 June, allowing Denis Napthine to turn a \$65 million deficit into a \$935 million surplus for 2013–14.

However, as you know, Acting Speaker, as the rest of the house now knows and as this side of the house has always known, there was not a single dollar of funding for the western section of the east–west link allocated in the 2013–14 financial year in the Victorian budget — not a single dollar. Any federal funding paid in 2013–14 is simply to add to the healthy surplus that has already been forecast for the year. That is a great way to launch into a speech about this year's budget by the coalition government. It puts the alternative Treasurer and his alternative team in stark contrast to the coalition government. This is virtually the same team that was in place in 2010 and was responsible for leaving the Victorian economy in a very precarious position.

The coalition government's Victorian state budget will deliver a once-in-a-generation boost to state-shaping infrastructure. It will create jobs and economic growth and will boost productivity right across the state. This budget will provide infrastructure and services for Victorian families and local communities, which will dramatically change how we move the goods and services that will be provided to the people of this great state. The coalition government has committed \$27 billion in state-shaping infrastructure. That state-shaping infrastructure will create jobs, boost productivity and build a better Victoria. That is why this government was elected in 2010.

Through the responsible management of the economy the coalition is able to deliver better services, which is reflected in record funding for health, education, community safety and support for the most vulnerable in our community. Responsible economic government by itself is not enough, but responsible economic government is essential to provide the services and

infrastructure this state needs. This budget goes a long way to delivering the needs of this state. At the same time it is repairing an enormous amount of damage that was done during the 11 years of the Labor government.

The Napthine government is running a responsible budget which will deliver a \$1.3 billion surplus. That is a surplus that has been unheard of in this state over a long period of time, including the 11 years of the Labor government. It is a strong budget, it is a positive budget and it is a budget that delivers for today and plans for the future. That is what the Victorian people have asked for from this government, and that is why this government was elected in 2010. Only a coalition government has the skills and experience to manage the biggest business in the state, which is the state government. Most other businesses in the state rely on this big business being run properly and well. The coalition government is running this business well, and this budget is very strong evidence of that. The haste with which the opposition was happy to pass the budget today clearly shows that it believes the same thing. It recognises that this budget is exactly what this state needs, and it was in a great rush to pass the budget today. It was probably the quickest that any budget has been passed in this state, which is another great compliment to this government.

There are an enormous number of issues to cover when discussing this budget. I will cover some of those issues in my speech. I will discuss how this state budget relates to my local area, but I will also refer to some of the broader issues that have been improved by the budget. The state government is putting more money into health to ensure that Victorians can receive world-class health care, more into education so Victorians young and old can receive world-class education, more into law and order so Victorians can be and feel safer and more into roads and public transport so Victorians can move around the state with greater ease, more affordably and in greater safety. Those are important investments, the effect of which is being felt throughout the state. The improvements are palpable. When I speak to people in my electorate, they always refer to the fact that infrastructure and services are being improved and improved quite quickly.

In late 2010 the coalition government took over Victoria's finances. As I said earlier, those finances were precariously balanced. Labor's debt was again spiralling out of control to levels similar to the record levels seen under former premiers Cain and Kirner. One would have thought that it would be impossible to have a government that did worse than the Cain and Kirner governments. However, the most recent Labor government went out of its way to make sure that its

money handling was as poor as the Cain and Kirner days. People need only look around the state to see some of the damage caused by those in charge of the most recent Labor government, including the \$1.8 million a day that Victorians are paying for the desalination plant; the north-south pipeline, which sits there being unused; and the debacle that myki was under Labor.

You have only to look around the state to see how devastating Labor's management was. Many of these things have been repaired, many are still under repair, and many are still to be repaired. We had 11 years of bungled major projects. That just re-emphasised that Labor just cannot manage money and it cannot manage major projects. Every time it attempts to do so, it just proves it again and again.

There is always a price to pay when you build something that is weak. The Labor Party builds its parliamentary party from a very small breeding ground. It builds it from unions and electorate officers. When you build a parliamentary party from unions and electorate officers and when you are trying to manage the state's finances, that is when the price has to be paid, and that is when the price is always paid with Labor. It has such a small gene pool from which to build its parliamentary party that of course there is no problem understanding why it struggles when it comes to finances.

In the last years of the Kennett government, Jeff Kennett ran the state on \$17.2 billion, with a \$1.8 billion surplus, so it was \$19 billion a year to run the whole state. He had infrastructure being built all over the state, and Victoria was a leader not only in Australia but in many parts of the world in quite a few areas. After that, Labor took over, and over the next 10 years it had over \$400 billion to spend. What did it build and what did it achieve? It took over with virtually no debt, had \$400 billion over 10 years and handed over the same levels of debt as Cain and Kirner had. What does that tell us about the money managing capability of Labor? Every time Labor has an opportunity it proves time and again that it cannot manage money.

I remember thinking, as I said earlier, that there could not be a more incompetent government than that provided by the Cain and Kirner governments, but I am afraid the most recent Labor government was able to prove that thinking wrong. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the mess that these same people, who are putting themselves forward again for the same jobs, would make of the rebuild which this state has undergone over the last three and a half years and

which is still happening. The promise that this budget brings to the state could be swept away just as easily again by re-election of the Labor Party, which would ruin the finances of this state yet again.

From the perspective of my electorate, \$359 000 will be put into Moorooduc Primary School. That school operated for 11 years with virtually no input of money, but we have been able to put in \$759 000 for an upgrade of that school. Those involved in the school and the children in it are very grateful that they will have much improved facilities. Also almost \$1 million will be put into the Pearcedale Primary School. That is an important primary school because it also deals with hearing-impaired children. It is a very important school for my electorate, as it is for whole state. Obviously these investments in my local area build on investments that have been made over the last three years, including \$16.3 million for the Somerville police station. On top of that we have the \$81 million expansion of Frankston Hospital, which obviously is the local hospital for my community, and construction of the new \$4 million Somerville technical college, which is really important.

As we know, the Cain and Kirner governments got rid of technical colleges in Victoria, and since that time people who do not fit particularly well in the normal curriculum of a school have felt like failures because they do not actually receive the kind of teaching they need to match their skills, but their skills are every bit as important to our economy and our state as others. The reintroduction of technical colleges is an important thing. BlueScope Steel, Inghams Enterprises, the Port of Hastings Development Authority and Esso will all contribute to the curriculum of this technical school so that we can grow and train local kids and they can take local jobs. That is a very important aspect for my community and something we are working on.

Members of the house will know of the \$110 million that is already being invested in the port of Hastings development. That stands in stark contrast to Labor's policy of saying, 'What are we up to this week?'. Labor members know, when you speak to them offline, that they cannot possibly put a port in Port Phillip because the heads there will not allow the big ships to go through. The channel cannot be dredged deeply enough to get the ships in. Labor members know they will not be able to put it into Port Phillip, so they have really got themselves stuck in a bit of a quandary, and they would end up having to go for the Hastings option at some point. But of course if Labor implemented the policy that it had the last time it was in power, that would decimate my local community. That policy was to create a port that expanded from one end of Western Port to the other. It also had a great toxic element to it,

which included a bitumen plant, a urea plant and coal drying plants. It would have been the worst of all worlds for my electorate.

The plan that we have put in place gives a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to my community that is refined to just above Hastings with no industrialisation south of Hastings. It allows for no use of the Stony Point line for freight from the port. That is another thing that the Labor Party was going to do. It was going to use the Stony Point line for the freight, which would have ruined the passenger service. It was also going to put an extra freight line straight up through the middle of Pearcedale. Labor had absolutely no care at all for the population of the Western Port area. It only had a plan in mind just to move freight. Now, because Labor needs the votes around the Werribee, Melton and Geelong areas, its members have decided to drop 50 years of bipartisan support for the port of Hastings and go with some plan for a dot on the map at Bay West, which they know is impossible to do.

In summary, the government has worked across the state to develop a very strong economy and is working to further strengthen it. In my local community there has been an enormous shift and enormous impetus.

**Mr GIDLEY** (Mount Waverley) — It is my pleasure to follow the member for Hastings and to concur with and endorse many of his thoughts. In particular I outline to the house this evening the benefits of the coalition government's budget, both for the state of Victoria and for my local community. Given that this is our final budget in this parliamentary term, it is useful and appropriate to reflect on the enormous achievements thus far and the enormous strides that have been taken in delivering not only for our state but also for our local community, including my electorate of Mount Waverley.

When I turn my thoughts back to the first budget I am struck again — and it needs to be stated again as a matter of record — by the disastrous state of the finances inherited by the coalition government when it came to office. The facts speak for themselves: expenditure growth had outstripped revenue over the previous decade whilst Labor was in power and spending grew by an average of 8 per cent a year, in contrast to revenue growth of only 7.3 per cent. The government over that decade was clearly operating in structural deficit. The only thing that saved that government from greater scrutiny was the one-off sugar hits from the commonwealth, which boosted the coffers of the Bracks and Brumby governments and meant that the operating surplus was masked in many ways. Most importantly, Labor knew at the time — and most

people who have managed a household budget would know — that that position was simply unsustainable. You cannot continue over a decade to spend more on day-to-day services and expenses than you earn without either maxing out your credit card or getting the one-off sugar hits, and that is what happened under the previous government.

It was the challenge for the coalition government to put in place its values and beliefs about living within its means. That is a key part of the coalition government's principles: that for day-to-day expenditure the government of Victoria should live within its means, because the alternative proposition is unthinkable. The alternative proposition is to have future generations saddled with debt and deficit as a result of our operating expenses. That is the simple fact of the matter. It does not matter whether it is a household budget, a community organisation or the state government of Victoria, you cannot on a day-to-day basis continue to spend more than you receive in income.

That is a clear principle, and the coalition government was determined to ensure that it put itself on a sustainable footing so that it could live within its means. It was not easy, because not only was the budget in structural deficit but there was a reduction in the global economy. The reduction in state taxes and GST as a result of the changed economic circumstances averaged a write-down of more than \$1.9 billion a year, which was more than the loss during the 2008 financial crisis, just to put that into perspective. I say that because it is a fundamental point of difference in the values, views and philosophies of this side of the house and the opposition.

Putting aside building infrastructure and whether you believe it should be funded by a mixture of debt and surpluses over time, the fact remains that day-to-day expenses should not be put on the credit card for future generations to pay off. That is morally wrong, and that is the difference between this side of the house and the other side. It is something we have moved very swiftly to rectify. If there were ever a change in government back to Labor, we know that the old traits would return: spending more than comes in as revenue and a return to structural deficit and to the morally bankrupt principle of saddling future generations with debt and deficit and interest payments to fund day-to-day services.

This government has reduced the growth of net debt significantly and also the growth of public sector debt. There is more to do in relation to that; there is no question about it. Importantly in this economic context the government has always maintained that, wherever possible, Victorians are better placed to make decisions

on how they spend money than the government acting on their behalf. With this in mind I note the reduction in payroll tax from 4.9 per cent to 4.85 per cent starting from 1 July.

It is an important principle reflecting our view that people are better at determining how to spend their money than state or federal governments wherever possible. If you have that view, you believe in a lower tax environment, as the Treasurer has indicated. Not only is this saving consistent with our values and beliefs, it will also save Victorian businesses around \$234 million over four years. It will benefit around 39 000 Victorian employers and confirm our state as having the second lowest rate of payroll tax in Australia. For payrolls between \$4.7 million and \$26.7 million Victoria will have the lowest effective payroll tax of any jurisdiction in the country.

In addition to the payroll tax cut, I note that from 1 July the duty payable on life insurance in Victoria will be abolished entirely, saving consumers \$16 million over four years.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr GIDLEY** — I note the sarcasm of the members opposite; they would not understand that that saving, which has come from hard work, is significant. If you throw around the sort of money that was thrown at myki, the desalination plant and other things, of course you do not understand the value of money. That is clear from those interjections and from Labor's record. The spendathon would continue under Labor and be consistent with its rhetoric.

I note that this is a quarter of a billion dollars in tax relief and, most importantly, a dividend of good economic management. It goes without saying that, if Labor had managed projects better when it was in government, had not spent the bank and had not been in structural deficit, we would have the capacity to reduce taxes and charges even further. However, we accept the path we were elected on: to restore the state budget and reduce the growth both in general debt and in total public sector liabilities — growth which otherwise would have continued under Labor. That is very much consistent with our principles and the fact that, wherever possible, after governments have met their responsibilities people are better than governments at determining how they spend their money and should therefore have the lowest taxing environment possible. With that in mind, it is important to note where we were when we were elected to government and where we are today and to acknowledge those strides forward.

In addition, in my local community there have been a number of projects which have seen significant improvements in the lives of residents of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley. I note that in the area of transport the Glen Waverley line has gone from being one of the worst performing train lines in Melbourne prior to us coming to government to one of the best performing, and that is consistent with the \$12 million-plus rebuilding of the Glen Waverley line which the government undertook, replacing 45 000 sleepers and the ballast and ensuring that Melbourne is not the laughing stock of the world by having a train line shut for the Kooyong Classic, which happened on three different occasions under Labor because the Glen Waverley line was so unreliable.

In addition to that, I note that we are making good progress on our \$1.8 million Glen Waverley railway station upgrade, which will be finished later this year. It will provide commuters with improved facilities not only in terms of lighting but also in terms of disability access and safety and security. The \$10.8 million Syndal multistorey car park is progressing well, with preliminary works already done and the project set to continue. That is an increase on what we proposed, because we have ensured that the project complements the natural character of the area and has other improvements, such as anti-graffiti paint setbacks and other things. There is also the 601 express bus service to Monash University, which was talked about for nearly a decade. It took a coalition government to cough up the money to put that to a trial and then extend that on a permanent basis, and it is now one of the most patronised express bus routes in Melbourne.

Over its parliamentary term the coalition government has also taken important steps to improve the opportunities available for future generations. Just as this government will not saddle future generations with debt and deficit around their necks for day-to-day expenses, it will also ensure that our education system is focused on producing high-quality education outcomes. Part of that is about ensuring that infrastructure is well maintained and built. I note that the \$4.5 million Pinewood Primary School rebuilding and upgrade is on track, as well as the \$250 000 walkway project for that school. The \$2 million Mount Waverley North Primary School refurbishment and modernisation has been completed, and we look forward to opening that shortly. The Essex Heights Primary School rebuild has been opened at a cost of around \$7.8 million, and the Mount Waverley Secondary College junior campus was opened in 2011–12 by the Minister for Education. That was great to see.

It is not all about money and spending money; it is also about ensuring parental choice in education, and that is one of the things the coalition government has done, because we understand that part of a strong, quality education system is ensuring that parents have the opportunity to send their children to schools with the values and beliefs they want to instil. If you believe in that key component of non-government education, then you must stand up and support the exemptions the coalition puts forward to equal opportunity laws. I note very clearly that they were opposed by the opposition because, whilst there might be some members of the opposition who have sympathies with independent and non-government education, the reality is that Labor as a whole has no time for the non-government, independent sector; hence it opposed the equal opportunity laws we put through and hence it will not support parental choice in relation to that. It is not just about money; it is about values in education.

I note that there are a couple of examples in which the coalition government is putting its values, beliefs, principles and priorities into action. Health is one of the most important areas for us. Whether it is for a family member or another loved one, you can never replace the importance of health services. As the state member of Parliament for my district, I am proud that there has never been more funding going into our local health services. I note the \$250 million-plus Monash Children's hospital. Again, we are not saddling the future generations of our state with debt and deficit; we are giving them parental choice for their children, as well as good health services. That \$250 million-plus facility will be a fine paediatric services facility. It was talked about for many years by the opposition without delivery, although I note the opposition's supposed support for that now.

The MonashLink Community Health Service, a very good allied health service smack bang in the middle of Glen Waverley, will certainly assist in relation to providing local and specialised services for residents. I am also pleased that MonashLink has been able to continue with its program in relation to its Hughesdale facilities, although they are not in my district but in Oakleigh.

Finally, on public safety there have again been tremendous steps forward by the coalition government in relation to securing a safe community. One of the ways in which that happens is by ensuring that we have proactive front-line policing services, and to do that you need to have the necessary infrastructure in place. The coalition government has spent more than \$27.8 million on the police academy in Glen Waverley to upgrade that facility so that when officers are in a training

process or indeed a retraining process they have access to those facilities. There are 940 protective services officers, and in my electorate that will mean that every station will be manned as a consequence of that Glen Waverley police academy upgrade.

There is a \$1.5 million saving and modernisation of the Mount Waverley police station. When we came to office the bulldozers were there. The 'For sale' sign was about to go up, and the community was about to lose that police station. The government acted very quickly and ensured that the station was not closed. The government has acted very quickly to ensure a \$1.5 million refurbishment and modernisation program for that site, whilst acknowledging the neighbourhood character and ensuring that it is a 24-hour operational response station. There is no question about that. That is going to make a real difference to public safety in my electorate. In the time that has been allocated to me, I have given a few highlights. I commend the budget to the house.

**Ms RICHARDSON** (Northcote) — Since we debated the budget in the Parliament last week a great deal has obviously happened that has caused a lot of people to become engaged in state politics — some for the first time. I have to say many around my electorate have expressed various views about state politics after the events of the last few weeks and days.

For the benefit of members opposite it is necessary to make the point again that of course Labor will be passing the budget. The only party that is talking about scuttling the budget is the Greens political party, not Labor. We will not see teachers, firefighters and nurses — all of those who work very hard for our state — fall short because of the state that this Parliament finds itself in. However, not for one moment does that mean that this is the kind of budget Victoria needs at this time. Far from it. In fact it fails on so very many fronts. Today it even failed to rate a mention in the Dorothy Dixers. I think the Treasurer got one question in about the state of the economy and in that he made reference to the budget, but it otherwise failed to rate a significant mention in question time today. If this is such a critical budget — according to government members it is — why was it largely overlooked by them today in question time?

In joining this debate on the state budget I want to shut down all the circus noise and music, spin and pantomime to focus on what really matters to Victorians. This budget will affect those who are sending kids off to school, who need a hospital bed or who are looking for a job. Sadly we have seen more and more fall into the latter category on this

government's watch. It will also affect those who are waiting for a train, tram or bus, or sitting at a dangerous level crossing, those who are trying to run their small business, those who are looking for a place at TAFE, those who are trying to send their kids to kinder, and those who have a disability. In fact the government has left no-one out, no-one is unaffected by the state budget or unconcerned about its implications for them and their family.

A budget is an opportunity for all Victorians to understand what a government is all about — its priorities, its long-term goals and the values that underpin it — but at times the lines and spin generated around a budget make it fairly difficult to distil fact from fiction. Understanding the truth about a budget is critically important for each and every one of us, so on budget day and on the days that followed the Treasurer sold his budget to Victorians. The fact that the government was just a tad heavy on the spin and a tad light on the facts was evident in the mix-up on the location of the new station in Fishermans Bend, which we now understand is a new station in Southbank. Sadly we Victorians have grown accustomed to this state government's habit of falling over its feet. Spin has always come ahead of substance and noise has always come ahead of action. This is not the foundation for good government, and as a consequence it is the view of the members on this side of this house that this government has simply lost its way.

I have a healthy regard for this government's capacity to turn its back on the vulnerable, the sick, the homeless, job seekers and those struggling with a disability, and we have seen this at each and every state budget. I am sad to say that this budget is simply no different. Compounding this disgraceful approach is the pitiful effort by government members and the Premier to put a stop to the worst effects of the federal budget, which of course came after the state budget. We know that government members are very worried about the federal budget, but they are worried for their own sakes and the electoral consequences for them. They are not actually worried about how it will impact on Victorians. Of course little did we know that the Victorian budget was just a taste of what was to come.

The Liberal spin on the day and days after the budget was released was that the budget was 'visionary'. As the government slammed into working families just one more time, just for good measure, it had the gall to spin the budget as being visionary. In fact I remember listening to talkback the day after the budget. Liberal Party members were clearly calling in on the talkback numbers repeatedly. Constantly they had their scripts, and the word they were pumping out there was

‘visionary’ — it was a visionary budget, a visionary Premier and a visionary time. They were very concerned to make that point. The script had been sent out and so that is what they were sending in — and on and on it went. It got me thinking about what it actually takes to make a visionary budget. Could the budget before us be fairly described as a visionary budget? Given that visionaries are often described as those who can see a long way into the future, perhaps this was the best way to regard the budget given how long into the future Victorians will have to wait to see many of the government’s projects come to life, but I do not think this is the conclusion government members or Liberal Party members who were calling in on talkback were hoping for us to draw. No matter how hard I have tried I cannot come even close to describing this budget using that term.

As a Victorian first and Labor Party member second I am always hopeful that the challenges ahead will be understood by this Liberal government and, most importantly, that it will want to do something about them. Instead we have this shabby state budget. In fact if you were looking for an example of how not to be visionary, this is the document you would reference. Think about this: we have a budget that has a 6.4 per cent unemployment rate, which is higher than the national average of 5.8 per cent. More than 50 000 Victorians have lost their jobs on this Liberal government’s watch, but the jobs this budget is talking about creating will be created way off into the future, not now when we need them the most. There is another cut to health worth \$831 million while 10 000 people wait on elective surgery waiting lists, the longest the lists have ever been. The budget also cuts another \$124 million from TAFE. I noted that some education cash was splashed around, but it was often at schools that had not even asked for funding. This clearly demonstrates to me that it is postcodes, not an educational priority, that has driven this agenda.

Victorians are no doubt sceptical, to say the very least, about this government’s latest public transport frolic, as it has abandoned so many of its other public transport fixes, including the Rowville and Doncaster rail links, Avalon Airport, Southland station, the redevelopment of Flinders Street, rail links between Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat et cetera. This budget has also cut \$75 million from kinders, it has cut \$62 million from environmental programs, it has cut the Victorian energy efficiency target — all of this — and still Victorians live under a government which will deliver the highest taxing budget in Victoria’s history.

In relation to my electorate this budget will clearly leave my community worse off. It is bad news for our

schools, it is bad news for anyone waiting for a hospital bed, it is bad news for people needing aged care, it is bad news for our kinders, it is bad news for the homeless, it is bad news for public transport users and, yet again, it is bad news for the Chandler Highway bridge. Not a cent — not a single dollar — has been put forward to fix the bottlenecks that occur on the Chandler Highway bridge. The plans drawn up under the former Labor government to fix the Chandler Highway bridge are still gathering dust. There are so many plans just like this one for the Chandler Highway bridge that have just sat on the shelf gathering dust, and this budget will do nothing to address those. I think that for me what best summed up this budget, and in particular its lack of vision, on the day it was released was the fact that it provides twice as much for prison beds as for hospital beds — that is what this budget has delivered.

There is one area that I think demands special attention, and that is the area of innovation. Napoleon once said, ‘Never interrupt your opponent when they are in the middle of making a mistake’, but this mistake by the state government will cost and is costing Victorians dearly every day, and something must be done about it as a matter of urgency. I know those opposite do not want to admit it, but Victoria is in the middle of a manufacturing crisis, and it simply does not have to be. Too often we have heard the cry from the economic pointy heads, the ideologues and the intellectually lazy that it is simply too expensive to build anything in our state or in our country; that our future lies in tourism, farming and digging stuff up — that we have a pub, a farm and a quarry and that is it. Who do they blame for this? They do not blame themselves, of course; they blame the workers, they blame the unions. In fact they blame anyone who thinks there is more to be valued in manufacturing something of value than in manufacturing canapés. It does not matter that there are so many examples of high-cost economies with strong manufacturing bases and with workers who are valued, not derided — skilled workers who have a future because as far as their governments are concerned their wellbeing is critical to the wellbeing of the entire state.

So how have the governments running those economies done it? How have those governments managed to structure their economies in that way? It is very simple: they make stuff. They make smart stuff. They know they cannot compete with low-cost economies that can mass-produce low-value goods, so they make high-value stuff in workshops that protect their intellectual capital. They use their research capacities to not only find solutions to problems but to find solutions that the market needs, and all of this leads to jobs for their citizens. In short, they understand that in order to

generate skilled jobs they need to keep ahead of the game, and they do that by understanding the critical role governments must play in supporting research and innovation.

We are best placed to embrace this challenge, if only we are given the opportunity to do so. The science, technology and industry scoreboard developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) rates how major economies are performing when it comes to research and innovation. On this measure we rank 11th in the world — or no. 1 if our population is taken into account. Around the world we have a reputation for being pretty damn smart, but when it comes to commercialising what we know we are not so smart. Unfortunately, on this measure we sit on equal 21st, well behind other OECD countries. It is here, in this disconnect between our ability to research and our ability to then commercialise what we have learnt, that the state government must play an active role, yet here in Victoria we have a government in active retreat.

Keeping in mind the future demise of our car industry, who in their right mind would cut programs designed to fund the next job-manufacturing industry? I guess it would be the same people who think that cutting money from TAFE is also going to help Victoria's economy. Members should just bear in mind that since coming to office this government has cut \$45 million from funding for science and innovation. That is a 60 per cent cut. A fact sheet compiled by the minister's own department says that the automotive industry has the highest research and development spend of any manufacturing sector in Australia, yet even this industry's demise is not enough to convince this government to do what other countries around the world are doing, and that is to look at innovation as the pathway to skilled job creation. So strong are Liberal government members' ideological reflexes that they are prepared to sacrifice Victoria's chance to create good jobs and skilled jobs; jobs of value to each and every one of us. Why is this? In my view and in the view of members on this side, those opposite simply could not care less about Victorians' jobs.

At a personal level, I like the member for Brighton. I reckon we could sit and have dinner at any time and find points of interest and agree on a great many things. At a political level, unlike so many of her colleagues at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings, I have to say that at least she was prepared to be up-front about her ideological position. At PAEC she said that there is little if any role for her to play in this space. Can you believe that? Our state is facing this enormous crisis in manufacturing, and the Minister for

Innovation said that there is no role for her to play in finding what jobs will replace those lost in the vehicle industry. The minister did acknowledge the medical precincts, the film industry, the Australian Synchrotron, and that none of these things happened by accident. She said that the Labor government had made huge investments in this space and that that has benefited each and every one of us.

But the minister did not want to go so far as to say that she was prepared to revisit her ideological view and actually take a different approach to managing innovation in this state. In fact most people in the sector when I meet with them compare the minister to John Brumby, who was formerly innovation minister and who has consistently been described to me as visionary in this space — a visionary. By comparison they say that this minister clearly is not, which is a shame. This is costing Victorians dearly, and in response the minister wants to talk more about trade missions. I am not saying that we should get rid of trade missions, I am not saying we should abandon them, but clearly we should be doing both, because we need to grow skilled jobs in order to have something to trade. That is what we need to do.

Because of the lack of leadership in this area we are giving our competitors overseas an advantage. They are not going to let all of the skilled people and people who are terrific at research sit idle. They are going to pluck them from our state, and those skilled jobs will go overseas and we will not see the benefit for Victoria.

**Mr BAILLIEU** (Hawthorn) — It is a somewhat rare privilege for a former Premier to speak on a budget, and this is the second occasion on which I have had the opportunity. I think it has been a long time since a former Premier has had two such opportunities. It is not only a rare privilege but also a pleasure to speak on this budget. By any measure it is a strong and a good budget, and it is a budget that the coalition government in Victoria can be proud of, particularly given the circumstances it has faced as a government.

When we came to office we said we were here to fix the problems and build the future. I well remember the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meetings when I sat with my colleague premiers and we discussed our respective financial positions. All, including the Labor governments of the day, advised that they had commenced with budgets that were unsustainable, and that is exactly the situation we found when we came to office — a budget that was fundamentally unsustainable. Action had to be taken, and we made that commitment. We made the decisions that were necessary. We made the judgements that were

necessary about the future of Victoria. At that time and in the context of fixing the problems and building the future we committed to provide this state with a more sustainable budget, to provide this state with a more productive economy, to seek to grow our markets, to grow the Victorian economy and to assist those industries in Victoria that were transitioning in the changing economy. We made those broad commitments, and we have stuck to them through the term of this government.

We have fixed many of the problems that were left to us, and they are so numerous that it is difficult to mention them all. They include the unsustainable basis for post-secondary training in this state; problems like the Ararat prison; the north–south pipeline; IT projects that were overblown, overbudget and over time; smart meters; the synchrotron; the fish market; the gaming machines tender; and various other issues. I will not go into them all. We have heard many times in this place about the regional rail link and the disasters that were left behind for this government to fix. The many major projects and the problems in the building industry around the building commissioner are just some of the others. We have dealt with those issues as best we have been able to do, and in many cases we can say that those problems have been largely resolved.

Along the way we have sought to produce a budget that is more sustainable. We are in a position in Victoria to say that we have a AAA-rated budget with a positive outlook, and no other jurisdiction in this country can say that. Four years ago the budget in Victoria was, as I said before, fundamentally unsustainable, and we have delivered on our commitment in that regard. We have slowed the growth in expenditure, we have stabilised debt, we have reduced the public service as it needed to be reduced down to a more sustainable level. We have introduced a responsible wages policy through more forensic enterprise bargaining agreements. We have made commitments around stamp duty to reduce stamp duty burdens for first home buyers. We have extended the energy concession to 12 months. We have led the nation in calls for transformational structural change at a federal level, all in regard to providing a more sustainable budget. That is what this budget now delivers on after four years.

We can be proud that the Victorian budget delivers a substantial surplus and will deliver more substantial surpluses in the years ahead. That is what we planned, that is what we have drawn attention to over the last few years and that is what we have delivered. I will remember a press conference after a COAG meeting where I made the point, both inside the meeting and at the press conference, that decisions made at a federal

level by the former federal Labor government, the Gillard government, were going to impose upon the states massive additional expenditure and impose upon the commonwealth massive additional expenditure, and that the expenditure was unfunded. I made those points at that press conference, and the Prime Minister of the day, Julia Gillard, sought to ridicule those claims. We now see that all of those claims have proved to be very much the case. We were prevented at COAG through those years from having discussions about important issues on the one hand and on the other hand about the funding of those important issues, and now all Australians are contending with those facts — and they are the facts.

Along the way not only have we produced a sustainable budget but we have produced a more productive economy, with the biggest tax reforms in 20 years around the fire services levy. We have reduced WorkCover premiums to the lowest they have been in the state, and we continue to reduce them. We have led the case for a national construction cost inquiry, something we still need to have if we are going to get a handle on construction costs in this state in particular. We have produced the taxi reforms that were necessary, that many said were impossible, and they have been important reforms. I know there are some in the taxi industry who baulked at that, but from talking to the drivers, as I have done, I know they now welcome those changes. The drivers welcome the additional income they are getting.

The changes around liquor licensing and planning reform have been well received. We have grown our markets and we have grown our economy. We have ensured that in the process we have, as the previous speaker said, balanced our activities. Yes, we have led trade missions in an unprecedented way. In fact we have set the standard for international engagement, and everywhere I go I am able to say proudly that the coalition in Victoria has taken up the challenge. Whether it be in Japan, China, Indonesia, the Middle East, India or in other nations, our trading partners welcome engagement with Victoria, and it is important that we continue that.

We have also, through the Regional Growth Fund, ensured that all Victorians get a share of the benefits of this budget. We sought to grow our markets and our economy, and in these difficult times we have gone out of our way to assist those industries that are in transition — some of which are dramatically so.

In regard to the core messages in this budget we can say that we have delivered on a surplus and on stabilised debt. If members look at debt, they can see it is coming

down. This budget delivers on many things that are actually coming down for the benefit of all Victorians. We have a leaner, meaner Victorian government. This is a leaner, meaner and more efficient budget. We have a more efficient government sector. Payroll tax is coming down. Stamp duty for first home buyers is down to 50 per cent, just as we committed to, on the timetable we committed to. Stamp duty on life insurance contracts is being eliminated.

The reduction in residential water bills negotiated by the Minister for Water is a very significant change. There is also the reduction in the fire services levy premium, along with debt coming down. They are the very issues that Victorians want to see. When we add to that free transport in the CBD and the change around zone 2 fares, over the delivery of this budget and its predecessor budgets there is a lot to be very pleased about.

Nevertheless, there are things that are going up, and I acknowledge that. Spending on education is increasing. Spending on health is increasing. Spending on public transport is increasing. Spending on emergency services is increasing. We acknowledge that, and we accept that is increasing. I think it is actually a positive.

The infrastructure that is acknowledged and committed to in this budget is unprecedented. There is some \$27 billion worth of it, and so much of it is appreciated — we only have to look at the east–west link. The support for the east–west link which used to exist on the other side of the house no longer exists. You would have to be barmy not to support the east–west link. The Dingley bypass, the rail standardisation project through the Murray Basin and the substantial level crossing upgrades, which are not being undertaken on a whim but are funded programs on key level crossings, are all very significant.

The Melbourne rail link is, admittedly, different to the Metro rail link. I am somebody in this chamber who knows the Metro rail project intimately. We examined it in great detail and with great care. One thing we determined through that examination was that it was going to be enormously costly, enormously slow to build and potentially so disruptive as to be unsustainable in itself. The Melbourne rail link is an effective alternative to the Metro rail link, and will provide some of the stations that the Metro rail link was not going to provide. I know there has been a focus on Parkville, but there are other stations that were not provided by the Metro rail link which are provided by the Melbourne rail link. That in itself is a positive.

Most budgets provoke some commentary — commentary about inadequacies and commentary about some problems they deliver. This budget has been blessed with third-party endorsements unlike any budget that I can recall in my 15 years in this Parliament. When I look at the summary of those endorsements, I see glowing references from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and the ANZ Bank, which said:

The Victorian budget is in good shape ahead of the November state election and arguably the healthiest of all Australia's states and territories.

UBS said:

The state of Victoria boasts the strongest fiscal position of the Australian states.

It went on to say:

Its infrastructure spend will be fully funded by operating surpluses (and asset sales) from 2015–16.

Which other jurisdiction can make that claim? The Master Builders Association of Victoria praised the budget. The Housing Industry Association praised the budget. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia praised the budget. The Australian Industry Group praised the budget. The Tourism and Transport Forum said:

The infrastructure program announced today will deliver the trifecta of vital new CBD rail capacity, a rail link to the airport and a major upgrade of Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor ...

That trifecta alone warrants praise. The Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry praised the budget. The Victorian Farmers Federation praised the budget. The Committee for Geelong, the Cancer Council Victoria, the Australian Retailers Association, the Victorian Council of Social Services, beyondblue, the RACV, the Property Council of Australia, the Bank of Melbourne, the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank — all sought to praise the budget, as did the Council to Homeless Persons and Hanover welfare services. Regional endorsements came from Ballarat, where the mayor said he was very pleased. The mayor of Surf Coast shire and the CEO of G21, Elaine Carbines — who is not unknown to the other side of the house — praised the budget. Rebecca Casson from the Committee for Geelong, the chamber of commerce in Geelong and — this is a rare one — the Geelong Trades Hall Council also praised the budget.

In Bendigo there were similar endorsements. In my time in this house and in my observation of this Parliament before I joined this house I have never, in any circumstances, seen such a list of endorsements of

a government's budget. The comments on major infrastructure projects, likewise.

I will make some observations about my own electorate. The funding for the upgrade of the Burke Road level crossing is not only essential but will be very much welcomed. The additional money made available to the brand-new already successful Auburn High School will be much appreciated. The funding for Auburn Primary School and protective services officers, which will continue to roll out in this budget, will be likewise appreciated. Also appreciated will be the zone 2 fare arrangements, which will see a lightening of the parking burden that occurs around Camberwell stations in particular, owing to people seeking to avoid the zone 2 hiccup.

New community facilities are being supported, such as the Boroondara Men's Shed and the Hawthorn community hub, and the general disposition of this budget is a very good one. I say again, this is a good budget of which all Victorians can be proud.

There is, I believe, one very simple endorsement of this budget which is probably unprecedented. That is the comment that has come from the other side. Since it has been released not a single question has been asked in this house about the budget. Could there be a better endorsement? The very fact that the budget bills this afternoon were collapsed by the opposition was again an endorsement of this budget. The other side has nothing to say. This is a great budget.

**Ms KAIROUZ** (Kororoit) — I rise to speak on the motion to take note of the budget papers 2014–15. I am pleased that Labor facilitated the passage of the budget. We did that in order to support and pay our hardworking public servants, our teachers, our nurses, our firefighters and our ambulance officers. However, when a budget is handed down by a government, that government should be able to tell Victorians that everything is okay and that it is doing everything it can to support them. Governments should be able to demonstrate that providing better health, better education, public services and more jobs is their no. 1 priority. Instead we have a budget which clearly tells Victorians just what this Liberal-Nationals government is all about and where its priorities lie. It is very clear that the priorities of this government do not lie in new schools and new hospitals or in securing jobs or building strong communities. Its priorities do not lie in investing in areas that provide for the future of our state. Its priorities lie elsewhere, like in securing jobs for ministers and for their mates.

This government is desperately trying to give the impression that it is doing something and getting on with the job, but sadly it is not. This budget lets down so many Victorians — ordinary hard working Victorians and vulnerable Victorians. It lets down families, children and people with a disability. It lets down patients and hardworking staff at our prized hospitals. It lets down our students, our teachers and our TAFE's. It lets down our ambulance officers, our firefighters, our teachers and our nurses. It lets down many communities in relation to their right to feel safe, secure and ready to deal with any challenges that come their way. This budget professes to be a budget for all people, but when you have a closer look you see that those who need the support of their government the most are abandoned and hung out to dry. There is absolutely nothing in this budget for those who need the support of their government. The only thing we see in this budget is promises, promises and more promises, all of which are empty and cannot be delivered. I will give some examples, particularly in relation to education, and I will commence with Gonski.

The Gonski educational reforms were meant to deliver additional needs-based funding to minimise educational disadvantage and facilitate high-quality education for every student in every school. Not one single dollar of Gonski money could be located in this budget. Then there is the education maintenance allowance. One of the first things this government did when it won office was to cut funding for the allowance, an allowance that is meant to provide financial assistance to families on low incomes to help them with the cost of essential educational items such as textbooks, stationery, uniforms and excursions. Not one additional dollar was provided to make up for the education maintenance allowance cuts that this government has made since it took office. This government also cut programs like the Reading Recovery program, the Victorian certificate of applied learning and the School Start bonus, and there is no evidence in this budget of a reversal of these cruel cuts. Labor's plan to renovate, rebuild or modernise every Victorian government school has also been slashed from this budget.

Then there is the crisis in our health system, which is certainly nothing to be proud of. The Napthine government to date has cut \$831 million from Victorian hospitals over its four budgets. Hospitals in Melbourne's west no longer see major capital investment. The elective surgery waiting list has grown by 10 000 — it is the worst it has ever been — and hospital performance has gone backwards. Emergency departments are overcrowded, and the promise this government made to deliver 800 new hospital beds in its first term has been well and truly broken, with only

43 beds being added to the system. This government has spent more money on prison beds than on hospital beds.

Then there is the crisis that plagues the ambulance system. The war between the Liberal-Nationals coalition and our hardworking and prized paramedics is still ongoing, with the government refusing to do anything about ambulance response times and the time taken for ambulance patients to be transferred to a hospital. Ambulance response times are at their worst levels ever since this government took office, and the cuts to the health budget have not helped. As I mentioned earlier, \$831 million has already been slashed from Victorian hospitals. To make matters worse, the Abbott government will slash more funding from our hospital programs, leaving our health system bare and vulnerable.

Since this government took office, thousands of jobs have been lost. We have seen the closure of Ford, Holden, Toyota, Shell and Qantas, just to mention a few. Victoria has been losing jobs every single day. Figures relating to job losses in the western suburbs are quite alarming. More than 52 000 jobs have been lost under this government. Youth unemployment is at 20 per cent, the highest on the Australian mainland, with youth unemployment in Melbourne's west at 15.5 per cent. This is no surprise, because it is so hard for the young people to get a job and get the skills they need to build a better future. How can they do that when this budget does absolutely nothing for them and for TAFE other than slashing more funding, bringing the total cuts to TAFE to \$1.2 billion?

This government has nothing but empty promises and will do nothing to fix the crisis that it has created. Labor acknowledges the importance of investing in our youth. It knows that investing in their future is an investment in the state's future. The youth in the Kororoit electorate cannot get the skills they need for the jobs they want because this government has made it so difficult for them to access TAFE courses.

This heartless government has torn the TAFE system apart, resulting in more than \$1.2 billion in cuts from TAFE. These cuts have also resulted in increased fees, campus closures, regional TAFEs being forced to merge, apprenticeship enrolments dropping 4 per cent and traineeship enrolments dropping 35 per cent.

Also omitted from this budget is investment in the basic infrastructure needs of schools, such as Stevensville Primary School in my electorate, which does not have a hall for school assemblies. The staff and kids assemble

in the schoolyard in harsh weather conditions, yet Stevensville Primary gets nothing in this budget.

However, I am pleased to note that the government has finally announced funding for removal of the level crossing at Main Road, St Albans. This project has been my no. 1 priority since I was elected in 2008, and in 2010 Labor announced funding for this grade separation. At the beginning of the year the Leader of the Opposition announced that if Labor is elected then the St Albans level crossing will be one of the first to be removed as part of the program to remove the worst level crossings in Victoria. There has been a lot of community campaigning about the St Albans level crossing. Local traders, residents and I have collected thousands of signatures in a petition, and we have lobbied the minister.

I take this opportunity to mention one particular resident, Dianne Dejanovic, the mother of 31-year-old Christian Dejanovic, a victim of the deadly crossing. Dianne spent many hours helping me organise a rally that was held on the first anniversary of her son's death. Dianne is always prepared to speak to the media, write to the minister and engage the community on this very important issue. Dianne has been a tireless advocate for the St Albans crossing removal and has also organised an online petition which almost 5000 people have signed. When that petition is combined with the petitions that I have tabled, more than 7000 people have called for action. I am pleased that this grade separation has been announced.

I am also pleased to note that funding for the Caroline Springs railway station has been reinstated in the budget. Although it was promised and funded under Labor in 2010 and construction began in 2010 under the Labor government, one of the first decrees issued by this Liberal-Nationals government and the Minister for Public Transport himself was to halt the project in its tracks and wipe all trace of its existence from the Department of Transport's website. Freedom of information documents show that the minister personally intervened to stop this project in its tracks and funnelled the money into the leafy eastern suburbs and Liberal-held seats.

FOI documents also show that advice given to the minister from the department recommends that the minister reactivate construction of Caroline Springs railway station. While the local residents and I are very pleased that the works will be reinstated, the question we ask is when that will happen. The people of the west have very long memories. They will not forget what this government did to them and to their station. This station should be fully functional and operational by

now, but instead for the last three years it has been a road to nowhere.

This budget is also bad news for kindergarten programs, for environment programs, for disability programs and for domestic violence programs. Some of these programs have received no money at all or their funding has been slashed. I have highlighted a few of the most damning aspects of this budget. Clearly any attempt to fix the problems has been omitted from this budget. Over the last three years this government has been creating problems, with one crisis after another. It is a government in chaos. The Treasurer grandstands and says he has delivered one of the best budgets. I say to him there is nothing to be proud of.

**Mr HODGETT** (Minister for Ports) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the motion to take note of the budget papers. Firstly I take the time to congratulate the Treasurer on handing down a game-changing and visionary budget that invests a record amount in infrastructure that will transform our great city and our great state. I am immensely proud to be a member of this government and to be associated with a budget that invests in the infrastructure this city needs and will ensure that Victoria's finances remain strong. As I have said, we have invested significantly in infrastructure, particularly with two monumental, state-shaping, game-changing and visionary milestone projects.

This government will fund and build the Melbourne rail link, the next chapter in the metropolitan rail network. The Melbourne rail link will increase the capacity of the network by 30 per cent and allow for 30 additional peak-hour services. The project includes the airport rail link, a project that has been talked about for decades. We have all spoken about having an airport rail link, and ours is a government that will get on and deliver the project. Again, it is this government — a coalition government — that is going to build it.

We have also committed to the western section, or stage 2, of the east–west link. The western section will join the eastern sections and provide the vital link from CityLink to Parkville and to the Western Ring Road. This government has committed funding to build the entire east–west link. I headed down to Geelong last week, and one only has to go over the bridge to see the amount of peak-hour traffic. I cannot believe this project does not have the support of opposition members, who have turned their backs on the west.

There is a record amount of infrastructure spending in this budget — \$27 billion — and it is the coalition that has enabled that spending to occur. The strong and

responsible economic management of the coalition has delivered a surplus in very challenging times. We heard the member for Hawthorn talk about the challenges we faced when we were elected to government, including what we have had to do and some of the tough decisions we have had to make. This budget will provide a surplus of \$1.3 billion, which will increase over the forward estimates period. It is this government's responsible economic management that has meant the coalition can invest in critical infrastructure and better services, and that is what the government is doing. We are getting on with the job.

In my contribution I intend to make some general comments on the budget, talk about my portfolio responsibilities of ports, major projects and manufacturing — all economic portfolios — and then talk about the great things the budget has provided for my electorate of Kilsyth.

I will go over those great figures again. The 2014–15 Victorian state budget will deliver an operating surplus of \$1.3 billion in 2014–15, which will grow to \$3.3 billion by 2017–18. Net debt will fall from 6.3 per cent of gross state product in 2014–15 to just 4.5 per cent in 2017–18. Economic growth is forecast to be 2.5 per cent in 2014–15 and 2.75 per cent thereafter. Unemployment is expected to remain stable at 6.25 per cent in 2014–15 before falling to 5.5 per cent by 2017–18. These are great figures. The budget is delivering a plan — a forecast — which will deliver for our great state of Victoria.

I now turn my attention to what the budget has provided for my portfolio areas. In terms of ports, as members would be aware, the coalition government will enter into a medium-term lease for the port of Melbourne. This will enable Victoria to take advantage of the commonwealth government's asset recycling initiative. The initiative allows for states to be supported to divest assets as long as the proceeds are used to fund new infrastructure, and that is exactly what we are doing. Our infrastructure-rich budget will be funded in part from the proceeds of the lease of the port. The lease is part of our visionary integrated ports strategy, which will support the expansion of the port of Hastings as our new international container port.

I am immensely proud of the 60 per cent increase in funding that this budget provides for the boating safety and facilities program (BSFP) to support the improvement of boating infrastructure. This will allow for many projects to be undertaken to support the recreational boating and fishing sector, which was neglected for 11 years under Labor. The Minister for Local Government was in here before; he is a great

supporter of recreational boating and fishing. The coalition government recognises the economic and social importance of the recreational boating industry to Victoria, and that is why it is investing in it and increasing its funding. The program is critical for local councils, agencies and community groups to undertake vital infrastructure improvements to jetties and boat ramps, as well as delivering navigational aids, signage and assistance for search and rescue groups.

If I had time I would speak about local ports infrastructure because I know there are people in the parts of Melbourne around St Kilda who are happy with the investments we are making there, but as time is against me tonight I will stick to the topic of the BSFP. The coalition government is firmly committed to improving boating facilities and services across Victoria. Even though Labor introduced the scheme, it took a coalition government to increase its funding, which has been stable for a number of years. I was absolutely delighted to get that increase in funding to put into this sector, which is important to the state's economy. Similarly, I am proud of the investment we are putting in to support the marine pollution response. It is vital that Victoria be prepared for, and adequately resourced to respond to, an emergency. Investing \$3.4 million in marine pollution equipment will boost the state's preparedness to respond to an emergency incident. The budget also includes additional funding of \$10.3 million for maintenance of Victoria's local ports infrastructure.

This is an exceptional budget for freight. The budget provides \$58 million, which includes a commonwealth government co-contribution of \$38 million, to establish port rail shuttle services to improve the efficiency of containerised freight transport throughout Melbourne. We are also providing \$20 million to continue the mode shift incentive scheme, which promotes the movement of containers from regional Victoria by rail to the port of Melbourne. There is also funding of \$220 million for the Murray Basin rail project to undertake major country rail freight upgrades and build the transformational Mildura to Geelong rail standardisation link.

Moving on to major projects, in January the Premier, the then Minister for Sport and Recreation and I announced that the coalition government would fund stage 2 of the Melbourne Park redevelopment. This \$338 million boost will refurbish Rod Laver Arena, build a new bridge over Batman Avenue and build a new administration and media building. The funding will ensure that Melbourne hosts the Australian Open Tennis Championships until 2036 and that our grand

slam remains the players' favourite, with the best facilities in the world.

The budget provides a fantastic boost to the Ballarat community, with \$30.2 million in funding provided to kick-start the Ballarat West employment zone, which represents a major boost for investment and jobs in Ballarat and western Victoria. The project is expected to generate some 9000 jobs for the region over the next 20 or so years.

The budget also provides \$8 million over two years to progress the development of the Richmond to Footscray rail corridor. In question time today we heard the Deputy Premier talk about this wonderful rail corridor and its associated projects. This funding will continue the development of the projects the Deputy Premier mentioned, such as E-gate, Federation Square East, Flinders Street station and Richmond station. This suite of projects represents the opportunity for billions of dollars of development and thousands of jobs. Each project offers the chance to unlock underutilised land, transform the city and activate the surrounding precincts. They also each have the potential to deliver important public outcomes such as new jobs, increased conductivity, increased housing and new open space.

I move to my third portfolio, manufacturing. The most significant budget announcement for industry, small business and manufacturers is the cut in payroll tax. The government is providing much-needed relief to businesses. When I am out and about visiting many of our innovative manufacturers, one of the most common themes people running companies and small businesses raise with me is the difference payroll tax relief would make, and we are delivering it. This tax cut will help Victorian businesses reduce their costs and create jobs. The initiative will mean that businesses with an annual payroll between \$4.7 million and \$26.7 million will pay the lowest payroll tax in Australia. The payroll tax rate in Victoria will be reduced by 0.05 percentage points to 4.85 per cent from 1 July 2014 — coming up very quickly — saving Victorian employers more than \$234 million over four years. This will benefit the 39 000 businesses that pay payroll tax and benefit the 1.6 million people they employ. Importantly, approximately 17 per cent of this cut will support job creation in the construction and manufacturing sectors. I am enormously proud to be a member of this government, which is providing tax relief to Victorian businesses and supporting the manufacturing industry.

Significantly, the coalition government is investing more into strengthening the support it is providing to build Victoria's defence capability. We have committed \$8.7 million to drive growth and innovation across

Victoria's \$1.5 billion defence and aerospace industry. The funding will support Victorian-based defence and aerospace manufacturers to secure Australian and international defence contracts, and the member for Eltham is very excited about this. It will capitalise on existing and emerging opportunities in domestic and global supply chains. Victoria is renowned for being Australia's leading defence and aerospace manufacturing hub, with more than 300 defence businesses employing around 6000 people across Melbourne and regional Victoria. This funding will enable the government to assist in the continued lobbying for new contracts to ensure that our leading position is maintained and strengthened.

The budget also confirms the Victorian government's contribution to the Automotive Industry Structural Adjustment Growth Fund to support the automotive sector and supply chain. We committed \$12 million to this fund shortly after the announcements by Holden and Toyota that they would cease operations in Australia. A total of \$155 million for the fund was recently announced by the federal government, and I welcome the \$100 million commitment made by the commonwealth. The coalition will also support automotive workers with \$30 million allocated in the 2014–15 state budget to reskilling automotive supply chain workers. This was announced by the Treasurer and the Minister for Higher Education and Skills recently and it was very well received. The funding will set up drop-in centres for careers advice in Geelong and other affected areas, and provide funding for retraining.

I turn now to the tremendous benefits this budget provides for my electorate. The 2014–15 state budget is a huge win for residents in Croydon, Kilsyth and the outer eastern suburbs. I was thrilled at the announcement that Eastwood Primary School will now get its full rebuild, thanks to the remaining \$4.3 million required being included in this budget. This is fantastic news for members of the school community, who have worked so hard and been so united in their support for a full rebuild, and can now look forward to state-of-the-art educational facilities.

I was also pleased with the \$2.34 million for Bayswater North Primary School for its modernisation and building upgrades. This is great news for the Bayswater North staff and students, and is another example of the coalition government's commitment to education. The Premier, the Minister for Education and I also announced prior to the budget the \$2.2 million in funding for an upgrade to Pembroke Primary School. This news has been well received within the school community and is a great validation of the hard work and dedication of the staff and school community at

Pembroke. The school community was thrilled that we are investing in buildings that were neglected for so long and desperately need upgrading.

Public transport commuters in the outer eastern suburbs are also huge winners from this budget. The announcement of the Melbourne rail link will directly improve services along the Belgrave-Lilydale line.

**Mr Nardella** interjected.

**Mr HODGETT** — The construction of the link will increase capacity across the network with an extra 30 services across peak hour, the member for Melton will be pleased to hear. Additionally, commuters' hip pockets will also benefit from the announcement that residents travelling from our area to the city will now have to pay only a zone 1 fare. This will provide huge savings for transport users. Commuters travelling from the current zone 2 suburbs to the city will save around \$1300 per year or \$5 per day. The announcement that the full east–west link will also be built is great news for motorists. The connection of the Eastern Freeway through the city will provide a direct link from the outer east through the city and beyond.

Cyclists, too, are winners in this budget. Cyclists in the local area will also be excited by the announcement that the coalition government is investing \$7.8 million in constructing the missing link of the Carrum–Warburton bike trail.

In the time remaining I will quickly run through my final points. The coalition has also invested a record \$1.2 billion in skills, education and training, helping to train workers and to provide students with vocational training that leads to real jobs. As I mentioned earlier, the payroll tax cut is fantastic news for business and will provide relief for local businesses in my electorate. This will save businesses in the manufacturing sector an average of \$1300 per year, and will benefit many small to medium size businesses across the area. I represent a large business and manufacturing sector in Croydon and Kilsyth, and this tax cut will deliver real benefits to them. The strong economic position enables a huge investment in the future of Victoria — in transport services, school upgrades and — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! Thank you, Minister. Your time has expired.

**Mr BLACKWOOD** (Narracan) — It is with pleasure that I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers 2014–15, and it is a pleasure to follow the visionary contribution of the Minister for Ports. This budget is based on a visionary and transformational infrastructure

program that is game-changing, as the minister said. A big part of that falls within his area of responsibility.

The budget is based on sound economic management. It sets up a record \$27 billion infrastructure program that is job creating and state shaping, and will transport Victoria into the future.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BLACKWOOD** — Some people just cannot bear to hear good news, that is all it is. Some of the major projects we are looking at include the Melbourne rail link, the western and eastern sections of the east–west link, and the Cranbourne–Pakenham rail corridor project, which includes the removal of an additional four level crossings. They also include the port of Hastings. Talking about being visionary — and I have heard a number of members on the opposite side tonight accuse us of not being visionary — if we look back to 1962 we will see that Sir Henry Bolte had the vision to set aside 3000 hectares of land for the expansion of the port of Hastings. That expansion is now happening thanks to the great vision of Sir Henry Bolte, and the vision of our current Minister for Ports will carry that project home.

In terms of what is underpinning our ability to deliver the sort of budget we have, it really goes back to the strategy that was put in place by the former Premier, the member for Hawthorn, and the former Treasurer in the first couple of years we were in government. They set up what has now been delivered in terms of our commitment to the vision for the groundbreaking infrastructure that is going to set up Melbourne and regional Victoria for many years to come. That strategy was based initially on delivering an operating surplus of \$100 million a year, but as we have heard from other speakers on this side of the house, that operating surplus will be \$1.3 billion this year, growing to \$3 billion in future budgets during the forward estimates. It is based on a strategy of stabilising expenditure growth and reducing debt.

**Sitting suspended 6.30 p.m. until 8.01 p.m.**

**Mr BLACKWOOD** — As I was saying before the break, the government has a very clear strategy in terms of how to manage the budget and the economy in a way that will provide opportunities for everybody into the future, in particular making Melbourne a more livable city and making regional — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! If the member for Narracan’s colleagues would care to

extend him the courtesy of being quiet and listening, that would be wonderful. Otherwise they can leave the room, the Minister for Ports included.

**Mr BLACKWOOD** — Thank you, Acting Speaker. I appreciate your support. As I was saying, the coalition government has a very clear strategy to ensure that the budget will set things up for the future. It will provide benefits for Victoria over the term of the forward estimates but also well into the future by supporting congestion-busting, job-creating infrastructure. This is a clear strategy. We have a financial strategy, which is based on delivering surpluses of at least \$100 million. This year the Treasurer has been able to deliver an operating surplus of over 10 times that — \$1.3 billion. In the forward estimates years that will build to over \$3 billion in surpluses. Underpinning that is our ability to contain expenditure growth and to stabilise and reduce debt.

Our economic strategy is to restore Victoria’s public finances while boosting front-line services. That is a key to what was set up during the first two years of our government under the former Premier and former Treasurer. The sustainable government initiatives that were put in place in those early years were focused on boosting front-line services but also rationalising the public sector in a way that allows us to keep our costs and expenditure growth to a minimum, or to a figure that is appropriate. They also allow us to fund productivity-enhancing infrastructure to drive economic growth. That is what I am talking about with regard to this congestion-busting, job-creating budget. The economic strategy is based around building a buffer for future economic and fiscal shocks.

I will make a comparison between the way the coalition government is managing the budget and economy and the way the previous Labor government did so. The coalition’s budget is about bringing expenditure growth under control. As an example, during the 11 years Labor was in government the average expenditure growth was around 8 per cent per annum. Since early 2011 the coalition average increase in expenditure has been contained to 3.1 per cent per annum. In the forward estimates that will drop to a 2.6 per cent per annum increase in expenditure growth. This government controls and manages the budget and the economy to contain expenditure and keep it in line with increases in revenue.

The surpluses are funding a record infrastructure program. In the 11 years of Labor, investment in infrastructure was on average \$3.48 billion per annum, which compares to the coalition average in our first three years of \$5.4 billion. In the forward estimates that

will build to \$6.8 billion expenditure on infrastructure per annum. Clearly the initiatives that we are putting in place are containing expenditure and making sure it does not outstrip revenue, and we are putting those surpluses into congestion-busting, job-creating projects.

The Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project is one of those congestion-busting, job-creating projects.

**Mr Pakula** — Do you get a buck for every time you say it?

**Mr BLACKWOOD** — I just want to remind you of the facts. Obviously it is cutting through, because you are starting to get sick of it. One in 10 Melburnians will benefit from improved services on Melbourne's busiest suburban train lines. The Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor project will include 25 next-generation, high-capacity trains, which will accommodate an additional 4500 passengers during the peak periods. It also includes the removal of four level crossings and plans for the removal of a further five.

Critically in terms of the impact this budget will have on my electorate, as well as the extra services that will be provided, there will be more consistent and reliable travel times for patrons going from my electorate into Melbourne for the purposes of work, shopping or recreation.

The establishment of a Pakenham East rail maintenance facility will involve 300 jobs in its construction and will provide ongoing job opportunities for 100 people. That is great because it means job opportunities in and on the edge of my electorate. Both stages of the east–west link, east and west, are funded by this government in this budget. Not only are the benefits of the east–west link enormous in terms of improved livability for people residing in Melbourne but they are huge for the people of Gippsland, and in particular in my area of Gippsland, in terms of getting product to the new Epping market to the north of Melbourne and getting freight to the port of Melbourne. It is a great project.

Just in terms of people being able to travel across Melbourne via a second river crossing, this will open up amazing opportunities for the movement of road transport and road traffic around Melbourne. In terms of the cost, the western section is expected to cost between \$8 billion and \$10 billion, and the entire project, both east and west, adds up to \$18 billion. This is a significant investment in a major project, but its benefits will be seen for many years to come. It is very hard to explain to people at this particular time just how good the benefits will be. Opening up Melbourne with a second river crossing will benefit many people.

The thing that I find hard to accept is the fact that the Labor opposition has decided to oppose this project, both east and west. That will mean that all those good people who choose to vote Labor and have done so in the past will have to make a decision before the election this year: to vote for Daniel Andrews and his crew, who will not build a second river crossing, or to vote for the Premier and his crew, who will deliver a second river crossing for Melbourne. It is a pretty stark choice, but I know a lot of people in the western suburbs are now convinced that the only way they can be sure of getting a second river crossing is if they vote for the coalition government, and that is what will happen.

As I said before, connecting the port to the east–west link, getting product to market, making it easier for people to come across to this side of Melbourne, providing the second river crossing and all those things are critically important for the future growth of both regional Victoria and the city of Melbourne.

That brings me to the benefits of the budget to regional and rural Victoria. The coalition government's budget delivers record funding to build a better Victoria by investing in future infrastructure and services to unlock the potential and drive growth across regional and rural communities. As I said, the east–west link is certainly a big part of that. The budget highlights across regional and rural Victoria include the \$220 million to build the Mildura–Geelong rail standardisation link as part of the Murray Basin rail project. This will revolutionise the movement of freight across the state — once again, something I believe Labor opposes.

The budget also provides an extra \$130 million for roads, maintenance and restoration, increasing our roads maintenance investment to more than \$500 million in 2014–15, compared to \$384 million under Labor. That is a significant increase in road maintenance. Our country hospitals will share an extra \$287 million in funding over the next year, enabling them to treat more patients in hospitals and emergency departments. As part of that \$287 million there is \$73 million for the expansion of the Latrobe Regional Hospital.

Regional and rural schools will share in a massive \$500 million package to build and upgrade local schools, delivering modern learning environments for country students. Also on education, this funding will build on what has been provided in my electorate for a number of kindergartens and schools over the last two to three years. The coalition government has provided nearly \$1 million for early learning centres across Narracan: \$300 000 for Oak Street Kindergarten in Drouin, \$300 000 for the Mouritz Street Kindergarten

in Warragul and \$300 000 for the establishment of the Yarragon early learning centre. That is just an example of the investment we are making in education in my electorate. I mentioned the Latrobe Regional Hospital in terms of health funding, which is a great outcome for people living in the city of Latrobe, part of which is in my electorate.

One of the biggest projects outlined in the budget is the Sand Road interchange, which is at the intersection of Sand Road and the M1 freeway at Longwarry. This project has been on the drawing board for a number years — I think about 11 years in total. It was bumped off as no. 1 in AusLink funding priority some time ago, but now, thanks to the commitment of the coalition government, working in tandem with the federal government, it is a joint \$30 million commonwealth-state investment and it will be delivered in the next two to three years. It is an extremely important project in terms of improving safety for local residents. With the number of vehicles that use that section of the M1 where it intersects with Sand Road and the number of heavy vehicles that are coming out of Longwarry Food Park and out of farming enterprises, with milk being transferred across the road, this intersection is extremely dangerous. It has been identified as an accident black spot for many years. Giving the people of Longwarry the ability to travel across the freeway safely and making it much safer for those travelling down the freeway towards Melbourne and back towards Gippsland is a great outcome. It is a credit to the Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Roads in particular.

This project builds on the \$26 million railway station precinct project in Warragul, which is also delivering 200 car spaces and a third rail crossing as an underpass at Warragul station. That project started early this year; it is well under way, and it will be delivered very soon.

**Mr NARDELLA** (Melton) — I never thought in all my years in politics and in this Parliament that a government would be in the pocket of the Mafia. Never did I think that a government of the state of Victoria would be working with and taking money from the Mafia here in Victoria, and doing it gladly, going to various gala events with the Mafia and taking its money, going out there and making sure that the money that it gets is tainted money — and it is money that it takes on a daily and weekly basis.

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I am not sure that I understand what relevance this particular contribution has to the motion before the house, and I ask you to bring the member back to the motion before the house.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I have absolute faith that the member for Melton will come back to the motion and that this is just an introduction.

**Mr NARDELLA** — Certainly when you are talking about the budget, when you are talking about law and order and about corruption within Victoria, that is absolutely apposite to the budget debate. We need extra funding within this budget to task more police to undertake an investigation into these nefarious links. The police budget should be further increased to investigate the Fruits of Life gala ball held at Docklands on 17 April this year. These investigations have been occurring within the newspapers. An article in the *Age* of Saturday, 24 May, this year, at page 26 carried the headline ‘Liberals’ link to market Mafia man’. They are not my words; they are the words of the *Age*. The front page of the *Age* talks about godfather claims — —

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order on relevance, Acting Speaker, once again I am not sure how this particular part of the member’s contribution is relevant at all to the motion before the house, and I ask you to bring him back to the motion before the house.

**Mr NARDELLA** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the budget allows for a very broad debate. I have been listening to budget speeches for quite a long time, and I know they are very broad speeches. I have in fact referred back to the budget when I have called for an increase in the police budget to investigate these matters, and I am absolutely within my rights to raise these matters within this broad debate.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I obviously wish to support the member for Burwood. Whilst the budget debate has always been very broad ranging, what we have seen from the member for Melton — who is a very experienced and skilful politician — is simply a desire to relay some information to the house in relation to an article that he has read in the Fairfax press. I am not sure that that constitutes a response on the budget, broad as the budget papers may be. I would urge you to consider in this context whether the member for Melton is being true to the motion before the house.

**Mr Pakula** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the manager of government business is also a very skilled and experienced politician, and she has tried to use those skills to pull the wool over your eyes. The member for Melton during his contribution has referred to reports in the media, but that has been done by members of the government consistently in the budget debate, and indeed during question time and

every day that I have been in this chamber. The member for Melton did, however, having done so, then refer to the need for increased funding in the police budget for particular investigations, and as such he very clearly brought his contribution back to the budget. It was in no way outside the breadth of contributions made by other members during this debate.

**Mr Hodgett** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, whilst I am pleased that the member for Melton is reading the Fairfax media, I would ask you to uphold the member for Burwood's point of order and bring him back to the motion.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I have heard enough discussion on the point of order. I do not uphold the point of order, but I do ask the member for Melton to use his years of accumulated experience and relate the rest of his contribution to the budget.

**Mr NARDELLA** — You have this headline: 'Liberals take money of Mafia man', in the *Age* of 23 May this year.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I ask the member for Melton — —

**Mr NARDELLA** — Every single person in this chamber is allowed to quote from newspapers. They do it on a daily basis, and that is what I am doing. Let us keep on going about the Mafia and the Liberal Party connection — —

**Mr Katos** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Melton's contribution is not relevant to the motion that is before the house, which is to take note of the 2014–15 budget papers. I ask you to bring him back to the motion.

**Mr NARDELLA** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I am on the budget. I am talking about resources for police and the need for increased resources for police to investigate these corrupt practices. It is absolutely about the budget.

**Mr Watt** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I understand that the member for Melton has a wealth of experience with this, but if he were to refer his comments back to the budget and expenditure, then I would not necessarily have the problem that I do with the fact that he is not being relevant to the motion before the house. This is about the budget papers 2014–15.

**An honourable member** — What is the point of order?

**Mr Watt** — I am talking on the point of order that was raised by the member for South Barwon.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! The member for Burwood will raise his point of order without the assistance of the members of the opposition.

**Mr Watt** — I would appreciate it if the member for Melton did get back to the motion before the house, and I would call on you to uphold the point of order put forward by the member for South Barwon.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I will give the member for Melton a little bit more licence, but I really would like to hear about the budget.

**Mr NARDELLA** — On the budget, I believe that the police budget should be increased so a task force could be set up to investigate the alleged crime figures who organised the original fundraiser one year beforehand. This Mafia boss with direct links to members of Parliament had members at this gala night, where tickets cost \$1000 each.

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member has already been asked to go back to referring to the motion that is before the house. In the next minute we will probably be hearing about the Labor Party's connection to the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and the corruption links there. I ask you to draw him back to the bill.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! At this stage I do uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Melton to now discuss the motion before the house, which is to take note of the budget papers.

**Mr NARDELLA** — It was reported that this gala ball that I believe — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr NARDELLA** — No, I believe quite seriously that the police should investigate this gala ball. It is the right of this government — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I ask the member for Melton to return to the motion, to not defy the guidance that I have provided from the chair, to continue contributing to the debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers and to not immediately make a beeline for the previous argument that he has been running.

**Mr NARDELLA** — The police budget should be increased.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr NARDELLA** — That is in the budget that we are discussing. What should the police be doing? They should be investigating corrupt practices; they should be going through these gala balls, these underhand donations in the brown paper bag — —

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member continues to defy your rulings. I ask that you sit him down and that he no longer be allowed to continue on with this line.

**Mr NARDELLA** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, just as it is the right of honourable members on the other side of the house to have raised the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the desalination plant and a number of issues on the budget papers, it is my right to raise serious matters, such as the increasing need for resources for the police to address these matters. It is absolutely within the realm of the budget papers, Acting Speaker, and you should rule this point of order out of order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I again ask the member for Melton to return to the debate on the budget.

**Mr NARDELLA** — The My Room cancer charity for the Royal Children's Hospital was part of this arrangement, and what is known is that the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation has not received the funds from the My Room Fruits of Life gala ball. It did not give authority to fundraise for the Royal Children's Hospital. It did not authorise the use of the logo, and about \$226 000 was raised.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! The member for Melton is defying my guidance and ruling. I would ask — —

**Mr NARDELLA** — I am not. I am referring to the appropriation bill, the police resources we see in it and the police budget. That is what I am referring to. What am I supposed to be referring to?

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I believe the member for Melton is going beyond my guidance and the bounds of this debate. If he wishes to take it up later with me or the Speaker, I am very pleased for him to do that, but at this stage I request that he operate with the guidance I have provided and some understanding.

**Mr NARDELLA** — I will talk about the health budget, the Royal Children's Hospital and the foundation. The donations that are given to the Royal Children's Hospital are auxiliary to the work and the good deeds it does. The problem is that this money — the \$226 000 raised through this shonky deal — has not yet been given to the Royal Children's Hospital, and that should be investigated.

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Melton is again defying your rulings. I think this is the seventh time you have sought to bring him back to the motion. He has defied that for the seventh time. He is disrespectful to the Chair. I ask you to sit him down and that he not be allowed to continue with this abominable speech.

**Mr Pakula** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Caulfield has not raised a point of order. He did not make any reference to relevance or anything of that nature; he simply asked you to shut the member for Melton up, and that is outside his bounds and, I respectfully say, outside yours, Acting Speaker. Unless the point of order can be founded in the standing orders, it has no standing and the member for Melton is entitled to continue.

**Mr Newton-Brown** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the member is straying from the topic. The matter of relevance is the point of order I put before the Chair. Given that this is the seventh time the member has defied your ruling, I respectfully suggest to you that it may be appropriate to name the member at this stage.

**Mr NARDELLA** — Coming from you, you fool!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! That is enough debate on the point of order on relevance. I ask the member for Melton — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! I have heard enough on the point of order.

**Mr NARDELLA** — I withdraw the term 'fool'.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — I thank the member.

**Mr NARDELLA** — It is very important to make sure that crime in our society — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr NARDELLA** — Crime in our society is part of the budget, and this Mafia person, Blondie, was in the

*Age*. I can refer to the *Age* — no, I have to be shut down! Those links to the Liberal Party are too close. Blondie should be investigated by the police. The Liberal Party should be investigated by the police. The ministers should be investigated by the police — —

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

**Mr TILLEY (Benambra)** — I rise this evening to speak in support of the coalition's 2014 budget, which continues to deliver on the government's commitment to building a better Victoria, strengthening our economy and protecting our community. I do not intend to go through the budget line by line and highlight the many outstanding initiatives it contains. I am quite confident that my colleagues have more than adequately articulated the benefits this budget brings to the people of Victoria and also reminded this house of the sound fiscal management that has enabled this budget to deliver a surplus — a real surplus, not a Gillard-Swan surplus and not a typical Victorian state Labor surplus, which would see us in structural deficit and which is good on paper but not really there. They say that an ALP surplus is a bit like a bunyip — rumoured to exist, but no-one has seen one for some time. Ladies and gentlemen, stick around and keep listening anyway.

This is a real budget and a real surplus. This is the product of a party that knows how to balance the books, knows how to read a balance sheet and knows what an economic forecast is. It is a party that does not have \$1 billion gaps in its accounting figures. These budget figures are absolutely real. These figures add up. They are not like those dodgy statistics released by partisan players just before an election to con the electorate that all is well as it drowns in a sea of street violence. These figures are not massaged, cherry picked or selectively quoted. These budget figures stand up to scrutiny, and there is no chance of their author cutting and running down to Van Diemen's Land.

Rather than dwelling on the economic and other failures and the apparent numerical illiteracy of those who sit on the other side of this place, I intend to speak on the things that are closest and most important to me: the needs of my electorate and the protection of the community. This budget continues to provide funding to support the recruitment of an extra 1700 police, along with 940 protective services officers (PSOs). Those police and PSOs, if I have anything to say about it, will be deployed to the front line at local police stations that we fund, build and resource, despite whatever it may say on some loo paper. My apologies — I mean a blue paper.

I must say that the conversation needs to be had, and when our police retreat from the streets we surrender the ground to the lawless, the criminal and the thug. When that happens the most vulnerable in our society, including the elderly, begin to live in fear. They withdraw from society and hole up in their homes. Communities become fractured, and we all suffer as a result. Then we all wring our hands and bemoan the loss of our communities and neighbourhoods. It is typical of the socialists that after 11 years of Labor they wipe their hands and create some social problem about our crime figures, but that is something that needs a hell of a lot more time to be argued and debated.

This budget provides \$13 million to equip police with tasers, giving police another less than lethal option. I was actively serving as a member of the police force nearly eight years ago, and I am still a member of Victoria Police, an organisation which I am extremely proud of but currently do not hold office in.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**An honourable member** — You could go back.

**Mr TILLEY** — I would be more than happy to go back one day and serve the community; don't you worry about that.

**Mr Pakula** — Are you still in the union?

**Mr TILLEY** — I am not paid up, like you blokes.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Sykes)** — Order! Through the Chair!

**Mr TILLEY** — It was an ALP government that promised to fund tasers but never delivered them — such were the hollow promises under the Labor government. However, the rollout by the coalition has already started.

There is \$447 million allocated to our prisons, which will provide for an additional 871 prison beds, including 50 beds at Her Majesty's Prison Beechworth. In recent times not only did the local government — the mayor and councillors — make representations to me on behalf of their community, but the community was also happy to see an increase at Beechworth prison. That was a great result, and we delivered on that. More prison beds are a necessity, since under the coalition's approach to law and order those who do the crime will do the time.

Additionally, the days of a weak and out-of-touch approach to dealing with parole violators have gone. Under this government it is now much tougher to get

parole. Under this government you will have to earn it, not just fill in a form and wait near the revolving door of the prison for some bleeding-heart, out-of-touch, do-gooder apologist for your violent crimes to pick you up and chauffeur you home. Under this government, if you breach the trust granted to you by the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, you can contemplate your failings back in prison.

There has also been \$457 million provided for the Country Fire Authority (CFA), which enables funding for 78 new firefighting vehicles. Those of you who were touched by the impact of the Black Saturday fires — those of you who did not abandon your responsibilities to protect the community by going out for a haircut and a pub meal — no doubt acknowledge the fine work the CFA does in protecting the community and the importance of the continued funding of this organisation. I absolutely acknowledge the critically important work this organisation performs.

The budget also continues the commitment this government made to regional Victoria. In the Benambra electorate there is \$3.8 million to support the expansion of Wodonga West Primary School, which is a great school. It has done the hard yards, and I must acknowledge — I do not do this very often in this place — the former president of the school council, Alan Warhurst, who was patient and worked with us right along the journey. The \$3.8 million to expand the school to provide its great school community an absolutely promising future comes on top of a \$425 000 investment in early learning and kindergartens in the electorate.

In the budget there is also \$7 million to assist in the operation of a newly constructed 10-bed prevention and recovery care facility in Wodonga. That is certainly great news because I know firsthand that mental health is a significant issue for all of us to address, not only around the electorate of Benambra but also right throughout the state of Victoria. I know that the coalition government is absolutely committed to addressing the issues confronting us in mental health, and these beds in early and post-trauma high-end, high-need care will have a significant impact for so many of those affected by mental health issues in our community. There is also the ongoing work with Albury Wodonga Health, which will see patients not having to travel all the way to Wangaratta for the high-end trauma beds at the Kerferd clinic because of beds becoming available in Albury-Wodonga in the very near future. People will no longer have to be transported great distances to obtain treatment.

Moving on from mental health, \$1 million is being committed for the restoration of Shelley-Walwa Road — a fantastic result given the enormous co-contribution from Hancock Victorian Plantations. At the top end of the electorate, although Shelley-Walwa Road is used primarily as a significant logging road, school buses also travel on that road and its restoration is something we have been trying to achieve for many years. Given the plantations at that end of the electorate, there will probably be at least another 30 years of logging traffic travelling down that road — unfortunately leaving Victoria and going to the Tumberumba mill, although there will be some coming into this state — so we need to get that done. Hancock has been a great corporate citizen in the area, and I congratulate it for supporting the coalition government in getting significant work done on the restoration and sealing of the road.

There will be \$2 million in additional funding for wild dog control, a matter that has been near and dear to my heart for quite some time because we are aware of the neglect shown by the former government in relation to wild dogs. Certainly you, Acting Speaker, know full well as a passionate advocate for wild dog control and a great help to me personally in confronting the wild dog problem in north-eastern Victoria, what a continual scourge wild dogs are on our farming community. Today the *Border Mail* reported more wild dog stories, but we are getting on top of those mongrels. Unfortunately, with the great start we have had to the season, the grass has grown so long we have had some farmers losing lambs. With the dogs it is a separate matter, and those farmers have not given up. I know this is certainly not the first time I have spoken about the need to put down vicious wild dogs which threaten the good order of Victoria. That mission has been accomplished, although sadly not before a number of good people were torn apart. We can now focus our attention on the four-legged variety of blood-crazed mongrels. Certainly with the aerial baiting in addition — —

**Mr Pakula** — What are you talking about?

**Mr TILLEY** — If you read this tomorrow, you will be able to make some sense of it, because you are all part of that lot from those dark 11 years of Labor, don't worry about that.

I absolutely commend this great, positive budget, which will see a long-term prosperous future not only for the electorate of Benambra but for all Victorians and for all of Victoria. It is a budget built upon a commitment to the Victorian community, underpinned by fiscal maturity and responsibility, and is one that, unlike a

slogan concocted by an overpaid spin doctor on which those opposite were very good at spending the generous donations of the taxpayer, will certainly ensure that Victoria is and will remain the place to be. Once again I commend this bill to the house.

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Pascoe Vale) — I wish to contribute to the debate on the budget in the areas of health, education, and community transport, and I will also cover sport and recreation. In the 15 minutes available to me I will try to whip through all of those topics, which are so important to the constituents of the Pascoe Vale electorate and to all Victorians. The first thing is in relation to the most important thing in most people's lives — health. Health has gone backwards under the coalition government. When it went to the last election, the coalition government promised it would create 800 new beds in its first term. In fact 43 beds were delivered. That is a failure.

This budget delivers \$447 million for new prison beds, but in contrast only \$222 million for hospital beds. The people in my electorate and throughout Victoria want hospital beds over prison beds. We want our loved ones to be looked after, and we need hospital beds in order for that to happen. If there is a serious illness or event in their lives, most people call the ambulance, the ambos. Once upon a time when you called the ambos, you would feel confident that they would be there in as rapid a response time as possible because there would be hospital beds that would allow patients to be admitted to hospital. Now we have hospitals underfunded, underresourced, and without sufficient hospital beds in existence, and ambulances are ramping outside the hospitals.

I want to pay tribute to Victorian ambulance officers. They are the most highly trained yet the lowest paid in Australia. This government deserves a fail not only on hospital beds but also in relation to how it has treated ambulance workers.

The budget has done nothing to improve response times in emergency departments. The emergency departments that look after my electorate in particular are at the Northern Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital. If you look at the Northern Hospital data for the last 12 months, you will see that the number of people awaiting elective surgery has increased by 147. In relation to elective surgery category 2 patients — that is, patients treated within 90 days — the government has set a target of 80 per cent. In fact at the Northern Hospital by December 2012 only 65 per cent of category 2 patients had been treated within the 90 days, and by December 2013 that figure had dropped to 64 per cent.

Not only did the figures for that hospital worsen over 12 months, they are also 16 per cent below the designated target. For elective surgery category 3 patients the response target is 90 per cent, but by last December only 83 per cent had been treated within the 365-day period. For people living in the northern suburbs these figures are appalling. They are appalling because this budget puts more attention on prison beds than it does on hospital beds. The Royal Children's Hospital targets have diminished, and the Royal Women's Hospital has failed to meet its expectations in relation to elective surgery lists. For people living in the northern suburbs the Napthine government has failed.

I want to move briefly to education. The Minister for Education, thankfully, is sitting at the table. He has heard me speak many times on Westbreen Primary School. That school has been let down over four successive budgets. It was ready for its \$5 million rebuild. The minister has seen how bad that school is. It is sinking, and its wooden frame is disintegrating. The school community has patched that place up with tender loving care. The minister went out recently and gave that school some extra money for maintenance when it needed \$5 million for a rebuild. I am a carpenter's daughter, and my son is a carpenter. We were told that, as members know, you do not spend good money after bad. That school needed \$5 million for a rebuild, and the minister went out and gave it some maintenance money. The school was gracious enough to accept that money, but it does not address what was required — which was finalised in August 2010.

This government has had four years to meet that school's needs, and now it has given the school money for a patch up. What an insult to the students and to the whole school community. I made an FOI request in relation to the minister's visit to Westbreen Primary School to see what information was provided to him in relation to the sorry state of that school. The FOI documents are insightful in that they show that the minister failed totally in getting his department to brief him adequately.

Let us look at just where the funding has gone under the Napthine government. The government has spent an average of \$278 million a year on school capital, which compares poorly with the Labor government's average investment in its last term of \$467 million per annum. In this budget there was an opportunity to reinstate the education maintenance allowance cuts. That did not occur; the government deserves a fail on that measure. There was an opportunity to address cuts to the School Start bonus. That was not reinstated. That is another fail. There was an opportunity to reinstate the cuts to

the Fresh Fruit Friday program. That was not reinstated. That was a fail. There was an opportunity to address the cuts to the Reading Recovery program. They were not reinstated. It is another government fail.

The vocational education and training coordination funding cuts were not reinstated. The Victorian certificate of applied learning coordination funding cuts were not reinstated. The extensive specialist school support teams at regional offices that were slashed were not reinstated, and the Coburg office is now home to support staff for not only the northern region but also the Loddon Mallee region. So the Napthine government has saved a penny on rental for northern country Victoria by putting the staff in the northern metropolitan office, but of course it has lost in terms of travel time and inadequate rapid response to schools in the northern region of country Victoria.

Looking at the TAFE sector, we can see that the government has failed again. After the \$300 million cut, a further \$124 million has been hacked from the TAFE funding for next year. I recently visited Youth Projects in Glenroy. Staff there are looking after some of the most disadvantaged young people in our community. They are funding a retail course for very disengaged young people at \$1 an hour. I thought I had heard incorrectly and asked them to repeat the figure. They get \$1 an hour in funding for that TAFE course. They are continuing with the TAFE course because it links young people to ongoing employment — and, as we all know, the retail industry continues to grow.

I will mention briefly some of the callous cuts and aspects of this budget. One of the worst parts of the budget, in my opinion, is that pertaining to the Victorian WorkCover Authority. We are set to witness WorkCover paying the government \$600 million in dividends over the next four years. That is something Labor never did and never would do. A number of us are looking after constituents in relation to WorkCover. It is one of the most heart-rending experiences as an MP when you try to advocate for people who need WorkCover and who are being given the run-around by insurance companies. Organisations like WorkCover Assist are trying desperately to look after people injured at work and assist their families, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to do that under the current budget, and it is only going to get worse.

In relation to sport and recreation Pascoe Vale Sports Club desperately needs a \$100 000 pavilion refurbishment. I hope this budget provides the minister with the opportunity to announce this funding fairly quickly, but I will not hold my breath, because so many of the funding initiatives are being based around

coalition-held seats. Anyone in a coalition-held seat where there is a requirement for a grade separation is more likely to get it. Anyone who needs school funding is more likely to get a new school if they are in a coalition-held seat. That is quite different to how things operated under Labor; our ministers took an oath to deliver without fear or favour, and that is what they did.

I will briefly mention domestic violence. Today in question time we saw crocodile tears from the Premier about domestic and family violence and how urgently he needed to talk about it today. What this Parliament needs to remember and what commentators need to remember are the words of Fiona McCormack from Domestic Violence Victoria, who said after the budget was announced:

The murders of these women and children have taken place while Victoria's been on the stewardship of Denis Napthine.

We're asking him to meet with the families of victims and explain to them ... why this figures so little in the government's priorities.

It's an absolute disgrace.

Yet today, when faced with some other difficult issues, it suits the Premier to trot out family violence. It is such an important topic, and in my opinion the way it was used today was shameless.

I will also mention briefly the Scallywags Children's Centre, which lost Take a Break occasional care funding. The Sussex Neighbourhood House was hoping there would be some good news in the budget in relation to reinstating Take a Break occasional care funding, but there was zero in the budget in relation to that. As a result there are mums and dads in my local area who cannot afford child care and are left without any option.

Hopefully the next speaker will be addressing the subject of transport in a more comprehensive way than I have time to do in my last minute or two. I was appalled to find that half a billion dollars has been taken out of the work that was going on on the Western Ring Road upgrade, particularly from Glenroy through to Preston and across towards Greensborough. That half a billion dollars has gone, and as a result the hope we had of noise walls being constructed on that ring-road looks quite forlorn. The government needs to address grade separation. I am glad Labor is doing it in relation to the Glenroy railway crossing and the Bell Street crossing in Coburg.

The last transport matter I raise is the Merlynston railway car park, where residents are losing their footing in dangerous potholes. I have raised the need

for that car park to be urgently upgraded directly with the Minister for Public Transport. In the absence of such an upgrade, perhaps he can provide people with splints for broken ankles or Wellington boots for winter.

**Mr DONNELLAN** (Narre Warren North) — It is an honour to say a few words on the budget papers. It would be nicer to be talking about the glory days of Fitzroy Football Club and the 1986 final in which Hawthorn beat us, robbing us of a grand final opportunity. There are not so many enjoyable days, however, so we will go back to the budget.

This budget highlights that those opposite have been in government for nearly four years. They have brought down four budgets, and they have very little to show for it. To date not one major project has been funded and managed by this government. At the end of four years we might have a contract signed for the east–west project, albeit one that has not been put to the people. Realistically, however, in four years we have not had one project completed that was not funded or initiated by the previous government, whether it be the regional rail separation, the children’s hospital or similar.

This is a government that has sat still for four years and suddenly, in this final budget, says to the Victorian public, ‘We’re awake. We’re alive. We’re going to do something. We’ve finally woken up’. After four years of withdrawing government funds from the economy and allowing employment growth to come quite literally to a standstill — and even suggesting in this budget that unemployment figures will increase — what we have is a government that has not set its path and is now, in its final year, saying to the Victorian public, ‘Look, we haven’t done anything for four years, but give us another opportunity and maybe in the next four years we’ll do something’. Personally I do not think the public will accept that. I hope they will not accept it because at the end of the day four years is far too long to have done very little.

We have the major project which the government is supposedly going to sign off on in October. It is going to wave around a contract and tell everybody, ‘Hip hip hooray, we have a contract signed’. We still have not seen the full business case, so we do not know what the underlying assumptions are. We have a serious suspicion that the full business case was premised on the idea that traffic volumes from the west side were included in it because it simply would not work out any other way. You have about 165 000 cars coming from the inner western suburbs and going through that part of the city and about 28 000 cars coming off the Eastern Freeway heading towards the west, so in terms of

making it stack up obviously those figures were used to put the business case together. That is why the business case has become such a top secret document that not even the CIA or anybody is ever going to see it.

If the government were confident about what it is putting forward you would think that the business case would have been fully released for analysis by the public. I know it has gone to Infrastructure Australia, and hopefully the federal government has a full copy of it, but it is ridiculous to be spending — I think it is now \$16 billion — and still not be able to explain why the business case will provide a beneficial return for all Victorians. If the government cannot say to Victorians, ‘This is going to generate future growth, employment and the like’ you would have to suggest that this project should not go ahead.

There have been various major projects also planned for my electorate. Again they have been quickly planned without a great degree of foresight or thought going into them. We have proposals to upgrade the Cranbourne and Pakenham railway lines, and that would be a welcome investment if it were well planned, but the problem for my community is that if you have been travelling on a train on the Pakenham and Cranbourne lines for an hour, the idea of suddenly being locked out of the city loop, which is what is proposed, does not greatly appeal. If you have been on a train for an hour and you are going to work, you do not want to be swapping trains to get to your workplace, so the idea that somehow or other this major upgrade by Metro would be an absolute godsend, a great nirvana for people in the outer suburbs, is simply not the case. The responses members of the opposition are getting from people who catch trains is that they are furious that this government is putting forward a proposal that has not been well planned and would lock them out of the city loop.

It is a pity that we also have this proposed outer loop, or whatever we might like to call it — the southern loop — and I know that the people at the Department of Transport are pulling their hair out at the moment because we are building an outer loop and then we are going to build a light rail into the city to link with this outer loop. We may as well put in a canal from the Yarra River and run the ferry from Werribee, or wherever we are running the ferry, have it come through the canal, pick people up in Fishermans Bend and then get them into the city. That is about as logical as the plan being put forward at the moment.

Again the government has panicked after four years of sitting still and suddenly said —

**Mr Hodggett** interjected.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — To be fair to the Minister for Ports, who is at the table, we will say three and a half instead of four. That is reasonable. But it is still three and a half years. It has been very slow. It is as if rigor mortis has set in for this government.

**An honourable member** — Early.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — Early. I was about to say that it has only been at it for three and a half years, and it is already feeling a bit stiff and slow.

If the government is going to spend money on this project, it needs to be properly planned, and again there is a complete lack of focus by the government on getting properly planned projects and properly planned major infrastructure on the board. We have the east–west link, we have the Pakenham and Cranbourne lines upgrade and then we have this birdbrain outer loop for which somehow or other we have to build a light rail to get it into the city. We have three projects to date which are major projects costing billions of dollars, yet we do not have a proper business case for any of them to date and all the public is given is the ‘trust me’ syndrome. The government is saying, ‘Somehow or other we will do it properly and you just have to trust us’. That is simply not good enough.

While this has been going on and this government has spent three and a half years planning to do something — which is great but is still just a plan to do something — there is congestion across the board, whichever part of Melbourne you are in. In the north of Melbourne, in the new suburbs out there like Aurora and so forth, you are very lucky to be able to get onto the Hume Highway. The west also has serious problems with roads in places like Point Cook, and the issue is: what has the government done about it? Again the government has gone around talking about a congestion-busting birdbrain idea that the east–west link will fix congestion problems across the universe.

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall)** — Order! The member for Burwood without assistance.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — Calm down! The congestion-busting exercise simply is not going to work. It is a birdbrain idea for a pack of bird brains. It simply does not work. How on earth the east–west link will fix congestion problems in the city of Casey, the city of Brimbank or any of those other areas is beyond me, but all this government has done is go out and tell people that the east–west link will fix everything. If you

are sick, if you have cancer, the east–west link will fix it. If there is congestion in Paris, the east–west link will fix that. If you have an irritable stomach, the east–west link will fix that. It is about the logic of this government going around and saying, ‘The east–west link fixes everything’. We all know that is a lie. It is a furphy. It is load of drivel. It simply does not work. What is probably most disappointing for this government is that eastern suburbs voters are not particularly excited at the prospect of simply getting to their holidays more quickly. That is not enough to get it over the line.

The government has worked out along the way that spending \$16 billion on one inner city link project does not deliver great outcomes across the board. That is pretty upsetting for all of us, but most upsetting for all the punters who do not live in the eastern suburbs. At the end of the day people know that this government is trying to sell them a major dud.

Unfortunately this situation reflects what members of the Liberal Party are. They are not doers about growing the product and growing the economy. We can see that in the year ahead government members are expecting unemployment to increase, which is pretty disgraceful. It is an indictment of all government members that they think it a reasonable proposition to have in the budget books that unemployment will increase. That highlights that members of this government are not doers; they just sit there and occupy the Treasury benches. They are not there to grow the product and grow employment to give people more dignity in their lives. Government members are there to sell the great furphy that the east–west link will fix everything.

This budget highlights that areas like mine, the city of Casey, will get very little from the budget — absolutely bugger-all. You only have to see the punters down at the train stations to understand what the loop lockout means to them. They are horrified at the idea of the loop lockout; they think it is absolutely ridiculous. They would rather wait and make sure that this government planned its proposals properly. They do not want to be locked out of the loop and sent off to Fishermans Bend or somewhere like that, because that is what is proposed at the moment. Then the government might have to build a light rail carriageway to get those people into the city, but congestion simply is not getting better.

The people in my electorate were looking forward to more hospital beds in Casey, but there is not one new bed — full stop. At the last election Gleneagles Secondary College was promised new change rooms by members of the Liberal Party, but there is zip — nothing at all. There are no more beds, there is very

little roads funding and there is not much to crow about. But we did see an upper house member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region go around the place suggesting that money spent across the whole of the south-east was somehow or other being spent in Casey. That was an absolute lie; it was simply dishonest.

At the end of the day the poor punters of Casey have received very little from this government. You have only got to look at the faces of the City of Casey councillors to see the panic that is setting in now. Those people are not getting anything, even though members of the Liberal Party would swear black and blue that they are the friends of the outer suburbs. We only have to look in the outer suburbs across the board to see that very little money has been spent anywhere, whether it be in the west, the north or the south-east. I guess the east gets east–west link, so they are meant to be jumping in the stalls — ‘Hip hip hooray!’.

**Mr Watt** — The west gets a train line to the airport.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish)** —

Order! Members of the opposition as well as members of the government will cease interjecting.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — We start to get the idea that people are suggesting a trip to the airport for their holidays. What I thought most amusing was the bar in Flinders Street station, so as you hop off from the south and go to work, government members will say, ‘Don’t worry! There’s a bar on the way to work. Have a drink, because it’s our big initiative to put a bar in Flinders Street station. Don’t worry! If all else fails and you can’t get to work, sit in the bar for the rest of the day’. That is what members of the Liberal Party are saying: ‘Hip hip hooray! It’s one for you punters. Don’t worry about work; don’t worry about life. Just have another drink and relax in the bar in Flinders Street station’.

I could not believe that when I heard it the other day. Obviously things were going pretty badly when the southern punters had worked out that they would be locked out of the loop, whether they are on the Sandringham, Pakenham or Cranbourne lines. The bar fixed it all, didn’t it? Down at the train station people are saying, ‘All is forgiven. Members of the Liberal Party have not spent a brass razoo on us, but they’ve delivered us a bar, and we’re overjoyed with it’.

**Mr Hodgett** — As Minister for Ports should I claim that?

**Mr DONNELLAN** — The Minister for Ports could claim that, and he could have a couple of drinks on the

way to work, but I do not think he would be half as productive as he would be if he bypassed the Liberal bar and got on to work. People in the south-east want to go through the loop to get to work. They have none of the bad habits of members of the Liberal Party, such as drinking on the way to work.

People want to get to work. They want to be locked into the loop and be part of it. They want to travel around the loop and get to work, whether it be to Parliament station or Melbourne Central. Instead people are probably not going to stop at the Flinders Street bar and celebrate the delivery of this magnificent initiative by the Liberal Party. What else could we ask for? No-one has ever delivered a bar to the punters of Victoria, but the Liberal Party will deliver this magnificent bar. That is really what this budget is all about.

**Ms Hennessy** — Frankston line commuters won’t get access to the bar.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — That is right. The poor Frankston line commuters will not get access to the bar. Obviously they are going to be really upset.

**Mr Newton-Brown** interjected.

**Mr DONNELLAN** — Maybe the punters in South Yarra would like the bar. We do not know, but at the end of the day we will have to wait until we see this magnificent bar built and the Liberal Party deliver us one piece of major infrastructure — a bar. Thank you, Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to make a small contribution.

**Ms THOMSON (Footscray)** — I rise to speak in the debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers. This is yet another disappointing budget after a run of disappointing budgets over the last four years. When we read the budget papers and see what the budget contains, the one thing we realise is that this budget is not about Victorians at all; it is all about the Liberal Party and The Nationals surviving in government. It has nothing to do with what might be needed in this state. It does not show that the coalition government has a plan or a strategy, or how this series of budgets will meet that plan and strategy.

Victorians do not know where any of this money is being pulled from or where it is going. There is not a list of ongoing funding. What year the money will be expended is anyone’s guess. Government members say, ‘Let’s get this together and hope it re-elects us’. This budget comes on the back of budgets that did very little for Victorians, particularly those in the western suburbs — very little indeed. This budget is a sham for those people who live in the inner west. There is

nothing in it that people in the inner west can take any joy from at all.

In health alone, there is no new money in the budget for Western Health, yet there is an increase in population, an increase in the birthrate, an increase in the need for aged-care services and an increase in the incidence of chronic illnesses. Chronic illnesses are overrepresented in the west, including diabetes and heart disease, and people in the west need medical support and assistance. Where is the money for that? It is not there.

Data about emergency departments was released recently which showed that Western Health is one of the worst — I think the second worst — and that was because there has been no investment in its emergency department facilities. This government should have provided that funding. The Western Hospital emergency department should have been rebuilt under this government, but it has not been. Government members have not put money in the budget for that at all.

Let us have a look at education. I fundamentally believe that government has a large responsibility to provide great government schools, particularly for kids who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. For those kids, having an education is something they can only look forward to if there is a good government school for them to go to. What has this government done? Has it spent anything on our schools in the western suburbs? The government made a promise to Sunshine College of \$6.1 million, of which only \$1.26 million will be available in the first financial year, and the college will have to wait out to the never-never to get the rest of it. That is not what Sunshine College needs. In 2010, under the Labor government, Sunshine College was promised \$10 million to start the first stage of its redevelopment, which was going to go from five campuses to three.

The college has a master plan; it is all set and ready to go. But instead of delivering on the master plan, which you would expect the government might do — the work has been done; it is all there; there is an expectation by the families, the teachers and the community — the government said, ‘Don’t worry about a master plan. Let’s ring the principal a couple of days before and announce that we will give them some money for who knows what’. This is real planning — this is really great government! It is really bad government. It is not actually giving the school what it needs. Schools across the state got the very same phone call saying, ‘Have we got something for you! We have written it on the back of an envelope. We do not have any plan, but we will give you some money because it

looks good in the lead-up to an election’. That is not what a community is looking for in a government — nothing like it.

Let us talk about TAFE. Poor Victoria University TAFE, which has to look after one of the most disadvantaged areas in the state, has been absolutely gutted by this government. It is certainly suffering as a consequence. It has had courses cut, it has lost teaching staff and it has lost the capacity to help all those who have become unemployed recently because this government does not have a manufacturing industry policy that it can look to in providing jobs for the future. It is just a hopeless situation. It has had almost \$50 million cut from its budget by this government. Government members should hang their heads in shame that they are taking so much out of the TAFE system and not investing in our young people or in people who are being retrenched on a daily basis and need to find new jobs and new ways of earning money to support their families. This government does not care — it could not give a damn — because it does not think those people are going to vote for it anyway. Those people will not be voting for the government because of that.

Let us look at housing. There is no new money for public housing in my electorate or in the whole of the west as far as I can see, yet we know that homelessness and demand for public housing is growing in the west. Does this government care about that? No, it does not give a damn about that either. It could not care less. We have a situation where family violence in the western suburbs is at an all-time high. We cannot find emergency housing for women who are running away from situations where they are totally unsafe. It is very hard to get them housed. What makes it worse is that while we are trying to encourage them to not go back to their partners, to try to live an independent life, we cannot provide them with long-term housing. There is no affordable housing for them to go into because waiting lists are so long and this government is not investing in new public housing that would enable these women to live safely with their children without being at risk.

Government members can stand in this Parliament and talk about family violence and introduce instruments they think will help address family violence, but they will not invest in the real things which would make a difference to these people’s lives and which would make it possible for these women to live independently, to support their families and even potentially to get back into the workforce and make a contribution to their children’s welfare and give back something to the community and society. Government members should

hang their heads in shame for not providing the necessary resources for the people who are most in need.

Then we have public transport. This government thinks it has done a wonderful job on public transport, but public transport takes planning, and you have to take time to plan it to make sure you are meeting the needs of Victorians. The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel — the project we on this side of the house still support — took six years of planning. Infrastructure Australia rated it as Victoria's no. 1 priority in infrastructure for support from the federal government. But what did this government decide to do? It trashed it, and instead it said, 'We are going to come up with an alternative plan over a six-month period'. There was no consultation, there was no talking to the people who would know, because those people were involved in developing the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, and so there was no understanding of the pressure the new project would put on the west.

This project is bad for the west. It is an atrocious abomination for people who live in the western suburbs. I will tell members why. It is because the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel — Labor's proposal — would have opened up a new rail route into North Melbourne, Parkville, the city and on to the Domain. Our plan would have given people in the west rail access to areas they did not have access to before. It would have created less of a burden on Footscray and Sunshine. It would have been fantastic. It would have been great, but instead we are going to add to the pressure on Footscray and Sunshine because of this never-never dream of building an airport rail link, which I know we will never see.

It will be a bit like the Avalon and Doncaster links, which we all heard so much about for years and years. Where have they gone? They have vanished. No longer are we building the Avalon or Doncaster links. Instead, this week we are going to the airport. Of course everyone in my electorate goes to and from the airport every day — this is the most crucial link they need! No, it is not. Very rarely would people from the western suburbs travel to the airport. It is a treat to fly off on holiday with your family. That is what people look forward to, but what they really want and need is a rail link that would open up access to the city loop and create more opportunities for them to go to Parkville and other parts of Melbourne.

Melbourne Metro rail tunnel would allow 60 000 passengers an hour to travel to get to work, hospitals, schools and recreation. But did this government care? No. It came up with a brand-new

idea that it dreamt up over six months and whacked on the table saying it was the greatest new plan. It is a sham. It is an absolute sham and it is no wonder that people in my electorate feel disappointed — not only disappointed but disgusted with this new government. It is atrocious that this has been allowed to occur.

Let us have a look at planning. Under Labor there was a central activities district in the city of Footscray, which was planned and which involved the council, the police, the local community, the community services in the area and local businesses in creating a strategy for how Footscray might be developed, not only for residential purposes but also for jobs. What do we see now? Nothing of the sort. What we had was a council that was prepared to support development that was reasonable and would improve the living standards of the people who live in Footscray now and provide great livability for the people who come to live and work in Footscray. What we have now is a minister who thinks that putting up a tower is a great initiative; I think I will be waiting to see these towers for a very long time. The one thing this minister does not care about is the standard of living of people in these communities. He does not care about a whole strategy for these communities. He says, 'Let's build a tower as big as we possibly can'.

If we turn to look at Sunshine, we see that Sunshine was to become a central activities centre — —

**Mr Newton-Brown** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish)** — Order! The member for Prahran is out of his seat and out of order.

**Ms THOMSON** — It has the same issues that Footscray will have — livability. Yet before this government was elected it made a promise to the people of Sunshine that it would grant the whole of the Sunvale Primary School site for parkland, but it has reneged on that promise. It has not done it, it will not do it. The government is selling off 0.8 hectares of the property for residential high-rise development without a care for the fact that it has made a promise to the community. But who cares? The government may have made a promise, but there is nothing wrong with reneging on it — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish)** — Order! The member for Prahran!

**Ms THOMSON** — The government is saying, 'We can go right ahead and relieve the community of that promise and just do what we like'. I thought it took a long time for governments to become arrogant, but this

one is as arrogant as you can get. This is not a budget for the people of Footscray, it is not a budget for the people of Sunshine and it is certainly not a budget for the people of Victoria. There is no strategy, there is no plan. There is only one agenda and that is to get the government re-elected.

**Mr LIM** (Clayton) — I should not say that I am pleased to be contributing to the debate, because it is a very sad budget for my electorate of Clayton. I have referred to this budget before as a smoke and mirrors budget, but I am going to bring to the attention of the house some of the very real pain that this government has inflicted on my community of Clayton. In talking about education, I am not going to talk about the devastation of the funding cuts to TAFE and so on. I am just going to talk about the real things that are happening in my electorate. There are six campuses of former primary and secondary schools in my electorate. I can name them: Clayton West Primary School, Clayton Primary School, the former Oakleigh South Primary School in Beryl Street, Oakleigh, part of Oakleigh South Primary School and two others, one primary and one secondary school. The government is selling these blocks of land and it is going to get tens of millions of dollars from these sales. All the while I have been pleading with the Minister for Education for funding for Clayton South Primary School.

Three times I have raised this matter on the adjournment. I have begged him, I have pleaded with him to come and have a look at just this one school. Clayton South Primary School is falling apart. Under the previous government it was at the tender stage for a rebuild. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development had set up a tender and everything was ready to rebuild the whole school. Then this heartless government decided not to fund it. It did not even bother to say what it was going to do. It is a cynical, sick joke that the member for Frankston said he did not want funding for a school in his electorate, but this government funded it to the tune of \$18 million.

What kind of government is this? One member of Parliament says the school in his electorate does not need funding, meanwhile I have begged and pleaded with the minister for funding, saying that my community needs the school that is falling apart. But the government decides instead to build it in Frankston, where nobody wants it and when nobody asked for it. What kind of sick mentality does that show?

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish)** — Order! The member for Burwood!

**Mr LIM** — Only a sick government would do something like that to a community it is supposed to be representing. The list goes on and on. The community and that very same school have been pleading for a 40-kilometre-per-hour speed limit and a pedestrian crossing for the kids from that school. However, the government has cut the funding, and the parents, the school and the school community have been waiting and hoping that it is going to be funded, but it has not been — and this is just in education.

I could go on all night about the government's broken promises. Let us look at the development of the Monash Children's hospital. The Labor Party went to the last election with the promise of a brand-new \$240 million facility that would be up and operating in 2014 — this year. The coalition at that time was dragged kicking and screaming to match the promise, but what is happening now? In this budget the government has only allocated \$47 million instead of the full amount, and it does not even know when it will finish that hospital. The government has no plan. It has nothing because deep in its DNA it does not know what it is doing.

For the first three years the government decided that it was going to be a small government and a small target. It did not want to do too much, it did not want to do something too big and it did not want to do something too fast, so it ended up doing nothing for three years. The government has done nothing, yet suddenly it says it has decided to build the east–west tunnel just to show people that it is doing something. This is what we are dealing with. We have ended up with a government like that in Victoria. It has no plan, it does not know what it is doing, and whatever it is doing it is doing in a panic and just for the sake of staying in government.

We have to ask ourselves whether Victorians deserve this kind of government. I think we deserve better than that, but I will continue. Clayton happens to be the most multicultural electorate of the 88 lower house electorates in this state. I can talk about the pain that this government has inflicted on the migrant community, on the multicultural community. We have seen the report of the Auditor-General on the confusion and the inability to provide leadership in that area. The coalition government has done this before and it was a mistake.

When Labor came back into government for 11 years we fixed the problem, and this government is supposed to be the government that fixes problems! It has not fixed any problems. In fact it has caused more problems for Victoria. Because government members are born-to-rule kinds of people, they have no idea of what

the people need and what they aspire to. They have no vision whatsoever for this state, let alone for the ethnic and multicultural community.

The lack of leadership is evident in the two competing bodies the government has to deliver services to the multicultural community — the so-called Office of Multicultural Affairs and the so-called Victorian Multicultural Commission. Neither body knows what to do. Each one is looking at the other and saying, 'It is your responsibility'; 'No, it is your responsibility', so neither delivers those services effectively and efficiently. For that, government members should be hanging their heads in shame.

The former Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship is leaving the sinking boat. Now we have a Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship in the upper house who has hardly had anything to do with the multicultural community. He is from an ethnic background, but that is not good enough. This government should not waste time and energy or the monetary resources of this state carrying on like this and losing its way.

I am concerned with this new development of the so-called rearranging of priorities and resources in the police force. In Clayton we do not have a full-time, functioning police station. From the sound of it, this redirecting of resources will be to so-called specific projects rather than to front-line officers walking the street. Clayton has had its share of problems. As a result of complaints by local traders and residents, there have been a lot of patrols in the main street of Clayton. That has made a lot of difference and has improved the situation in the Clayton shopping strip. If there is any change to that by pulling out the patrols and the presence of those police officers on the main street of Clayton and reallocating them to other priorities, without any justification, there will be a real problem again in Clayton.

Members probably do not remember that there have been incidents of people being held up at gunpoint or knifepoint when they were withdrawing money at banks in the main street. People have been threatened and robbed at gunpoint or knifepoint because the attackers know there are no police at the station. The police have been very underresourced in this state and in Clayton. The government's promises on this issue have not been delivered. Unfortunately this government is building prisons instead of hospitals. The government has not delivered on its promises, which is a real concern.

At long last this government has decided to do something. It decided to tell the people it is doing something. It told them that it was going to tackle the issue of trains. However, the coalition went to the last election making big promises. It said, 'We are going to fix the problem'. Do you know how it is going to fix the problem of the Dandenong-Pakenham line? If people in my electorate board the train in Clayton, they will not go through the loop and they will not go to their workplace. They will go somewhere else. That is how the government is going to fix the problem for my community. We know that the government is going down that track. The only result awaiting the government is a big slap from voters who catch trains on the Dandenong-Pakenham line and those on the Frankston line, who will have the same problem. Their destination should be their workplace in the loop, but their train will now go somewhere else outside the city.

You have to ask: why would a government do something like this? It promised to fix the problems. Instead of fixing the problems, the government is creating problems, and it is becoming the problem. It amazes me that after four years the government has decided to go down this track. An opportunity has been missed. The government should have grabbed the opportunity to fix public transport in the state, but it has not. This includes grade separations in Clayton and at Centre Road in my electorate. These have become a major concern. I bring to the attention of the house a member in the upper house. When she was in opposition, she was jumping up and down almost every second week complaining about these issues. However, now that she is Cabinet Secretary, it is okay. She is happy now, and she is not complaining any more. This is an indication of how sick, bad and fundamentally wrong this government is. It has no direction, no vision and no empathy with the people of Victoria. The people's concerns are not the government members' concerns, because the government members are born to rule.

I could go on and on about the failure of this government, which went to the last election saying it would fix the problems. As I have mentioned, instead of fixing the problem, government members have themselves become the problem, and they themselves are creating more problems for the community. They should be ashamed of themselves. They should have a look at themselves before the next election. I have not even mentioned the problem in this chamber that they have created, which they have not been able to solve and do not intend to solve. They have no will to solve it. Indeed, they are becoming the problem.

I came to the Parliament 18 years ago — four elections ago — and I have never before seen the Parliament deteriorate in the way that it has recently. Each of the previous Labor government budgets provided fairness. We allocated at least \$1 billion in each budget to looking after the community. This government takes from the community. I will give one small example. The volunteering funding has just disappeared. The government does not even know where the money has gone. The minister who is supposed to be responsible for this area will never be able to explain to this Parliament or respond to my inquiries and many representations as to where that money is. It is a little money — a couple of thousand here and there, enough for small community groups, especially ethnic communities, which cannot articulate their wishes.

We have heard about Co.As.It — unfortunately I have to mention it — an organisation representing the Italian community, being able to reap \$140 million from the state of Victoria and the commonwealth in the past 20 years. Yet the Chinese community, which is four times bigger, cannot even get a hundredth of that kind of money to look after themselves, and the misery they have been through under this government —

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

**Ms NEVILLE** (Bellarine) — I rise this evening to make a contribution on the motion in relation to this year's state budget.

**Mr Hodgett** interjected.

**Ms NEVILLE** — The minister at the table, the Minister for Ports, indicates that he will be moving for an extension of time because he is so interested in my contribution. The budget has been formally passed by this house and supported by the opposition, but of course our formal support of the budget and the budget bills before the house in order to ensure supply does not mean that we are giving a big tick to every element of this budget or to the associated bills, and I had the opportunity to speak on the Building a Better Victoria (State Tax and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2014. It certainly does not mean we do not have concerns about this government's priorities when it comes to determining how state tax money is spent.

Last sitting week I had the opportunity to make a contribution about the way this government has shown a real lack of interest and failed to invest in the Geelong region. The budget, which was before the house and passed earlier today, and recent policy changes and announcements by the government indicate how low

down the priority list Geelong is for this government. There are cuts to police services in my electorate. I spoke about this in detail last sitting week. Three police stations are basically being wound back — they are really being closed — by this government: Drysdale, Portarlington and Queenscliff.

We have seen enormous cuts in the TAFE system, and this has had an enormous impact on Gordon TAFE in Geelong, resulting in fewer staff, fewer students being able to undertake courses and fewer courses being provided through Gordon TAFE. What we also have before us are enormous job losses. The Minister for Manufacturing is sitting at the table this evening, and I know the loss of hundreds of jobs from Alcoa is looming in only a few weeks time. Unfortunately this budget provides no real strategic investment in jobs or any support for the workers who are about to lose their jobs from Alcoa.

We are seeing a lack of investment in health and ambulance services. The Geelong region has one of the worst ramping problems across the state. In the last few days I had the opportunity of meeting with some of the paramedics from the Bellarine stations, and I know the ambulance services being provided to Bellarine residents are less than satisfactory.

This budget has let down Geelong. It is certainly letting down regional Victoria. The figures suggest that, of the infrastructure spend in this budget, only 4 per cent is going into regional Victoria, despite the fact that regional Victoria makes up 25 per cent of the population. It feels like we are revisiting the Kennett years, when the Kennett government left regional Victoria behind and when there was talk about Victorian towns being the toenails of the state.

I will touch on a couple of areas of concern about this budget as it pertains to Geelong. There is no money for training. We know that TAFE across the state will face additional funding cuts, and we imagine that further cuts to Gordon TAFE will occur. This budget confirms that the promised \$85 million for a second public hospital for Geelong will be only \$50 million, and of course, as has been revealed through secret documents that were leaked, it will not be a second public hospital but in fact something arranged in a private deal with a private hospital.

I turn now to the promised Avalon rail link. Three and a half years ago some money was allocated for a study; the government is going to keep studying. By the time it finishes studying, Avalon will probably be gone. No rail link is delivered in this budget. In regard to the study provided for in the last budget for a potential train

line to Drysdale, the government is going to keep studying it. There has been no community consultation, and no-one knows what is happening, so again it will just be delayed and delayed.

On the commitment of money to the Northern Health facility, what we discover in this budget is that there is only \$3.4 million and that it is not until 2017–18 that we see the final amount spent.

We have seen the Minister for Ports recently visit my electorate, and I presume as a contingency measure \$3 million was allocated towards Portarlington Pier. It absolutely needs rebuilding because it is about to have load limits placed on it, but what the community wants is a safe harbour. Labor has committed the \$15 million. The government has committed \$3 million to do another master plan. As I said, this budget shows the government has again walked away from regional Victoria, and it is a very big disappointment for the Geelong region.

Another thing about this budget is that it further deserts Victoria's environment. It is hard to believe that is possible, given the last few budgets. The last three budgets have seen serious funding cuts to the environment. In the last three and a half years this government has overturned many environmental policies which had been supported in a bipartisan way across both conservative and Labor governments. Again this budget gives a clear indication that this government does not care about Victoria's environment.

We have seen over 500 staff cut from the Department of Environment and Primary Industries. In addition to that, over 200 jobs have been lost from Parks Victoria. That is up to this point, and this budget will see further cuts, including \$19 million from environment policy, \$46 million from environment programs and \$16.6 million from the management of forests, parks and public land. The merger of the former Department of Primary Industries and the former Department of Sustainability and Environment has resulted in the environment part of the new department being the poor cousin. It is wearing the vast majority of program and staff cuts. This was confirmed during the hearings of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee when the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security basically said the funding cuts were not in the primary industries area but within the environment part of the department.

These cuts are having and will continue to have a significant impact on the capacity of the government to manage and protect the environment, of which it is

custodian on behalf of all Victorians. The impact is already being seen in the management of national parks and coastal areas. When you think about 200 jobs being lost from Parks Victoria, that is prior to this budget taking effect. That is a massive cut in jobs, and that is not just in metropolitan Melbourne. About half are in metropolitan Melbourne and half are in regional Victoria. This, combined with the budget cuts that Parks Victoria has had to sustain, is impacting on the ability of Parks Victoria to manage our coastal and national park assets.

If you have a look in the budget papers, you will see the performance measures that the government has set out in relation to the environment. Page 129 of budget paper 3 sets out the service delivery figures. Let us look, for example, at the performance measure in relation to foreshore protection assets around Port Phillip and Western Port bays. This measure relates to how many of the assets are rated as good to very good. The target for 2013–14 was 80 per cent, but what was in fact delivered was 50 per cent — 30 per cent lower than the target. The government has now revised the target down to 55 per cent. That means that when Victorians go to the beach, the bay or, in my case, around the Bellarine Peninsula and use the barbecue, the picnic table, the walking tracks or the foreshore area, they can only expect 55 per cent to be in good to very good condition. That is down from 80 per cent, which was the target.

In addition to that, when we look at things like recreational facilities in state forests with a life expectancy of greater than five years, we had a target of 70 per cent in 2013–14, and the expected outcome in this financial year is 54 per cent, with a future target of 60 per cent. We are basically seeing that the funding provided and the staff cuts that have occurred in Parks Victoria have meant that we are unable as a state to protect and maintain the assets that all Victorians rely on when they visit national parks, state forests, parks in our local communities — where many hundreds of families walk their dogs, for example — and of course our foreshore areas.

The irony is that the government cannot find the money to protect these assets but it is able to find the money to enable another trial of alpine grazing. The minister admitted at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing that in addition to what has already been spent, which is at least a couple of million dollars, another \$400 000 at least is going to be spent to enable the next trial of alpine grazing. This trial is going to occur in the Wonnangatta Valley, an area which Parks Victoria has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last few years rehabilitating, getting rid of the

weeds et cetera. Now we are going to allow cows back into the area, which will deteriorate the area again — when the reason for the weeds and deteriorated natural values in that valley was cows grazing. Not only is the government going to waste the money that Parks Victoria really did not have to spend in that area, but it is about to spend another \$400 000 on what is really an ideological fight around alpine grazing in the Alpine National Park area.

We have also seen in this budget the government hitting programs like the solar water program and the energy efficiency program. The government basically went to the election saying right up to the last day, 'We're going to have a great environment policy', but really it had none. One of the things it promised was that it was committed to improving the energy efficiency of Victorian homes, raising them from an average of a 2-star to a 5-star standard. That is another commitment the government has walked away from in this budget, condemning Victorians to high utility bills. This particularly impacts lower income Victorians, who are also going to be affected by the fact that the value of concessions is no longer keeping up with the real cost of utility bills.

We again have nothing for climate change; despite the adaptation plan launched by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, there is nothing to back it up. If you do not have energy efficiency programs, like solar hot water, you are saying that it is somebody else's problem. It is a bit like Tony Abbott going overseas and saying to the President of the United States and basically 90 per cent of the world community, who believe climate change is the critical issue facing our world, 'It doesn't matter; we won't do anything', and working with the Canadian government to try to block attempts to deal with climate change. The state Minister for Environment and Climate Change has led the way on this, walking away from real action when it comes to climate change.

This budget has deserted regional Victoria, it has deserted Geelong and once again it has deserted the environment here in Victoria. Generations of Victorians will pay the price for that desertion.

**Motion agreed to.**

## TREASURY LEGISLATION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 7 May; motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Treasurer).**

**Mr SCOTT (Preston)** — The Treasury Legislation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2014 is essentially an omnibus piece of legislation to deal with a number of matters that fall largely within the responsibility of the Assistant Treasurer. The acts that are amended include the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986, which will create a requirement to comply with any prudential standards approved by the Governor in Council, and the State Superannuation Act 1988 and the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968 to allow former members of public sector superannuation funds to commute a pension to meet a commonwealth tax liability.

There are also amendments to the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 and the Accident Compensation Act 1985 to improve the operation of the acts. That is what is stated in the explanatory memorandum, but essentially the amendments in the bill deal with issues that arose from the introduction of the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 and the unintended consequences of a series of amendments.

There are also amendments to the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority Act 1996 relating to the ability of the board, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), to delegate to a holder of a named office of the authority rather than having to individually name a person. There are also amendments in relation to the VMIA act to provide further clarification on powers and delegations of powers of the chief executive officer or other persons to appoint or engage other officials and employees and to set terms and conditions of appointment or engagement. There are also changes in relation to indexation provisions in acts, particularly in relation to how the Australian Bureau of Statistics changes indexation over time.

To turn to the individual clauses in the bill, I will first deal with the amendments that relate to the Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986. These amendments relate to the prudential standards that apply to these particular public sector superannuation schemes that are covered by Emergency Services and State Super (ESSS). It is important to note the scale of public funds. We often talk about budgets and related matters, but there are funds that exist within the public sector that

are often administered without particular regard to the public debate.

It is important to note the amount of funds the ESSS administers. If you look at the most recent annual report, you see it includes assets of nearly \$20 billion and liabilities of nearly \$34 billion. We are talking about very significant areas of public administration that involve the retirement of many thousands of Victorians, and these liabilities relate principally to defined benefit schemes — there are over \$31 billion of liabilities relating to defined benefit schemes. The assets, of course, relate to both defined benefit schemes and accumulation schemes. There are also smaller but still significant liabilities of over \$2 billion but under \$3 billion relating to the accumulation schemes. These are very significant funds, and the opposition is of the view that it is reasonable to provide further regulation. At the moment the prudential standards that apply are applied voluntarily.

#### **Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

#### **Keeping It Together program**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Community Services and concerns the good work of the Casey North Community Information and Support Service (CISS), in particular its successful Keeping It Together program. The action I seek is that the minister fund the program so that it can continue and, if possible, be expanded.

The city of Casey has disturbingly high levels of family violence and family breakdown. Sometimes the two problems are linked, sometimes not. What we know is that families in the city of Casey are in desperate need of assistance. Budget cuts are having a dramatic impact on the lifestyle of local families and on support services which provide families with advice and assistance during times of crisis. Family violence is a major cause of homelessness among women and children in the city of Casey.

The Keeping It Together program has been in operation for five years. Facilitators work two days a week, delivering three programs per term, with an additional annual program for culturally and linguistically diverse women. The emphasis in the program is on prevention — preventing family breakdowns and

preventing family violence. I do not think there would be a person in this house, and I know that to be true of the member for Gembrook, who would not support a successful program with such a positive focus. This is what some of women have said about the Keeping It Together program:

The course was really worthwhile and the format and structure was excellent! I would happily recommend this course to others.

A second woman said:

I never thought I had an issue with anger management; I became aware that I actually do!

Another said:

It has also given me the skills to stop and act, rather than react.

Yet another said:

The kids are happier to be around and they seem to notice that I am happier and not angry all the time.

The program has been supported in the past by some philanthropic organisations, and I thank the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, the R. E. Ross Trust and the Besen Family Foundation. It is now time for the government to support this innovative and life-changing program so it can continue to change lives, save lives, stop women from being victims of family violence and keep families together.

None of us can be proud to live in a state where a woman dies every week at the hands of a partner or previous partner. Family violence is estimated to cost the state economy \$3.4 billion a year in police and court costs, hospital time, ambulance response, lost productivity and support. A couple who benefited from the program recently visited Casey North CISS and donated \$300. They said it was to say thank you for saving their marriage. We should all be grateful for this life-changing program, so I ask the minister to follow the lead of this generous and grateful couple, especially now that there is new money, given that the budget was regarded as a pittance. The Premier was asked to return his white ribbon, and the government was accused of being an active contributor to the abuse of women and children. I ask the minister to find the funds necessary for the Keeping It Together program.

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

### Caulfield Park conservatory

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) — I rise today to raise a matter with the Minister for Environment and Climate Change in regard to the Caulfield Park conservatory. The action I seek is for the minister to conditionally approve the relocation of the historic conservatory to the Rippon Lea estate, subject to the vacant space at Caulfield Park being appropriately utilised as a feature within the park. The conservatory was in fact originally located at Rippon Lea as a greenhouse, but the original burnt down in the 1920s. There has been a great level of community concern and a big local campaign to save the conservatory.

Unfortunately the structure has become run down over the years, and the Glen Eira City Council surveyed residents to explore options of either developing, demolishing or refurbishing the site known as the conservatory. One of the proposals included a cafe, which was completely rejected by the community. The building is in worse shape than originally thought, and even though the most preferred option from the community consultation was to refurbish the conservatory, the Glen Eira council has voted to demolish it.

I am told the cost of refurbishing the conservatory is estimated to be in excess of \$250 000, and council has only set aside \$100 000 to do the work. As a result, due to the overwhelming community concern and the historical nature of the conservatory, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has offered to relocate the structure back to the Rippon Lea estate. I have been informed that the council supports this new approach and is willing to fund the relocation of the conservatory. I believe this is a good option, as we will still retain the conservatory in the area and in fact return it to its original home. This also opens up the possibility of upgrading the space and better utilising it for local residents, who have been advocating for more seating for the elderly and families in Caulfield Park.

I would be prepared to organise a meeting, under the minister's direction, with council and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries to explore these possibilities and opportunities. It is on these grounds that I ask that the minister approve the relocation of the historic conservatory to the Rippon Lea estate, subject to discussion with the council, and to appropriately upgrade the vacant land and keep it as a unique feature within the park.

Caulfield Park is a great park. As I have said on many occasions, it is the jewel in the crown of our open space in Caulfield, and we are looking at relocating the depot

to Booran Reserve and to be able to look at this particular conservatory as one of the key projects. It is certainly a historic building. It has historic significance, as I said, back to the 1920s. To take that building back to its original home at Rippon Lea gardens would be a great opportunity for all, and I ask the minister to consider this matter.

### Cranbourne electorate bus services

**Mr PERERA** (Cranbourne) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for the introduction of a much-needed bus service for the new estates of Cascades on Clyde and Selandra Rise in my electorate of Cranbourne. The new route I am seeking is to run along Linsell Boulevard, passing through Cascades on Clyde and the north end of the Selandra Rise estate. The electorate of Cranbourne is certainly a growing area, with many families moving in week after week.

As the minister knows well, two Liberal governments — the Napthine and Abbott governments — have hit anyone with a car in their respective budgets. The Abbott government's unfreezing of the fuel excise levy will lead to an increase in petrol prices twice a year, adding about 2 cents a litre to the cost of petrol from August, and there is also the Napthine government's additional increase in the motor vehicle registration fee by \$25 on top of consumer price index increases, plus the stamp duty increase in motor vehicle sales of 4 cents on every \$200.

Many residents are now looking for alternative ways to commute. Most of them are members of young families and first home buyers who are struggling to cope with these additional cost of living pressures. At present, if you live in areas like Cascades on Clyde or Selandra Rise estates, there is no direct way to commute by public transport without walking a long distance. My constituents from these areas request this bus service time and again when I meet with them on my doorknocking rounds, in my mobile offices, in shopping centres, at community events and at other places. Over the last three years both estates have been growing well and are still doing so, hence the need for a bus service to be introduced urgently. This much-needed bus service would enable residents to travel to their places of employment or education, attend medical appointments and travel to shopping and entertainment facilities in the Cranbourne area, or easily get to the railway station.

Cascades on Clyde is a vibrant masterplanned community created to suit the growing needs of my

electorate's modern families. Selandra Rise is an Australian first — a world-class community being developed through an innovative partnership that enables residents to be at the forefront of planning for the creation of a healthier and more engaged community. Bus services in growing areas like the electorate of Cranbourne play a major role in the provision of public transport and therefore need to be delivered urgently. I therefore urge the Minister for Public Transport to support this much-needed bus service in the Cascades on Clyde and Selandra Rise estates.

### Visionstream

**Ms MILLER** (Bentleigh) — I direct my request to the Minister for Technology, the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips, and ask him to visit the Bentleigh electorate to tour the national headquarters of the Visionstream business in Bentleigh East to meet the staff and management who work in this large locally based business. Bentleigh East is the home of Visionstream's head office, where approximately 450 staff members are based, including the senior leadership and executive teams. Visionstream provides design, construction and maintenance services for advanced communication and industrial networks in Australia and New Zealand. With a heritage in design, construction and maintenance services, Visionstream is a trusted partner to leading telecommunication and ICT network providers and industries that rely on mission-critical infrastructure. The company was established in 1994 as a subsidiary of Telstra to design and build the \$4 billion Telstra cable TV rollout, before being acquired by Leighton Contractors in 1996.

Since 1996 Visionstream has been a part of Leighton Contractors and has built an impressive track record in delivering telecommunication construction, maintenance and engineering services to carriers, governments, channel partners and enterprise customers in Australia and New Zealand. Its key expertise is held in-house and backed by industry-recognised accreditation and an award-winning safety record. Some of Visionstream's current projects include the delivery of the national broadband network and the installation of fixed line, mobile and wireless networks for Telstra and Optus. It also has a community investment program, which operates from a company-wide strategic framework aligned with its parent company Leighton Contractors. This ensures support and focus for greater impact and creates true sustainable outcomes for communities through a combination of cash and in-kind donations, community sponsorships, skilled and unskilled volunteering, and fundraising. Community partnerships focus on three

core areas: environment, Indigenous and disadvantaged youth.

The action I seek is for the minister to come to the Bentleigh electorate and visit the large locally based telecommunication and ICT network provider Visionstream and to meet with management and staff to gain a greater insight into the work it carries out.

### Isla Avenue Community Respite Care Facility

**Mr CARROLL** (Niddrie) — I rise to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Community Services. The action I seek is for the minister to investigate the operation of the Department of Human Services respite facility located at Isla Avenue, Glenroy. By way of brief background, on 26 May I received an email from a constituent of mine, Mr Paul Greenfield, whose son Thomas stays at this respite facility. In his email to me Mr Greenfield outlined that he had recently been informed by the department that all respite at Isla Avenue Community Respite Care Facility had been cancelled until further notice. As I am sure the minister appreciates, respite care is a vital service that provides not only a much-needed break for carers but also gives individuals like Thomas an important change in their daily routine and habits and the chance to interact with different members of the community. In fact Mr Greenfield has informed me how much his son looks forward to the respite and the opportunity to get out into the community with other children at that facility.

This sudden and unexpected cancellation of respite at Isla Avenue, Glenroy, has greatly inconvenienced not only the Greenfield family but also others who depend so much on the facility for their children. I understand a possible reason for the cancellation of respite is that the facility is needed to provide a refuge for another patient with high-care needs. I do not know the full circumstances, and I am hoping the minister may be able to shed some light on what is happening at this facility. I have given the minister some details on the concerns at the facility earlier today. Furthermore I believe this is not the first time that respite has been suddenly cancelled at Isla Avenue. In fact I have been advised that such cancellations in the past have led to complaints being lodged with the disability services commissioner.

Mr Greenfield's frustration was clear in his recent email to me, which states:

The issue here is that as usual we the carers come in second in every way, shape and form. The fundamental issue here is that Isla Avenue is a respite facility, not a refuge, but you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

The action I seek is for the minister to investigate the operation of the Department of Human Services respite facility located at Isla Avenue, Glenroy. I also ask that the Minister for Community Services pursue this matter immediately and ensure that these problems are addressed as soon as possible.

### **North-eastern Victoria investment**

**Mr McCURDY** (Murray Valley) — I am a member for the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. The action I seek is that the minister come to north-eastern Victoria to meet with various groups, particularly in the Myrtleford and Bright areas, where I would like to show him the progress made on some of the investments made through the Regional Growth Fund and some of the activities going on and potential opportunities to be had in the area. For example, last Friday I accompanied the member for Benalla to Boynton's Feathertop Winery for the opening of the latest \$150 000 stage of its expansion. It was a lovely day there. The \$150 000 from the Regional Growth Fund is in addition to a further coinvestment by the federal government and a major investment by the Boynton family.

Another significant investment in this region from the Regional Growth Fund has gone towards a cycling track between Bright and Harrierville — a distance of about 25 kilometres. It is being built from each end and does not quite meet in the middle just yet. However, I want to update the minister as to how we are travelling with that project. I also invite the minister to inspect various communities in the region, including at Porepunkah. Lucy O'Dwyer, who runs the Rail Trail Cafe, has many stories to share about the rail trail activities and the value of tourism.

Obviously as the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and Trade I think it is important that the minister hear from the community itself how important and value adding the cyclists, the snow traffic and the food and wine sector are to the region. It is important that the Minister for Regional and Rural Development sees that firsthand. I would also encourage him to meet with members of the Porepunkah United Neighbourhood Community Association, a very proactive group, and of course no trip to the north-east would be complete without at least an update on how we are travelling with the Mount Buffalo Chalet.

The Bright and District Chamber of Commerce is a very active group, and it will be keen to show the minister some of the fine investments that have taken place in Bright and the potential opportunities that lie ahead. If he plays his cards right, I would also be

delighted to take the minister to the Myrtleford Butter Factory. Myrtleford is an outstanding part of the world where Naomi Ingleton runs a fantastic business. It is a small business, but it has a large vision. I have no doubt the Deputy Premier will be impressed with what he finds in our region. If he can fit it into his busy schedule, I would encourage him to come to our wonderful electorate so I can show him some developments in the region.

### **Vocational education and training**

**Mr HERBERT** (Eltham) — I wish to raise an issue for the Minister for Higher Education and Skills. The action I seek is for the minister to lift the cloak of secrecy and release long-overdue public information on the Victorian training market. I call on the minister to stop stalling and release the long-overdue full-year vocational education and training market report 2013 and the now overdue Victorian training market report for the first quarter of 2014. The minister's secrecy over these training market reports has now extended for so long that they are effectively banking up against each other. These reports do not contain trivial details; they contain information that is vital for a full analysis of the performance of the training market — the performance of over \$1 billion in public funding. It is public information that has been released quarterly for years by governments of all political persuasions, information that training providers rely on to make their business plans and evaluate the market.

On 16 May at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings the minister, when questioned about this, said the full-year 2013 report would be 'released shortly'. A month on there is still no sign of these reports; they remain under lock and key in the minister's desk drawer. We all know why the government is withholding these public reports. It is because the training system is in absolute turmoil and the facts stand in stark contradiction to the increasingly feeble rhetoric that we hear from the government. We know that TAFEs are in turmoil, with half of them posting operating losses last year; student fees are skyrocketing; apprenticeship numbers are plummeting; subsidy rates have fallen to unsustainable levels; robbing of public funds is rife; quality training is rapidly becoming a thing of the past; courses have been cut; thousands of teachers have been sacked, and small rural TAFEs are being consumed in the name of mergers. No wonder the government is in major cover-up mode over training.

Since this minister was elevated to his position he has presided over a systematic, shameful cover-up of any public information about the state of the Victorian

training system. He has refused to reveal details of the \$80 million in transitional funds. It took a leaked Auditor-General's report for us to discover that \$129 million in state government funding had been cut from our TAFE system. The list goes on and on. All this information would be clear if the minister released the quarterly training market reports. This is a minister who conducts public business in secrecy — a minister petrified of public disclosure of the decline of our TAFE and training systems. We have a government that is paralysed by scandal and indecision, a government afraid to change the direction of a sinking ship and a training system engulfed in a crisis not of its making but foisted on it by an incompetent administration. It is time the minister released these reports so we can see the total damage that has been done to our training system through this government's lack of proper policy.

### **Bowel cancer awareness**

**Mr BATTIN** (Gembrook) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Health and call on him to assist in our campaign to raise awareness around bowel cancer and assist Bowel Cancer Australia in getting the facts on the table about one of the largest killers in relation to cancer in Australia. Many people are not aware that more than 14 000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year. It is the second biggest cancer killer in our country, the first being lung cancer and the third prostate cancer. If found early, 90 per cent of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully, but fewer than 40 per cent are detected early. Twice-yearly screening for bowel cancer can reduce deaths by up to 33 per cent, which is obviously a substantial level.

Tonight I visited the offices of nearly every member of Parliament and left either under or at their door information in relation to bowel cancer. I particularly encourage people over the age of 50 to look at that information, get a test and ensure that they are on the right side of that early detection test, which may assist them in the prevention of bowel cancer in the future. In their packs members will also get some information and posters for their electorate offices to raise awareness around bowel cancer. In those packs is mention of the 14 000 families affected by bowel cancer in Australia each year.

Unfortunately, as everyone in the chamber knows, we have experience of bowel cancer on this side of the chamber. The member for Carrum underwent chemotherapy today. I spoke to her earlier. She is in a fairly good place at the moment, as far as she can be, given the treatment she is going through. I know everybody in this house would pass on their best wishes

to her. When she spoke to me she mentioned that one of her commitments is to raise awareness of bowel cancer with as many people as possible. Being in this position with bowel cancer can give you extra motivation. If that is what it takes for everybody to speak to one person — and if the pack I have put under members' doors today is not suitable for them, they can pass it on to someone and it could save someone's life — then I think it is worthwhile. I commend the member for Carrum, who, even in her position, still continually puts the message out there that it is up to you to make sure that you get your own test done and are in the best position for the prevention of bowel cancer.

There are many symptoms, and again I think it is worth looking in the pack or going to the Bowel Cancer Australia website. We should not assume that these symptoms could be anything from haemorrhoids to other things. If you have anything that looks like a symptom of bowel cancer, you should make sure that you go and get tested. The Bowel Cancer Australia slogan for this is 'Don't be a fool, test your stool'. Make sure you get tested so you stand the best chance of recovery.

### **South Melbourne Life Saving Club**

**Mr FOLEY** (Albert Park) — Through the member for Gembrook, we all wish the member for Carrum a speedy recovery.

The matter I raise is for the attention of the Premier. The action I seek is that he direct his Minister for Police and Emergency Services to reverse his decision to rip \$1 million from the South Melbourne Life Saving Club for its promised redevelopment and in so doing immediately direct the \$1 million contribution back to the delivery of the promised new clubrooms at that site. I do so because the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has made it clear through his actions that he will do anything to keep this dysfunctional government clinging to power, even robbing the South Melbourne Life Saving Club of \$1 million in funding to develop its new clubrooms in an attempt to sandbag the marginal seat of Mordialloc and its lifesaving club from its no doubt worthy funding claims.

The South Melbourne Life Saving Club is one of the most vibrant and active lifesaving clubs in Victoria, having been operating since 1876. It has operated from its now inadequate 1950s clubrooms whilst delivering one of the state's most successful nippers and cadets leadership programs, a widely respected and successful competition program across many levels, an extensive beach patrol and safety program and a wide-ranging community engagement program, including hugely

popular recreational and competition swims. This is important given the growing population around the South Melbourne beach, with its ready access to the beach via tram route 1. This has made the beach a popular one for many Melburnians and visitors to Melbourne. Along with that popularity we have seen a growing number of rescues and, sadly, over recent years a death or two at the beach.

With this in mind the club was well advanced in its planning. Indeed it had finalised plans for new clubrooms. It was working on the basis that this government would keep its word when it announced in 2011 that it would deliver \$1 million towards the cost of the redevelopment. With the support of the City of Port Phillip the club was well advanced in the process of finalising the tender conditions and terms of the redevelopment to go to market for bids for building and delivery. Imagine the disappointment and surprise of the club and the community when they learnt in April that the government was considering ripping \$1 million from the redevelopment. Sadly the club, the council and Life Saving Victoria now know it is true that the government ripped \$1 million from the club.

With cost overruns at the Mordialloc Life Saving Club and the ripping away of funding by the Abbott federal government from that club, the minister looked around for a source to sandbag the government's marginal and at-risk seat. Instead of doing the right thing and taking the fight up to Canberra, it did what Liberals always do: it failed to stand up for Victorians and instead ripped support from a community that was well advanced in the delivery of its clubrooms. In a media release dated 5 April the minister said he was glad:

... to contribute \$1 million towards the Mordialloc Life Saving Club redevelopment which will revitalise the club's facilities and replace an ageing building ...

What he forgot to say was that it was at the expense of the South Melbourne Life Saving Club. I share the South Melbourne community's concerns and support its demands for funding justice. It is time for the Premier to direct his Minister for Police and Emergency Services to fix the problem.

### **Badger Creek hall**

**Ms McLEISH** (Seymour) — I rise to make a request of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and I am pleased to see that he is in the chamber this evening. The action I seek is that the minister assist the Badger Creek Hall Committee of Management to resolve some of the issues with regard to the maintenance and upgrade of the Badger Creek hall.

When I first visited the hall its history jumped out at me. It has a beautiful old stage, tin features and old honour boards. What also jumped out at me was the amount of work that needs to be done to restore the building to its former glory. The hall was moved from a site closer to the Healesville Sanctuary to its current location on Crown land in 1978. I think previously the hall had been on its own land. It is in a beautiful precinct in Badger Creek. The Country Fire Authority is next door, and the primary school is across the road. The kindergarten and the old school are up the road a little bit. The area continues to grow, and the hall is a hub for the Badger Creek community.

Members of the small but dedicated hall committee are tireless workers for not just the area of Badger Creek but also the community in general. They are stalwarts in the community. The minister has met a couple of them. Kevin Mason was last year an inaugural inductee into the Healesville Sanctuary's hall of fame. He has been a long-time worker at the zoo and also a guide. The minister has met Bob Anderson. He has been actively involved with the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater for a long time and has done some marvellous work. Kathy Cameron is involved in all sorts of things in Healesville, whether it is disability services, the tennis club or the Badger Creek hall. These people do an enormous amount of work for the local community, but they have limited ability to fundraise. If you were to look at the hall, you would see the old concrete toilet block out the back. There are drainage issues and a variety of other needs.

I thank the minister for coming with me recently to the hall when we were both involved with the Mount Toolebewong and District Landcare Group's planting for singles event, and that was terrific. The issues facing the hall committee are very messy and complex. I request that the minister take an active role so we can assist the committee to make the necessary improvements to the hall.

### **Responses**

**Mr RYAN** (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — The member for Murray Valley invited me to visit his electorate and to meet with constituents to hear about their local priorities for their community. As the house knows, the member does a great job of keeping the government and me as the Minister for Regional and Rural Development fully informed of important issues in his community and the major priorities of his constituents. I thank the member for the invitation to visit his electorate and parts of the new electorate of Ovens Valley, and I assure him that I will visit his region in the near future.

Through our \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund a number of developments have occurred within areas that are either now represented by the member or hopefully will be represented by him after the election on 29 November and the readjustment of the boundaries. In the Alpine shire, for example, which will form part of the new Ovens Valley electorate, we have committed just over \$11 million to 36 projects, for a total project cost of just over \$32 million. In Wangaratta rural city we have supported 30 projects through the fund, with over \$6.5 million and a total project cost of over \$12 million. One great example of that investment is the Ovens riverside precinct in Wangaratta, which received \$715 000 from the Regional Growth Fund and has provided an important local community space. That project has been welcomed by the community and has transformed the local area, creating an attractive environment for the entrance to the CBD.

Those are but some of the instances where we have been able to fund projects within the member's electorate and those areas the member will represent if he is returned at the election, which is now 172 days away. I hope to be able to visit the member in his electorate and those parts of what we hope will be his new electorate in the not-too-distant future and to have the opportunity firsthand to see the many initiatives that are so important to his local communities.

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Minister for Community Services) — I am pleased to participate in the adjournment debate this evening. The first matter I will deal with is from the member for Niddrie. I acknowledge and thank him for speaking with me this afternoon so that I had time to get some information about this particular situation so as to be able to provide some information to him and his constituents this evening.

The government acknowledges the incredibly important work that carers do for people with a disability and in many other capacities as well and has sought to invest in a variety of different ways to support them in their important tasks. Part of this commitment has been an expansion of respite, both facility-based and school holiday-type programs and other flexible respite, as well as accommodation and other support. Unfortunately from time to time there are occasions when particular clients stay longer in a respite facility than is normally required while alternative solutions are found for them.

In this particular case in Isla Avenue, Glenroy, there are two young people with extremely complex needs who have been relinquished and who are being

accommodated at this respite facility. That is because at this point there is not any other option for their care. Because of the complexity of the needs and behaviours of these two young people and in order to remove the risk to other children, respite bookings at the house have been temporarily suspended. This creates a significant difficulty for other affected families, including the Greenfield family.

My department is working very hard to try to resolve this situation as a matter of urgency. I have asked the area director to contact Mr Greenfield personally to discuss other options for respite and what might be available for him and his son and also to keep him informed about progress in reopening the house. Reopening the house is, of course, our objective, but first and foremost in making our decisions we must prioritise the safety of all the young people, whether it be those two with complex needs or other young people who may access those respite facilities. This highlights the ongoing challenge and the need for a national disability insurance scheme, which I know has support right across the Parliament, where additional funding will create more flexibility and more choices in relation to respite and ongoing accommodation for a range of people, including people with extremely complex needs. I thank the member for Niddrie for raising that adjournment matter, and I hope some solutions can be provided along with further information for him and his constituent.

The second adjournment matter raised with me was from the member for Narre Warren South. Unfortunately, unlike with the matter raised by the member for Niddrie, I did not get any advance notice of this particular situation, so I have been unable at this late hour to get any information in relation to it. In terms of the Casey North Community Information and Support Service and the Keeping It Together program I did a quick Google search. Based on that and on what the member has provided it looks as if it is a very valuable program and one that has been well utilised and supported by the community. From a high-level look, it seems to be very much a relationship-based support program. It says it provides a safe space to explore strengthening yourself and relationships between partners, children and extended family. It offers things like positive conflict resolution, healthy communication, preventing social isolation, money management tips and ideas, and understanding and coping with anger. Clearly there is a component relating to violence in a relationship, but it also tackles many broader issues in relation to general relationship management.

Unfortunately from a government perspective there are no pots of money waiting for good programs to be

funded. The additional funding — the \$55 million — that the coalition government provided last month has been fully directed in a number of ways, particularly towards expanding our strengthening risk management initiatives, keeping women at high risk of violence safe, funding expanded sexual assault counselling services and other things responding to violence, particularly supporting women and children to get their lives back on track. There is an extensive suite of prevention initiatives, which I would put at least a component of this under, already under way, fully funded and operating.

I would be happy to offer that a relevant person in our area will sit down with the organisation to get some information about the program and see if they can provide some advice about other potential funding sources.

**Mr MULDER** (Minister for Public Transport) — The member for Cranbourne raised an issue with me in relation to the cost of living pressures on people within his community, and he also called for additional bus services in the Cranbourne area. As the member would be aware, the coalition government has established Public Transport Victoria. That was canned by the former Labor government as nothing more than a shifting of deckchairs. I think everyone in this house would recognise the great work that Public Transport Victoria has undertaken on behalf of the government in terms of cleaning up the mess that was left behind by the Labor government. Part of that work has involved working on bus routes.

Public Transport Victoria has been going along and straightening out bus routes where we had buses running in and out of residential streets and not picking up passengers. This was a turn-off for people who wanted to get from point A to point B and to do so as quickly as they possibly could. With the work that has been carried out by Public Transport Victoria we have seen a lift in patronage on the bus network.

I will put to Public Transport Victoria that it have a look at the Cranbourne area to see whether or not there is potential for any additional bus services out there or whether it can undertake the work that was not done by the Labor government in terms of analysis of the bus networks and determining whether there are any wasted kilometres in that bus network. It is important to point out that since the coalition government came to office it has provided approximately 3800 additional bus services a week.

In situations where we open new railway stations the first thing we do is go through and retune all the existing bus networks to make sure they coordinate with the train timetable. Moving forward, we are

looking at an integrated public transport system where tram or bus meets train. I think it is important to make sure that families in particular are not wasting their time.

I think it is also important to note — and I am sure the member for Cranbourne would understand — that under the Labor government transport plan there were two 5 per cent public transport fare increases, with the promise of improved infrastructure and service delivery. I am sure the member would be aware of the appalling situation on the Pakenham-Cranbourne-Dandenong rail corridor. I think about 1 in 10 rail commuters use that very crowded corridor. When we first came to government I was advised that unless a major investment was made in that corridor, we would end up with people being left standing on platforms. That, of course, would have affected a number of the member for Cranbourne's constituents as well.

We have looked at that corridor and made a significant investment of \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion to upgrade the Pakenham-Cranbourne-Dandenong corridor. As part of that investment they will get new trains, and there will be upgrades to level crossings, high-capacity signalling and a new depot down at Pakenham. There will be a massive improvement and a 30 per cent uplift in service delivery along that corridor, something that would never have happened under the Labor government.

As well as that, and because we know that families are under enormous cost of living pressures, zone 2 fares will be available for the cost of a zone 1 ticket, while those who are travelling in zone 2 will still be able to travel at that discounted zone 2 fare. Families who live, for instance, in Cranbourne — perhaps a couple; maybe a husband and wife — and travel daily through zones 1 and 2 could be looking at a saving of somewhere in the order of \$2400 per annum, which is a massive level of assistance in terms of relieving pressure on those families.

I am sure the member would also be aware that a lot of people in that area, particularly during winter, want to head off to Bali or interstate for a holiday at this time of the year to get away from the cold weather, and as part of the Melbourne rail link the government is providing a link to Melbourne Airport. Let us look at the benefits that would provide for people living in Cranbourne. They would be able to get on a train at Cranbourne and travel right through to Melbourne Airport without having to drive and use the long-term car park. You can imagine how that would reduce cost of living pressures for families in Cranbourne.

We are doing an awful lot to assist families in Cranbourne deal with cost of living pressures by

improving services out there with a \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion investment that would never have happened under a Labor government. We are providing an airport rail link to the people of Cranbourne, and Public Transport Victoria will no doubt go through the process of analysing the current bus routes operating through Cranbourne to do away with some of the wasted kilometres on those routes that were established under the Labor government.

**Mr R. SMITH** (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — I rise to respond to the members for Caulfield and Seymour. The member for Caulfield raised issues about the relocation of the Caulfield Park Conservatory. As the member representing a municipality that has the lowest amount of public open space in metropolitan Melbourne I have to say that he has been a great advocate for the good use of the public space that is available. I have asked him to convene a group of people who have an interest in using the open space in his electorate, and he is doing a very good job in making sure that in discussing the moving of the Glen Eira council depot from Caulfield Park to the open space at Booran Road we get the very best outcomes we possibly can. In doing so he will be discussing that issue with a number of sporting clubs and other users in the area. I will certainly be happy to accommodate the meeting he has asked for to ensure that we get a good outcome.

The member for Seymour raised an issue around Badger Creek hall. She is also a very passionate member of her community, and having visited her community a number of times with her I have to say that she is very well known to community groups for being a good advocate in raising various issues. I have visited Badger Creek hall with her, and it is a lovely little hall with some fantastic characteristics. However, it has some issues that we need to consider to see whether we can help to address them. The member mentioned that I met Bob Anderson there, and that is true. He is not only on the committee but is also a passionate member of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater. It is not uncommon in these communities that individuals have more than one volunteering hat, and full credit goes to Bob and to other members of the community for the work they do in that community, ably supported by the member for Seymour.

The member for Bentleigh raised an issue for the Minister for Technology. You have to hand it to the member for Bentleigh for knowing the businesses in her area. I know that she organised quite an extensive tour of businesses in her area for the Minister for Manufacturing, which he very much enjoyed. She continues to be out and about in her community meeting with business owners, and they have got to be very happy about the reduction in payroll tax this

government has brought to businesses, not only in Bentleigh but around this great state of ours. I will pass her issue on to the Minister for Technology, and I am sure he will be very happy to join the member for Bentleigh visiting Visionstream because, as the member said, it is a great Victorian business, and I am sure the minister would be very happy to meet with the company and discuss its future with the member for Bentleigh.

The member for Eltham raised issues for the Minister for Higher Education and Skills regarding the release of the Victorian training market report.

The member for Albert Park raised an issue for the Premier, asking him to direct the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on issues regarding the South Melbourne Life Saving Club.

Finally, the member for Gembrook raised an issue for the Minister for Health about assisting in raising awareness of bowel cancer. The member made reference to our good friend and colleague the member for Carrum, who is going through a difficult time at the moment. Again, I have been out in her electorate, and I have worked with her in this place for the last three and a half years, and it is no surprise to me given the passion she has shown in her electorate and in this place that she is also passionate about raising awareness of bowel cancer. That she is able to do that while not being in the best of health is a credit to her, and I commend the member for Gembrook for raising this issue on her behalf.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The house is now adjourned.

**House adjourned 10.46 p.m.**

