

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Tuesday, 27 May 2014**

**(Extract from book 7)**

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The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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(from 17 March 2014)

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## 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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**Tuesday, 27 May 2014**

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Christine Fyffe) took the chair at 2.06 p.m. and read the prayer.**

**ABSENCE OF MINISTER**

**Dr NAPHTHINE (Premier)** — I wish to advise the house that the Attorney-General, Minister for Finance and Minister for Industrial Relations will be absent from question time today due to illness. Questions for the portfolio of the Attorney-General should be addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and questions for the portfolios of finance and industrial relations should be addressed to the Treasurer.

**Ms Allan** — Before question time starts, Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order that refers to the hearing of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that you appeared at on 12 May. At this hearing the President of the Legislative Council confirmed that the former Speaker, the member for Bass, determined to release to the media internal parliamentary security footage of the member for Frankston. We know that the member for Bass resigned as Speaker in this place on 4 February 2014. The footage in question appeared unattributed in the media on 12 February. As a result the member for Bass would have been in no position to make any formal decision to release this footage following his resignation on 4 February. In light of these revelations I ask that you advise the house what investigations or inquiries you will undertake to determine whether the member for Bass absconded from the office of Speaker with internal parliamentary — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East is making a very lengthy statement on what was a point of order — —

**Ms Allan** — I was about to finish.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member may be arguing that she has not finished, but I ask her to listen to me. The member made a very lengthy statement on a point of order. She is raising a matter that is not a question — —

**Ms Allan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member cannot request action from the Speaker from the floor of the house, and she cannot question what the Speaker may or may not do from the floor of the house. Her point of order is not in order.

**Ms Allan** — Speaker, I was raising with you a very serious security matter — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East! I have ruled. The member's point of order is not a point of order. I ask her to resume her seat.

**Ms Allan** — On a further point of order — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Members are very much aware that the Speaker cannot be questioned from the floor of the house and that the Speaker is not part of the debate on the floor of the house. If the member wishes to write to me, she may do so. I have ruled on her point of order. If she has a very different point of order, of course I will listen to it.

**Ms Allan** — On a different point of order, Speaker, on many occasions over many years there has been the opportunity to raise important issues by way of a point of order — —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms Allan** — Actually, no, it is not.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Please do not respond to interjections. Points of order will be listened to in silence.

**Ms Allan** — Speaker, it has been fairly common practice over many years for important issues to be raised through points of order on the floor of the Parliament, which is the floor of debate in this chamber. We feel this is a very important issue. It refers to matters that were raised at the Public Accounts — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I am having difficulty differentiating this point of order from the previous point of order raised. If it is leading down the same path in asking me to take action, I will not accept the member's point of order from the floor of the house.

**Ms Allan** — I am seeking clarification from you, Speaker, because in the past action has been sought from previous Speakers and has been granted. On a number of occasions previous Speakers have responded positively to issues that have been raised from the floor as points of order. We feel that this is a serious issue. In the past matters like this have been raised and responded to positively by the Speaker at the time, who indicated that they would review the request and come back with a report either to the house or privately. We are asking simply that you uphold those precedents.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East is repeating the previous point of order.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, a point of order cannot be used to raise a question with the Speaker, as you have pointed out. Indeed the point of order was based around the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, and there is a proper process of follow-up from the those hearings. I invite the member for Bendigo East to use the proper processes to follow up whatever issue it is that she wishes to raise.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I thank the Leader of the House for her advice.

**Mr Andrews** — On a point of order, Speaker — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I hope it is not on the same point of order. I have ruled on the point of order raised by the member for Bendigo East.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have ruled on the point of order raised by the member for Bendigo East, and all I am asking is that the Leader of the Opposition not go down the same path.

**Mr Andrews** — On a separate point of order, Speaker, I seek your indulgence for the sake of clarity, if you will give me just one moment to explain what I want clarification on. I will not raise the principal issue, but it is undeniably the case that in the past occupants of the chair have heard questions and have committed to take action to put in train processes to look at matters. I think it would be against the well-established practices of the house if members were unable to raise issues, not prejudging what the view of the Chair might be on those issues.

I am seeking from you, Speaker, clarification as to whether it is your view and your intention to rule that matters as to the business of this house or officers of this house — those who hold an office as a decision of this house — can only be raised with you in your office or in writing and away from this public forum, which forum is rightly the centre of debate and discussion in our state. If that is your position, Speaker, I do not challenge that; I have a view on it, but I am not challenging it. I think some clarification would serve all of us well.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! If my memory serves me well, when Speakers have actually responded to matters in the past, they have been matters that have been raised regarding activity in this chamber, what has been

happening in this chamber. The activity being referred to today was not under the control of the Speaker but was activity that took place at a committee hearing. I have ruled on the point of order. I do not support the 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 comments from the member for Frankston earlier today indicating that he intended to hold frank discussions with the Premier prior to question time. Given that the Premier's dysfunctional and chaotic minority government is held up only, exists only, at the pleasure of the member for Frankston, can the Premier detail what was discussed in these frank discussions?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. As Premier of the state I meet with MPs. I do not normally disclose the nature of these private discussions, but in the interests of accommodating the question from the Leader of the Opposition, I met with the member for Frankston today for a brief period.

**Mr Nardella** — Brief?

**Dr NAPTHINE** — Yes, about 10 or 15 minutes. I met with him, and I listened to the member for Frankston outline some of the things that he learnt from his recent trip to the United States. We talked about transport services, we talked about the upgrading of the Frankston railway station, we talked about the upgrading of Frankston railway services and about the operation of public transport in Victoria, and we discussed those issues with the member for Frankston.

I listened with great interest to the issues the member for Frankston brought back from his recent study tour to the United States, where he outlined a number of things that he had learnt, in particular about transport, about policing and law and order, and they were of great interest. We will continue to meet on a regular basis, and I welcome any member of the opposition who wants to have a meeting with me to contact me, and I will accommodate them.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order!

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I advise the member for Pascoe Vale that I have called for order. The member for Broadmeadows is not allowed to signal to the media gallery.

### Infrastructure delivery

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — My question is to the Premier. How is the Victorian coalition government's investment in congestion-busting, job-creating road and rail infrastructure building a better Victoria for Victorian businesses and families, and are there any threats to this?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the member for Sandringham for his question and for his interest in key infrastructure projects for the state of Victoria. Plan Melbourne outlines the challenges for Melbourne and Victoria with a growing population and increasing economic growth and activity. The state coalition has a clear plan to meet the growing transport needs of Melbourne and Victoria. We are building the regional rail link ahead of time and under budget, fixing the problem we inherited from the Labor government. We are building the much-needed additional port capacity for the port of Melbourne, and in future at the port of Hastings, and we are on track to commence building east–west link stage 1 later this year.

In the recent state budget the government outlined further plans and funding allocations for more game-changing transport infrastructure projects for Melbourne and Victoria, and one of these was the western section of east–west link. The western section of east–west link will deliver the absolutely vital second crossing of our river system. It will take traffic off the already overcrowded West Gate and Monash freeways. It will save 15 to 20 minutes for commuters from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and the western suburbs travelling to the CBD. Most importantly it will take those trucks out of Yarraville, Seddon and Footscray. It will improve transport and efficiency, it will improve productivity and it will create 3000 jobs.

Is it any wonder that the RACV says this about east–west link:

This section of the east–west link will help alleviate the massive congestion on the West Gate Bridge and local roads by providing an alternative ... for motorists and freight users wishing to get across town or from the docks to the Western Ring Road.

Somebody else said about this project — and I quote from the *Geelong Advertiser* of November 2009:

WestLink is an important project for Melbourne that will reduce overreliance on the West Gate Bridge, cater for the

planned expansion of the port of Melbourne, remove cars and trucks from local roads, create more jobs and improve our way of life.

Who said that? It was the member for Tarneit. That is when he supported the western section of east–west link. Another commentator said this:

A backup for the West Gate, which currently handles more than 165 000 vehicles a day, as well as the significant commercial and residential growth in the west, makes this a compelling case. West–east is the way we should view this project.

That was the Leader of the Opposition in October 2012. So we had the member for Tarneit and the Leader of the Opposition supporting the western section of east–west link, supporting the second river crossing, supporting the western suburbs and supporting the opportunities for those growth suburbs in the west out to Werribee, Geelong and Ballarat.

But of course the opposition simply cannot keep a straight policy. The *Age* of 21 May this year says:

The state opposition says it does not support the second stage of the east–west link ...

The Labor Party has kicked sand in the face of western suburbs residents and turned its back on the western suburbs, but the coalition looks after the western suburbs. We will build the full east–west link.

### Member for Frankston

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his 'frank discussions' with the member for Frankston, and I ask: was the Privileges Committee investigation into the member for Frankston's conduct discussed at today's meeting?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for his question. I did say to the member for Frankston that I had read in today's paper there was commentary about the Privileges Committee, but what I told the member for Frankston was that all I know about it is what I have read in the paper, because I am not across the Privileges — —

**Mr Merlino** interjected.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — No.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

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

**Dr NAPTHINE** — In my discussions with the member for Frankston I advised him that I had read in the paper this morning there was commentary about the Privileges Committee, but I told him that I knew nothing about these matters because I am not privy to the considerations and the discussions of the Privileges Committee, and neither should I be.

### **Regional and rural infrastructure**

**Mr McCURDY** (Murray Valley) — My question is to the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. How is the Victorian coalition government's investment in regional infrastructure driving regional growth and jobs, and is the minister aware of any alternative policies?

**Mr RYAN** (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — I thank the member for his question. As the house knows, our coalition government is building a better Victoria by investing in strategic infrastructure to improve efficiencies in our regional industries as well as, of course, across Victoria as a whole. The agricultural and food processing industries are but one example of those that are critical to the economies of regional and rural Victoria. Even though we have only 3 per cent of the arable land in Australia, in the year 2012–13 we exported \$9.4 billion worth of food and fibre from this great state — about 29 per cent of the total exports from that sector in Australia.

Through the budget, our government is providing significant support to enable internationally competitive agricultural and food businesses to thrive by enabling them to move their product to markets both here and overseas. This is being achieved through record infrastructure expenditure over the state in key freight transport areas. In the regions that infrastructure comprises a number of initiatives within this particular budget. For example, up to \$220 million is being committed to the transformational Murray Basin rail project, which will build the Mildura to Geelong rail standardisation link and upgrade country freight.

I understand this is of no interest to opposition members because of course they had nightmares about what former Minister Brumby said in his time as the Minister for Regional and Rural Development as part of the Bracks government. All the way back in 1999 he said repeatedly in this place that Labor would standardise these rail lines. And what did it do until the day it left office 11 sorry years later? Not 1 metre of track was laid, so one can well understand how opposition members are feeling terribly sorry about it now. Even worse, to compound the sin, members opposite will not now commit to doing what our

government has committed to do. What a travesty that would be, if they did not commit to being able to build this magnificent initiative.

But it is only one initiative. There are many more: \$730 million to maintain, restore and improve Victoria's regional road networks; \$362 million for the duplication of the Princes Highway from Winchelsea to Colac; \$86 million for the Calder Highway interchange at Ravenswood — yet another initiative that Labor promised for years and failed to deliver; another \$50 million for an upgrade of the Great Ocean Road; \$32 million for the Sand Road interchange, at long last, on the Princes Highway east; and \$11 million for three new passing lanes on the Princes Highway east.

Rural and regional Victoria will reap enormous benefit from the major projects that have been developed here in Melbourne. The Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor will provide efficiencies to Gippsland and to those industries and people using that line. Even the massive improvements in the signalling are going to mean much more efficiency in the way that line runs. There is east–west link across in the western section. The fact of being able to have product moved into our ports, into the airport or to Epping, as may be, and being able to do it via a second crossing over the Maribyrnong is something that these communities in the west have longed for for so many years. There is Melbourne rail link and the CityLink and Tullamarine widening.

All those initiatives offer enormous benefits to those of us who live in rural and regional Victoria. That is what underpins this budget. There are many initiatives set out in the course of this budget, which will go a long way towards further improving the capacity of the regions of the state to contribute to the fortunes of Victoria, because when the regions are doing well, the whole of Victoria is doing well.

### **Member for Frankston**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier, and it follows his answer to my last question and his admission that the Privileges Committee investigation into the member for Frankston was discussed at today's 'frank' meeting with the member for Frankston. I simply ask: who initiated that part of the conversation? Was it the Premier or the member for Frankston?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. To the best of my recollection, I was the one who raised the issue, and I said to the member for Frankston that I had read in the paper this morning that there was commentary in the

newspaper this morning about the Privileges Committee and when it may or may not report. I said to the member for Frankston that I am not privy to that information, and neither should I be privy to that information. I do not know where that report came from or how it came about, and I made that clear to the member for Frankston. To the best of my recollection, I raised the issue, and I clarified with respect to newspaper reports about a Privileges Committee that relates to the member for Frankston — —

**Mr Merlino** — Why would you do that?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — Because it was in the paper today. Surprise, surprise! I read the paper. It was in the editorial of the paper today, to the best of my recollection, and it is relevant to the member for Frankston. I made it clear to the member for Frankston I know nothing about the considerations or the activities or the deliberations of the Privileges Committee. Nor did I know anything about the assertions about the timing of the tabling of the report, and I made that clear to the member for Frankston. It is as pure and as simple as that.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Pascoe Vale has been interjecting continually. I ask her to cease.

### East–west link

**Ms RYALL** (Mitcham) — My question is to the Treasurer. How is the Victorian coalition government's strong financial management helping to build both stages of east–west link and are there any alternative proposals?

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Mitcham for her question and for her interest in infrastructure to help her constituents and all Victorians. Of course the budget that I handed down earlier this month contains a record \$27 billion of new infrastructure for Victoria, including projects like the airport rail link, which Labor opposes; projects like the Melbourne rail link, which Labor opposes; projects like the Cranbourne–Pakenham rail upgrade, which Labor opposes; and of course projects like the full east–west link, which once again Labor opposes.

East–west link will provide a long-awaited alternative to the M1 corridor. Going back to last week, we saw that incidents along the M1 corridor can have ramifications right across Melbourne's traffic network. Sir Rod Eddington identified this. He said that a city of our size cannot be reliant on one single east–west

corridor. He recommended east–west link as the no. 1 road project in Victoria — and we are getting on and building it.

Many people have endorsed the full east–west link, including the second element of it, which we funded in this year's budget. Let me take the house to some comments:

I think a second river crossing, an important redundancy for the West Gate Bridge and a link direct into the port is a stronger project.

Stronger when you consider the productivity benefits and stronger when you acknowledge that funds are of course limited.

That strong support came from none other the member for Mulgrave, the Leader of the Opposition.

A comment from another big fan:

... Melbourne's most urgent transport need was for a second river crossing to ease congestion on the West Gate Bridge.

'We cannot consign communities such as the outer western suburbs and those dependent on the economic fortunes of freight delivery to being ... poorly serviced by a road that is already at full capacity', Mr Pallas said.

Another big fan said:

... the money being funnelled into ferry planning would be better spent on a second river crossing ...

Altona Labor MP Jill Hennessy said ...

Not proceeding with this project would be a disaster for Victoria. It would consign Melburnians from east and west, Victorians from east and west, to decades of gridlock and decades of congestion. Why would you oppose 3000 jobs on the western section? Why would you oppose reducing congestion and making sure Victorians can get to their businesses and get home more quickly?

Of course, not proceeding would jeopardise \$3 billion worth of federal funding. I note that yesterday one individual claimed that because the commonwealth government has said it would put \$1 billion towards the western section of the east–west link in Victoria in the 2013–14 financial year, that without that money Victoria would be in deficit in 2013–14. There is one slight problem with that. We are actually counting on zero dollars in 2013–14. We were not counting on one extra dollar, so in fact if we get \$1 billion in 2013–14, all that means is that our \$900 million surplus will be \$1 billion greater.

It is all there in black and white in the budget papers. Who would make a \$1 billion error because they cannot

read budget papers? Who would falsely claim that our surplus is in tatters because they are economically illiterate and do not understand how budgets work? None other than that flag-bearer for economic credibility on the Labor side, the shadow Treasurer, the member for Tarneit.

**Member for Frankston**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. It follows his previous answer and admission that the Privileges Committee investigation into the member for Frankston was the subject of his discussions with the member for Frankston today, initiated by the Premier no less, and I ask: what other discussions has the Premier had with the member for Frankston in relation to the Privileges Committee investigation into his conduct?

**Dr NAPTHINE** (Premier) — The discussion was about a newspaper article about the Privileges Committee. That is what the discussion was about and that is where it began and ended, with discussion about a newspaper article, at which I said to the member for Frankston, ‘I am not privy to these matters. I am not aware of these issues’ — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPTHINE** — Because it was in the newspaper today and it is relevant to the member for Frankston. That is the beginning and end of the discussion.

**Melbourne rail link**

**Mr NEWTON-BROWN** (Prahran) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. How will the Victorian coalition government’s investment in the Melbourne rail link benefit commuters and how does this compare with any alternative proposals?

**Mr MULDER** (Minister for Public Transport) — I thank the member for Prahran for his question. There is no doubt that the coalition government is committed to building a better Victoria, and it is also committed to building a better public transport system. I do not think it is any secret either that when we came to government we inherited an absolute mess in relation to public transport from the Labor government.

Whether it was performance of the network, whether it was punctuality, reliability, overcrowding, fare evasion or the bypass of the Altona loop, with Public Transport Victoria in place we have started to turn that mess around in just three and a half years. Whether it was the regional rail link, the Pakenham-Cranbourne line or the Frankston line, we put the money in. We have made the

investment. We are investing in rebuilding our public transport network and rebuilding our rail network. Cardinia Road and Lynbrook stations, the Sunbury line electrification, myki — the list of absolute failures we inherited from the Labor government goes on and on. We have gone down the path of addressing those issues.

We will now start to rebuild the core of the metropolitan rail link with the Melbourne rail link, the biggest boost in rail capacity in the history of Victoria. We are going to increase capacity by about 35 000 per hour in the peak, and we are going to build a Melbourne Airport rail link for the people of Victoria. Your holiday starts when you get on a train with the coalition government. It will be built without shutting down Swanston Street, the world’s busiest tram route, for up to five years, and it will provide more capacity than the Melbourne Metro project of the Labor government. It will deliver more trains more often; it will carry more people.

Frankston trains will travel through new tunnels, the stations at Domain and Montague, and then into the city loop and Southern Cross station before running to Belgrave and Lilydale, via Richmond — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Essendon is warned.

**Mr MULDER** — It will deal with trains crossing each other’s paths, and it will untangle the network. Some commentators have been whingeing and moaning that travel on the city loop will change for Cranbourne and Pakenham commuters. The city loop is a circle; it actually goes around. Cranbourne and Pakenham trains will still service Flinders Street and Southern Cross stations, two of our busiest and iconic railway stations on the city loop. They will still have access to South Yarra, which is very important to Prahran, and they will still receive a connection to the Melbourne Airport.

Our plan is fully funded, unlike the former Melbourne Metro project of the Labor government. The Victorian ALP platform, signed off by the Leader of the Opposition, says Labor will commit to one-third of the construction costs of the Melbourne Metro rail — —

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Speaker, there is a longstanding practice contained in *Rulings from the Chair* that internal party documents are not relevant to government business and should not be referred to during question time, and answers from ministers — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms Allan** — We are not embarrassed in any way, shape or form by any pathetic attempt you put forward, buddy.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East will not turn a point of order into a debate. Members of the government will hear points of order in silence. I draw the member for Bendigo East back to her point of order.

**Ms Allan** — I am quite happy to come back to the point of order without interjections, Speaker.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Please do not respond to interjections. Points of order will be heard in silence.

**Ms Allan** — I have given up on that. It is a longstanding practice that Speakers in the past have ruled ministers out of order when they have gone down this path. We are happy for a full debate on transport matters — we welcome it and want to bring it on — but it is not relevant to government business at this stage. We ask you to uphold the practices that are contained in *Rulings from the Chair* and in the standing orders and ask the minister to come back to answering the question and for once talk about what his government is doing, not about the opposition.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East should not enter into debate.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, I think the member for Bendigo East may have missed the question. The question canvassed alternative proposals, and that is what the minister is putting forward.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not recall anything in *Rulings from the Chair* about not referring to documents. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr MULDER** — As I say, one prominent Victorian has an alternative policy, and that alternative would mean Cranbourne and Pakenham trains would no longer stop at Southern Cross, Parliament or Flagstaff. I have with me a copy of the former Melbourne Metro rail project that shows trains running from Pakenham, Cranbourne and Dandenong going straight through to Footscray. I cannot see in that particular document trains stopping at Southern Cross, Flagstaff or Parliament; I cannot see them stopping there.

Another document has been handed out at railway stations that says, ‘Denis Napthine cancels your city loop service’, and, ‘Denis Napthine cancels all city loop

services for the Pakenham and Cranbourne lines’, when in actual fact — —

**Ms Allan** — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer you to page 157 of *Rulings from the Chair* of December 2013 and the final ruling on that page, ‘Question based on a party document’. I ask you to uphold *Rulings from the Chair* and standing orders and ask the minister to come back to answering the question within the confines of government business. He is clearly offending against the standing orders; he is offending against *Rulings from the Chair*. I ask that you uphold the standing orders and bring him back to order.

**Ms Asher** — On the point of order, Speaker, at page 157 of *Rulings from the Chair* the Speaker’s ruling to which the member for Bendigo East referred is about a question based on a party document. The ruling from Speaker Lindell states:

The Speaker ruled a question out of order on the grounds that the basis for the question was a document from a party (in this instance minutes of an ALP committee meeting).

I put it to you, Speaker, that the question that was asked by the member for Prahran was not based on a party document and in fact called for alternative proposals, which the minister is outlining. I also put it to you, Speaker, that the member for Bendigo East, who has raised this point of order, has misunderstood the Speaker’s ruling by former Speaker Lindell.

**Ms Allan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Bendigo East! The ruling the member for Bendigo East has quoted is about a question. I do not uphold her point of order.

**Mr MULDER** — Quite clearly the former government’s Melbourne Metro project shows the trains do not stop at Southern Cross, do not stop at Flagstaff and do not stop at Parliament. So this is a lie that is being rolled out currently by the opposition; quite clearly it is totally incorrect. The shadow Minister for Public Transport needs a lesson in how the loop works. The member needs to sit down and compare both projects because quite clearly Melbourne rail link is a far superior project. You get an airport rail link for the same cost as Melbourne Metro — —

**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, and I ask: is it the

Premier's position that it is appropriate for him to discuss the Privileges Committee investigation into the member for Frankston with the member for Frankston, the very member who props up this Premier's minority government?

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I totally reject the premise of the question. I did not discuss the operation of the Privileges Committee or the deliberations of the Privileges Committee or the reporting of the Privileges Committee. What I did discuss with the member for Frankston was a newspaper article — an editorial in the newspaper — which made some commentary on the Privileges Committee. I did not discuss, because I am not privy to them, the deliberations of the Privileges Committee. I am not privy to its discussions, and I am not privy to the timing of its reporting. So I am not aware of any of those things, I am not across any of them, I am not privy to them. The only discussion was limited to a brief discussion of the article — the editorial — in today's paper.

### **Police and protective services officers**

**Mr WATT** (Burwood) — My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. How is the Victorian coalition government building a better and safer Victoria by investing in more front-line police and protective services officers (PSOs) at rail stations?

**Mr WELLS** (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I thank the member for Burwood for his commitment to law and order. When the coalition was in opposition it campaigned very strongly to ensure that it had a tough-on-law-and-order policy coming into government. The reason we did that was that Victorians were fed up with 11 years of a soft-on-crime approach by Labor. The coalition committed to 1700 police and 940 PSOs, and it is absolutely committed to delivering on that commitment.

I am very pleased to announce that as of Friday we now have 1525 police on the beat. This is the largest single investment in Victoria Police in the history of the force. In addition to that are the 940 PSOs that we have committed to. I am very pleased to announce that as of Friday we have 751 of those PSOs out on the railway stations. When we look at the satisfaction surveys of rail commuters, they place the PSOs as a very high priority. In the 2014–15 budget \$77 million was committed to things such as the Echuca police station, the taser guns for 24-hour regional police stations, the new police station at Ballarat West, and of course moving the mounted police to expand the arts centre.

The issue is that the Chief Commissioner of Police makes allocations within Victoria Police, and Victoria Police is moving to a new model. Rather than reducing front-line police, the coalition government is boosting the front-line force. Some of the issues the chief commissioner is tackling with task forces are family violence, ice addiction, organised crime and bikie gangs. Those are all front-line issues that we expect Victoria Police to be dealing with, and, having an extra 1525 officers means that the chief commissioner can set up special task forces to do that.

For example, there are 30 family violence specialist task force units across the state because we need to tackle this blight on society. So when there is a report of family violence — and there are 60 000 such reports a year — instead of a patrol van being sent out, a member or members of a specialist family violence task force will handle it. It means that the offender is dealt with, it means that the victims are responded to and it means that there is a hook-up between the Department of Human Services and the victims.

Anyone who argues that family violence is not a front-line issue for Victoria Police is blatantly wrong. These changes will encourage more women to come forward who are dealing with family violence, and this is an issue that the Naphtine government is absolutely committed to addressing. The irony in all this is there was one group down at Geelong the other day that was criticising the chief commissioner about the divisional model. Then this week — today; a week later — it is out there supporting the chief commissioner. This is another example of Labor members being all over the place, flipping and flopping when it comes to law and order; and they should hang their heads in shame.

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

### **ROAD SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

#### *Introduction and first reading*

**Mr MULDER** (Minister for Roads) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Road Safety Act 1986 and the Rail Management Act 1996, to make consequential amendments to the Accident Compensation Act 1985, the Transport Accident Act 1986 and the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 and for other purposes.

**Read first time.**

## PRIVATE HEALTH CARE FACILITIES BILL 2014

### *Introduction and first reading*

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Mental Health)** introduced a bill for an act to regulate private health-care facilities, to repeal part 4 of the Health Services Act 1988 and make consequential amendments to that act and other acts and for other purposes.

**Read first time.**

## NATIVE VEGETATION CREDIT MARKET BILL 2014

### *Introduction and first reading*

**Mr R. SMITH** (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to establish a native vegetation credit market, to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

**Ms NEVILLE** (Bellarine) — Can I ask the minister to provide a brief explanation of the bill?

**Mr R. SMITH** (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — This bill will put a legislative framework around current native vegetation offset procedures.

**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.

### PETITIONS

**Following petitions presented to house:**

#### Ann Nichol House

To the Honourable Speaker and members of the Victorian Legislative Assembly:

We the undersigned note the intention of Bellarine Community Health to sell Ann Nichol House.

We also note Bellarine Community Health's lack of consultation about the sale and the adverse effect any sale would have on the community and the level of care for our elderly.

We call on the Napthine government to intervene in any sale of Ann Nichol house and to immediately sack the CEO and board of Bellarine Community Health.

**By Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) (273 signatures).**

#### Aged-care facilities privatisation

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

1. the Napthine Liberal government's move to privatise public sector aged care in Victoria means that Merv Irvine Nursing Home and Ian Brand Nursing Home in Bundoora are at risk of privatisation or closure;
2. despite an ageing population, the Baillieu-Napthine governments have closed public sector aged-care facilities in Ballarat, Castlemaine, Koroit, Kyneton, Melbourne, Melton South and Williamstown and privatised one facility in Rosebud;
3. the 2012–13 Victorian state budget update foreshadows cuts to public sector aged care of \$25 million in 2014–15 and \$50 million in 2015–16;
4. Mr Napthine's plans to privatise aged care would significantly remove choices for Victorian families.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria urgently calls on the Napthine government to stop the privatisation or closure of Merv Irvine Nursing Home and Ian Brand Nursing Home.

**By Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) (10 signatures).**

#### Chandler Highway bridge

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

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

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

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

**By Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (107 signatures).**

### **TAFE funding**

A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the state government's plan to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from TAFE funding. In particular, we note:

1. the TAFE Association has estimated up to 2000 jobs could be lost as a result of these cuts;
2. many courses will be dropped or scaled back and several TAFE campuses face the possibility of closure;
3. with 49 000 full-time jobs already lost in this term of government, skills training has never been more important for Victorians.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urges the Baillieu state government to abandon the planned funding cuts and guarantee no further cuts will be made.

**By Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (21 signatures).**

### **Planning permit process**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the Baillieu government's plan to rush through 'VicSmart' legislation which threatens the livability of Melbourne and our suburbs.

In particular, we note:

1. developers that meet the VicSmart standards will be fast-tracked for multistorey developments and local residents will have no warning, no say and no right to go to VCAT;
2. this legislation does not protect our suburbs from inappropriate development and it does not protect the rights of Victorians to have a say about the shape of their community;
3. this unrestrained development will put more and more pressure on already strained infrastructure like roads, schools, health services and public transport.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly urges the Baillieu government to withdraw the radical reshaping of the planning act that will remove community consultation from the development approval process and to rethink, to consult with the community and to ensure that any proposal protects and improves rather than destroys our neighbourhoods.

**By Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (16 signatures).**

### **East-west link**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the Napthine Liberal

government's intention to build an \$8 billion tunnel. In particular we note that:

1. the Napthine Liberal government has failed to present a business case for this tunnel;
2. the \$8 billion tunnel will do nothing to fix traffic congestion in the Ivanhoe electorate;
3. the \$8 billion tunnel will mean that there is no funding left for transport projects in the Ivanhoe electorate.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the Napthine Liberal government to give Victorians the say they deserve and not sign any contracts for this project before the 2014 state election.

**By Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) (448 signatures).**

### **Craigieburn-Hanson roads, Craigieburn**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of Craigieburn and surrounding areas draws to the attention of the house the deep discontent of residents about the current state of the intersection of Craigieburn Road and Hanson Road in Craigieburn in the state of Victoria. In particular, we note that the intersection:

1. suffers from congestion during peak times as a major thoroughfare for all areas of Craigieburn and surrounding towns;
2. diverts through traffic into residential streets; and
3. is a safety risk for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria allocate funding for the purpose of installing traffic lights at the corner of Craigieburn Road and Hanson Road, Craigieburn.

**By Ms BEATTIE (Yuroke) (1357 signatures).**

**Tabled.**

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

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

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

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**Annual review 2013**

**Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale), by leave, presented report, together with appendices.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be printed.**

*Alert Digest No. 6*

**Ms CAMPBELL (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 6 of 2014* on:**

- Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014**
- Appropriation (Parliament 2014–2015) Bill 2014**
- Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**
- Building a Better Victoria (State Tax and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2014**
- Children, Youth and Families Amendment Bill 2014**
- Corrections Amendment (Smoke-Free Prisons) Bill 2014 (Assembly initiated)**
- Fines Reform Bill 2014**
- Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2014**
- Local Government (Brimbank City Council) Amendment Bill 2014**
- Treasury Legislation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2014**
- Water Amendment (Flood Mitigation) Bill 2014**

**together with appendices.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be printed.**

**DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled by Clerk:**

*Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:*

Order under s 17B granting a licence over Queen Victoria Gardens and Memorial Statue Reserve

Orders under s 17D granting leases over:

Geelong Botanical Gardens and Public Recreation Reserve

Mordialloc-Mentone Beach Park Reserve

*Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* — Report 2013 under s 96

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE — Report 2013

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

Ararat — C29

Banyule — C80, C102

Boroondara — C149

Brimbank — C128

Campaspe — C50 Part 1

Frankston — C94

Golden Plains — C62

Greater Bendigo — C195

Greater Dandenong — C138

Indigo — C53, C64

Maribymong — C122

Melbourne — C220, C233

Moreland — C151

Murrindindi — C51

Port Phillip — C140

Stonnington — C200

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

*Corrections Act 1986* — SR 25

*Financial Management Act 1994* — SR 29

*Magistrates' Court Act 1989* — SR 28

*Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act 1983* — SR 26

*Rail Safety Act 2006* — SR 30

*Rail Safety National Law Application Act 2013* — SR 31

*Road Safety Act 1986* — SR 27

*Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983* — SRs 33, 34

*Transport (Safety Schemes Compliance and Enforcement) Act 2014* — SR 32

*Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998* — SR 35

*Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:*

Documents under s15 in relation to Statutory Rules 15, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Documents under s 16B in relation to:

*Education and Training Reform Act 2006:*

Ministerial Direction MD141

Ministerial Direction to Adult Education  
Institutions on Executive Remuneration

Ministerial Order 749

*Racing Act 1958* — Harness Racing Victoria —  
Notice of amendments to Australian Rules of  
Harness Racing.

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

*Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment Act  
2014* — Whole Act — 21 May 2014 (*Gazette S155, 20 May  
2014*)

*Emergency Management Act 2013* — Whole Act — 1 July  
2014 (*Gazette S148, 13 May 2014*)

*Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Reduction of  
Red Tape) Act 2014* — Remaining provisions (except  
s 16) — 14 May 2014 (*Gazette S148, 13 May 2014*)

*Rail Safety National Law Application Act 2013* — Remaining  
provisions — 19 May 2014 (*Gazette S148, 13 May 2014*)

*Summary Offences and Sentencing Amendment Act 2014* —  
Part 1 and Part 2 (except ss 5 and 6) — 28 May 2014  
(*Gazette S155, 20 May 2014*)

*Transport Legislation Amendment (Rail Safety Local  
Operations and Other Matters) Act 2013* — Remaining  
provisions — 19 May 2014 (*Gazette S148, 13 May 2014*)

*Transport (Safety Schemes Compliance and Enforcement) Act  
2014* — Part 1 and ss 157 and 158 — 18 May 2014;  
Remaining provisions — 19 May 2014 (*Gazette S148,  
13 May 2014*).

## FILMING APPROVAL BILL 2014

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Council.**

**Read first time on motion of Ms ASHER (Minister  
for Innovation).**

## ROYAL ASSENT

**Message read advising royal assent on 13 May to:**

**Corrections Amendment (Further Parole  
Reform) Bill 2014**  
**Honorary Justices Bill 2014**  
**Sale of Land Amendment Bill 2014**  
**State Taxation Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**  
**Transport Legislation Amendment (Further Taxi  
Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2014.**

## APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

**Messages read recommending appropriations for:**

**Building a Better Victoria (State Tax and Other  
Legislation Amendment) Bill 2014**  
**Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**  
**Children, Youth and Families Amendment Bill  
2014**  
**Corrections Amendment (Smoke-free Prisons)  
Bill 2014**  
**Fines Reform Bill 2014**  
**Treasury Legislation and Other Acts  
Amendment Bill 2014**  
**Water Amendment (Flood Mitigation) Bill 2014.**

## RESIGNATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER

**Ms Broad**

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have received the  
following letter from the Governor dated 9 May:

I write to advise that the Honourable Candy Broad, MLC,  
called on me today and handed me her letter of resignation as  
member of the Legislative Council for Northern Victoria,  
effective from today. It seems that section 27A of the  
Constitution Act 1975 requires a joint sitting of the Council  
and Assembly to fill this vacancy.

I have advised the Premier, the President and the Leader of  
the Opposition in like terms.

I enclose a copy of Ms Broad's letter for your records.

## JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

### Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have received the  
following communication from the Minister for Liquor  
and Gaming Regulation:

Elected member of the board of the Victorian Responsible  
Gambling Foundation (foundation)

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Act 2011  
provides for three members of the board of the foundation to  
be elected jointly by the Legislative Assembly and the  
Legislative Council from members of those houses.

On 28 March 2012, a joint sitting of the Legislative Assembly  
and Legislative Council elected Mr Tim McCurdy, Mr David  
Southwick and Mr Trezise to the board of the foundation.

Mr Trezise most recently tendered his resignation from the  
board of the foundation, which was accepted by the Governor  
in Council on 28 May 2014.

I would be grateful if arrangements could be made for a joint  
sitting to occur, at the earliest time that is convenient for both

chambers, to elect a parliamentary member to the board of the foundation to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr Trezise. I am writing similarly to the President of the Legislative Council and will send a copy of this letter to the clerks of each house.

## 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 allow ministers' second-reading speeches in relation to the bills listed on the notice paper for Wednesday, 28 May, or Thursday, 29 May, to be incorporated into *Hansard*.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MEMBERS STATEMENTS

### Indian community

**Mr ANDREWS** (Leader of the Opposition) — It was my pleasure to spend time with members of Victoria's Indian community over the last few weeks on some of their most sacred days and in some of their most sacred spaces.

In late March I attended Holi festival at Sandown Racecourse with my colleague the member for Narre Warren South, along with Labor candidates Nick Staikos and Tim Richardson. Holi festival marks the victory of good over evil and is a fantastic community celebration not just for the Indian community but for the broader multicultural Victorian community.

On 6 April I also attended Vaisakhi festival at Sandown Racecourse along with my colleagues the members for Clayton, Lyndhurst and Cranbourne. I also visited the two biggest Sikh temples in Victoria, at Craigieburn and Blackburn, on 6 April and 13 April. Joining me were my colleagues the members for Yan Yean and Yuroke, along with Ros Spence, Labor's candidate for Yuroke, and Steve Dimopoulos, Labor's candidate for Oakleigh. Sikh temples are true community centres. Not only do they cater for Sikh or Indian people but everyone is welcome, regardless of class, race or nationality.

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak 500 years ago to overcome social discrimination. It also provides the concept of the community kitchen called Langar. At the Langar no-one goes hungry and everybody gets a hot meal. Together, all Victorian Sikh temples serve more than 50 000 free meals every month. The Sikh temples also make contributions to the Good Friday Appeal,

organise blood donation camps, offer food to the homeless and run breakfast clubs in schools for disadvantaged students. These are all admirable community purposes that are alive and well among the Gurudwaras, and these are just some of the ways that Victoria's Indian community has made our state — the multicultural capital of the world — fairer and stronger and better for the future.

### Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — On Sunday, 11 May, the third Victorian government-supported Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) concluded, and I am pleased to announce that it was a great success. The festival ran from 1 May to 11 May and featured over 40 films in 20 languages, with more than half being Australian premieres.

Vidya Balan returned for her third year as festival ambassador, and this year we were honoured to have Bollywood screen legend Amitabh Bachchan open the festival. He attended a range of events, including a lunch at Government House and the festival's opening night on Thursday, 1 May. The Victorian government was also honoured to have Mr Bachchan at the inaugural IFFM awards night on 2 May at the Princess Theatre, where he received the International Screen Icon award. This year the local community helped to shape the Indian film festival by providing feedback on the festival's languages, films and events.

The Victorian government established the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne as an election commitment prior to the last election to build closer economic, institutional and cultural engagement between Victoria and the subcontinent. Events such as this form a critical part of the Victoria's international engagement strategy, set out in *Victoria and India — From Engagement to Partnership*, a document I launched some time ago. Since December 2010 the government has led 10 trade missions to India, which have collectively generated some \$666 million in export sales for Victorian businesses. I look forward to more film festivals.

### Marymede Catholic College

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** (Mill Park) — I have great pleasure in informing the house of the visit to Parliament this morning by students of Marymede Catholic College in South Morang. The year 10 students were accompanied by teachers Mark Russell and Carla Esposito as part of their Issues in Running the Country course. The school has only just introduced this course, and I congratulate it for acknowledging

how important it is for young people to learn about how they are governed and how they can engage with the process of democratic decision making in an economic, legal and global context. Some of the key features of their course are the mining resources boom, its causes and its consequences for Australia; the economics of global warming and policies to tackle it; the global financial crisis and its causes in brief, its consequences and the policy response to it; changing the law, in particular with reference to Aboriginal rights; the impact of new technology; and human rights, social justice and the law.

The students asked questions on important issues, including the higher education contribution scheme fees right through to a rail extension to Mernda. It was great to see that the students are thinking through critical issues that are pertinent and timely and that they are learning and thinking about how they can engage in democratic processes in the lead-up to their attaining the vote at the age of 18.

Currently the school has 1500 students from prep to year 12, with room for further growth, and that will happen in this growing corridor of South Morang. Since its establishment in 2005 Marymede has developed into an excellent and well-rounded learning environment for thousands of young people in the local area. I am very proud to see that the school is engaging as it is in the politics of its community.

### **Rowville Country Fire Authority station**

**Mr WELLS** (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — On Sunday I had the absolute privilege to be in Rowville with the member for Ferntree Gully to officially open the new integrated fire station and officially hand over its new Scania heavy pumper. The Victorian government is committed to the state's emergency services, and a large part of the government's commitment is ensuring that they have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs. That is why \$5.84 million has been invested in the new Rowville fire station, with a further \$765 000 for the heavy pumper. Now well and truly part of suburban Melbourne, with some remnants of its rural past still with us, the Rowville Country Fire Authority (CFA) station requires the sort of equipment needed to deal with residential and industrial fires and other incidents. Consequently the Scania heavy pumper features a 4000 litre per minute pump and can carry 2000 litres of water. It has a range of improved occupational health and safety features, a thermal imaging camera and a gas detector.

Rowville became an integrated station in March last year. This magnificent station has the objective of meeting the increased demands on CFA firefighters in urban growth areas. While this station is situated just outside my current electorate of Scoresby, the station falls within the boundaries of the new Rowville electorate. I am pleased that it will serve the needs of a large area that has undergone significant growth over the past 20 years. The Rowville CFA station serves a growing community of 38 000 residents, seven schools, large industrial and commercial precincts and many large parks and reserves.

### **Greg Sperling**

**Ms HENNESSY** (Altona) — I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding educational leader who has made a substantial and meaningful contribution to Melbourne's west. Mr Greg Sperling has been the principal of Point Cook Secondary College, a school established under the previous Labor government which first opened its doors in 2008. Mr Sperling recently advised me of his intention to retire. I am sure I am reflecting the views of many members of the local school community when I say that my response to this news was bittersweet. I am saddened that the Point Cook community and the education sector more generally will lose the benefit of a man who has devoted his life to public education.

Mr Sperling is a person who has used the wisdom and benefit of his experiences to grow opportunities for students from Melbourne's west. He is an educational leader who understands the importance of investing in his workforce. He understands the difference that a good teacher, a good curriculum and a connected school community that cares about every student can make in a young person's life.

Mr Sperling is an education leader who has risen to the many challenges that get thrown at our schools and their leadership, from the challenge of establishing a new school or a new school council to ensuring that the opportunities available to students from all over Victoria are available to those in Melbourne's west. It is my very strong view that teaching is a noble profession and one that we undervalue. Dynamic, innovative and resilient educational leaders in school communities are worth their weight in gold. Mr Sperling is one, and I wish him all the best.

### **Waurin Ponds shopping centre**

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) — Last Wednesday morning I was delighted to be with the Premier and the mayor of Greater Geelong, Darryn Lyons, at the

opening of the first stage of the \$90 million Waurn Ponds shopping centre expansion. Phase 1 is now complete, with Coles, Kmart and approximately 20 speciality shops open for business. It is creating employment, with 200 jobs during the construction phase, and 500 more retail jobs will be generated when phase 2 is complete. Waurn Ponds is a major retail hub and will provide much-needed job opportunities for the growing population in the South Barwon electorate.

### **Carbon Nexus**

**Mr KATOS** — I then joined the Premier at the launch of Deakin University's new Carbon Nexus research facility at Waurn Ponds. The Napthine government has provided \$10 million towards the \$103 million Australian Future Fibre Research and Innovation Centre, an exciting collaboration between Deakin University, the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing and CSIRO. The Geelong region is set to reap the benefits of the growth in global demand for carbon fibre products, and this facility will lead the transformation of Victoria and Australia's manufacturing and fibre industries.

### **Armstrong Creek**

**Mr KATOS** — The celebration of the 1000th titled lot at Warralily was another boost of confidence for investment in the Geelong region. The Urban Development Institute of Australia March 2014 property report shows that an 11 per cent growth figure positions Geelong as the strongest regional market in Victoria. The Warralily estate in Armstrong Creek will comprise 5000 homes for approximately 15 000 residents. Currently an estimated five families are moving into new homes every week, and approximately 300 to 500 people work on the development every day. The livability of Armstrong Creek will be further enhanced by the coalition government's commitment of \$7.7 million funding towards a neighbourhood health and community centre to be located along Burvilles Road.

### **Craigieburn–Hanson roads, Craigieburn**

**Ms BEATTIE** (Yuroke) — It is with a great deal of frustration that I again rise to my feet in this chamber to raise the matter of Hanson Road in Craigieburn and the failure by this government to fund it and other urgent road projects in the electorate of Yuroke. Today I lodged a petition signed by over 1300 local residents calling for traffic lights to be installed at the intersection of Hanson and Craigieburn roads in Craigieburn. This section of road has gone well beyond being a daily traffic inconvenience and is a serious safety risk to

motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike. A number of accidents have been recorded at the scene, and I have repeatedly raised with the Minister for Roads and VicRoads the need for urgent action to prevent further serious injury or worse.

I would welcome a visit from the Minister for Roads or somebody from VicRoads to the electorate of Yuroke to see firsthand the intersection in question. In fact we would be so grateful for being graced by the presence of the Minister for Roads and willing to assist him in making good use of his time in travelling to the north of Melbourne that we would gladly encourage him to travel to Craigieburn via Somerton Road to ensure that he gets a feel for the urgent attention needed for that section of the road as well. We were indeed fortunate to have a visit from the Labor shadow Minister for Roads to see these issues firsthand.

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

### **North-eastern Victoria tourism**

**Dr SYKES** (Benalla) — I invite all members of this house and their friends and families to visit north-eastern Victoria on the coming Queen's Birthday long weekend. Food and wine, great company and magnificent scenery await visitors who wish to come to the best part of Victoria, which the member for Murray Valley, the member for Benambra and I call home.

### **Weary Dunlop You've Got What It Takes Award**

**Dr SYKES** — On a different note, I hosted nine young students from the Benalla electorate and their friends and families at the Collingwood versus West Coast Eagles game last Saturday at the MCG. The students were winners of this year's Weary Dunlop You've Got What It Takes Award. They all enjoyed a great game and a fantastic atmosphere, courtesy of over 50 000 fans, most of whom were barracking for Collingwood.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr SYKES** — Bad luck. I thank the AFL for its generosity in co-sponsoring the day. I hope the MPs who take over the area covering the electorate of Benalla will continue this much-appreciated award.

### **Benalla electorate sporting awards**

**Dr SYKES** — It has also been a great pleasure recently to meet and congratulate four winners of an award in our area which recognises young people who

excel in sport. Amy from Myrtleford, Amie and Chelsea from Benalla and Jessie from Euroa are all very capable athletes, but more importantly they are fine young people.

### **Boral Western Landfill**

**Ms KAIROUZ** (Kororoit) — I rise today to pay tribute to residents of my electorate for their tireless work in campaigning against the expansion of the Boral landfill site in Deer Park and to call on the Melton City Council to listen to and act in the best interests of the community it represents and reject the permit for the expansion of the site.

For many years, residents of Deer Park, Derrimut and Caroline Springs have had to endure repulsive odours emanating from the Boral landfill site. For most residents the application to expand the site came as an unpleasant surprise, with little or no community consultation. In February I called a community meeting in Caroline Springs to raise this issue with residents and plan a strategy for the community to fight the expansion. With Cesar Melhem, a member for Western Metropolitan Region in the other house, I addressed a crowd of over 500 and organised for a petition and copies of letters of objection addressed to the council to be circulated. I understand that in excess of 7000 letters of objection have been received to date by Melton council and that petitions containing over 10 000 signatures have been presented to the Parliament.

A committee was established to raise awareness in the community about the proposed expansion, and that work is continuing. Tonight the Melton council will vote to decide whether to grant the permit allowing Boral to expand the area zoned for landfill to a size of more than 100 MCGs. Given the location of the site — it is within the urban growth boundary area earmarked for future development — such a decision would seem to be at odds with any semblance of common sense. As a local resident of Caroline Springs and member of Parliament, I call on the councillors to act in the interests of the residents they represent and to say no to this outrageous application.

### **East Ringwood Football Club**

**Ms RYALL** (Mitcham) — It was a pleasure to join East Ringwood Football Club on Saturday for its 1000th game. The club was founded in 1929 and so has a long history in the local community. It is a family club, and the ground is always packed for home games. Volunteers are the essence of the club, making sure the grounds are well maintained and that everything required to ensure that the players are able to play at

their best is done. The volunteers also make sure that hot food and drinks are available to those present at games, particularly on cold days. I take my hat off to the East Ringwood Football Club for all it does in making the community a great place.

### **Blackburn Primary School**

**Ms RYALL** — I was pleased to join Blackburn Primary School community to celebrate its 125-year anniversary celebrations. The school has an exciting and vibrant history, and at one time had over 1000 students. With major redevelopment work under way and with a wonderful learning community and culture, I know Blackburn Primary School has a very exciting future.

### **Eastern Volunteers**

**Ms RYALL** — I was delighted to speak at an Eastern Volunteers lunch dedicated to its amazing force of volunteers who do extraordinary work in our local community. This was undertaken during National Volunteer Week. I thank all at Eastern Volunteers for the wonderful work they do. I know that the people they serve and those who are helped to live their lives truly appreciate them.

### **Ringwood Secondary College**

**Ms RYALL** — I congratulate Ringwood Secondary College on its 60th anniversary and on the unveiling of its bollards. Having 60 years of the school's history encapsulated on the bollards will be a continual reminder to all at the school of the richness of the school's history and its progress over time.

### **Side by Side Indigenous program**

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — Today I had the privilege of launching the Side by Side Indigenous program aimed at helping to coordinate lifelong learning and skills for jobs. The launch in Broadmeadows was made in conjunction with two of Australia's most eminent elders — Norm Smith medallist Michael Long, and retired Supreme Court judge Frank Vincent. The launch, in acknowledgement of National Reconciliation Week, is vital because while three-quarters of Australians have jobs, the rate in the Indigenous community is less than half. This is a critical gap we aim to help bridge. The proof of concept we will harness is the global learning village model for coordinating the three tiers of government, business and civil society. Programs provide lifelong learning and skills training.

Two years ago the Broadmeadows community lost its Koori school after the children stopped attending. Our aim is to help connect the disconnected. When Michael Long's wife, Leslie, was the principal of the Ballerit Mooroop school, the school was successful, so I approached Leslie and Michael Long after attending the launch of the Michael Long academy for Indigenous footballers in the Northern Territory, which also features a learning and leadership centre. The critical investment is in attitude, education and opportunity, to deny that miser fate, not just building bigger police stations, grander courthouses and more prisons.

In the countdown to Saturday night's Dreamtime at the G it is worth remembering Michael Long's response to racial abuse during the 1995 Anzac Day match, which I recorded in an interview for the *7.30 Report*. He said:

We bleed the same, but people have an opinion of people. I suppose they don't really care what colour their dog is, their car, but when it comes to people it is a different issue ...

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

### Shire of Hindmarsh tourism

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Lowan) — Last Friday, along with The Nationals candidate for Lowan, Emma Kealy, I attended two significant events in the Hindmarsh shire. Firstly, I was privileged to open two new uniquely designed cabins on the Wimmera River, which will be a terrific boost to Jeparit's tourism industry and which were made possible with the aid of a grant through the Regional Growth Fund. Secondly, I officially opened the Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre, a replica of Nhill's historic Bellman Hangar, which attracted a crowd in excess of 500 people. The centre houses a partially restored Avro Anson aeroplane, along with other aviation memorabilia, and pays homage to the Royal Australian Air Force air school which operated in Nhill from 1941 to 1946 as part of the broader context of Nhill's aviation and aerodrome history.

### Fire services property levy

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Since being elected to Parliament I have advocated for change to the insurance-based fire services levy. As a coalition government we have delivered a fairer, more equitable system, and I welcome further cuts to the fire services property levy rates, which deliver real savings for households, businesses and farmers in the Lowan electorate.

### Edenhope men's shed

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — On another matter, I was privileged to open the new Edenhope men's shed, made possible with a grant from the coalition government's Strengthening Men's Sheds program. The shed offers men in the area a safe, friendly and inclusive space that supports wellbeing and reduces social isolation.

### National Volunteer Week

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Along with Nationals candidate Emma Kealy, I attended the National Volunteer Week reception in Casterton to recognise volunteers in our community. Volunteers are the backbone of country communities, and I congratulate them for their tireless work, which helps make our communities great places to live.

### Hamilton skate park

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — I was pleased to announce that the Hamilton skate park will receive funding from our government for the installation of lighting, which will help increase use of the park by local youth and enhance safety.

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

### Local government rates

**Mr PERERA** (Cranbourne) — Only a Victorian Labor government will save ratepayers from council waste, such as Casey council's Arnold Schwarzenegger stunts, by controlling unnecessary rate rises. Many councils have continued to increase rates well in excess of the CPI. Under Labor, if local councils want to raise their rates above CPI, they must appeal to the independent Essential Services Commission and justify any rate rises. The commission will determine whether rate increases are fair.

### Cranbourne electorate police resources

**Mr PERERA** — Victoria Police freedom of information documents reveal that of 56 police service areas only 6 have more police now than in November 2010. More than 20 police service areas have had front-line police cuts of more than 20 per cent. In my electorate of Cranbourne, front-line police numbers in Casey have been cut from 195 staff, as at November 2010, to 160 staff, as at January 2014. That is 35 fewer police in the Casey area.

### **Cranbourne electorate crime rates**

**Mr PERERA** — Not only have front-line police numbers been cut to the bone; crime rates have skyrocketed under the Napthine Liberal government. In my electorate of Cranbourne, criminal offences have increased by 8.74 per cent in Casey since the Napthine government was elected in 2010. That is a whopping increase of 1206 criminal offences in our local area.

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

### **Edithvale-Aspendale Junior Football Club**

**Ms WREFORD** (Mordialloc) — On Sunday I was privileged to be a guest at the Edithvale-Aspendale Junior Football Club presentations night. This is a terrific club under the leadership of Anthony Turner. It has 16 teams this year, including a girls team. There are about 350 kids playing. It is a great community club.

### **National Volunteer Week**

**Ms WREFORD** — Recently I attended the Central Bayside Community Health Services National Volunteer Week event. It was an excellent opportunity to recognise and thank the volunteers who make such a positive difference to the service. Peter Beeching, Ross Burn and the many other volunteers do a fabulous job.

### **Australia's Biggest Morning Tea**

**Ms WREFORD** — Yesterday I joined residents at the Mordialloc Community Centre for their Australia's Biggest Morning Tea event. It was the fourth year the centre has run the event for a very good cause. Well done to Norma Gibson, Rebecca Harvison and the team for putting on a successful fundraising event.

### **Mordialloc Life Saving Club**

**Ms WREFORD** — The Mordialloc Life Saving Club senior presentation night on Saturday was inspiring. The room had an uplifting vibe — and so it should have, as the club won the state championships this year. It is a big deal. Well done to all the participants and their supporters, to club president Grant Rattenbury and to the committee members, who do so much for this great club. They delivered on their five-year plan to win the championships. Great work!

### **Narre Warren and District Family History Group**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — I had the pleasure of attending the 25th birthday celebration of

the Narre Warren and District Family History Group and presenting certificates of appreciation to volunteers. The family history group was established on 10 May 1989 after a meeting at Lorraine Taylor's house. A committee was formed, Lorraine was elected chairman and her home was the temporary meeting venue. It was great to see Lorraine at this event.

The family history group offers a service to those in the community seeking to trace their family trees. This task is made easier with the help of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers. The group also helps with recording local history. The 25th birthday of the history group also coincided with the 25th anniversary of National Volunteer Week. Volunteers are invaluable to the community. Society would simply not function without them.

The Narre Warren and District Family History Group has over 100 volunteer members and fundraises to help cover its operating expenses. I awarded certificates of appreciation to Maureen Abbott, Jeanette Angee, Lina Butler, Di Christensen, Jan Clarke, Moreyn Dimsey, Eileen Durdin, Wendy Eldridge, Rona Gibson, Wendy Goodwin, Jenny Hayes, Val Holland, Gwen Leighton, Joyce Masters, Kerryn Maxwell, Mary McGrath, Rex McFarlane, Lyne McGregor, Alice Pattison, Shirley Peterson, Jane Rivett-Carnac, Marianne Rocke, Kaye Smith, Maureen Stagg, Cheyenne Stevenson, Claire Stevenson, Paul Stevenson, Lorraine Taylor, Brenda Wheeler and Lynne Bradley.

These volunteers, ranging from committee members to sausage sizzlers, have all made a great contribution. I specifically mention president Lynne Bradley, who does a fantastic job and gave a most professional and personable master of ceremonies performance. Thank you and congratulations to all. Follow their lead and take up volunteering and tracing and recording family history.

### **Public Accounts and Estimates Committee budget estimates hearings**

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) — Members will be aware that, in the two weeks since the house rose, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee has been engaged in the estimates hearings. There were 10 days, 50 hearings and the opportunity to quiz every member of the Victorian cabinet on the plans and programs proposed in the 2014 budget. A total of 699 questions were asked — 430 from opposition members and 269 from government members. The opposition total should have been slightly higher, but unfortunately seven opportunities for supplementary questions were lost because of disorderly behaviour. Despite occasional

lapses the majority of the hearings were extremely civil, and I thank all committee members for their contribution. Most transcripts are already available on the committee's website for the assistance of members in preparing for their contribution on the appropriation bills.

I was interested to note opposition claims that the committee offered ministers the opportunity to avoid the tough questions. Given that Labor asked the lion's share of the questions, perhaps the problem has more to do with the quality of the questioning than the structure of the committee. I was also concerned to note the proposal to move to a pattern of one-day hearings for each department. If implemented, the current 10 days of hearings would become 9, a 10 per cent reduction in scrutiny. Major departments including the Department of Justice; the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation; and the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure would all have their hearing times cut.

First Labor opposed the parliamentary budget office; now it is trying to reduce parliamentary scrutiny of the state budget. It is just as well that this proposal will probably go the same way as did the last parliamentary reforms promised by Labor — dropped on winning government — but the policy does pose the question: what does Labor have to hide?

### **Geelong defence contract bid**

**Mr TREZISE** (Geelong) — Last Thursday, 22 May, I was very happy to attend, and to speak on behalf of the Victorian opposition, at a LAND 400 symposium attended by a number of important stakeholders. The forum was facilitated by Enterprise Geelong, and I take this opportunity to congratulate it on not only last week's event but the work it has done thus far on getting the LAND 400 project to Geelong.

For the information of the house, I note that LAND 400 is a \$10 billion-plus project to be conducted between 2014 and 2034 to provide the Australian Defence Force with world-class armoured fighting vehicle capability. I can assure the house that the Geelong region is well placed to provide the design work, production and maintenance for the vehicles, with of course Ford workers, for example, having the base skills and knowledge to do such production.

In support of LAND 400 being awarded to Victoria and Geelong, Labor, as part of its jobs plan, has committed \$5 million to establish a dedicated Victorian defence procurement office. This office will ensure that the skill and capability of Victorian manufacturers are marketed

to the world's largest defence contractors, generating vitally important manufacturing jobs.

As we know, Victoria is already home to some of the most important, highly skilled defence manufacturing companies in the world, producing sophisticated land-based vehicles such as the Bushmaster in Bendigo. LAND 400 is a vital project for Victoria and it is a vital project for Geelong. Labor is proud to be proactively working with the City of Greater Geelong and Enterprise Geelong and other stakeholders to ensure a quality, world-class vehicle is designed, produced and maintained in Geelong.

### **Mildura Field Days**

**Mr CRISP** (Mildura) — The Mildura Field Days were held last Friday and Saturday, and both days were a huge success. Both days had different crowds, with the farming community dominant on Friday and families on Saturday. I would like to congratulate the organising committee for their hard work and their success in organising the field days. A new generation took over the field days a few years ago and has been busy reinvigorating the event. Well done to the new generation, and well done to the older generation, who ensured future success by having a succession plan.

### **Sunraysia Agribusiness Summit**

**Mr CRISP** — Robinvale stood out on Thursday when it conducted an agribusiness forum and brought together key stakeholders in the horticultural industry, the logistics industry and the export marketing industry. This was an initiative of Advancing Country Towns and put the spotlight on the future of irrigated horticulture. It culminated in an address by the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security on the government's Food to Asia program. Well done to Glenn Stewart and his team for organising this event.

### **Mildura fruit fly treatment facility**

**Mr CRISP** — A partnership between Regional Development Victoria and Wakefield Transport to construct a pull-down room will deliver considerable savings to fruit fly-sensitive exports from the Mildura region. This investment will allow cold disinfestation treatment to begin when fruit arrives at Wakefield, progressing to containers to be loaded on rail, delivered to port and shipped to arrive fully compliant and ready for sale in an overseas market. The coalition government is committed and is continuing to support the horticulture industry in Mildura.

### Hopetoun pop-up market

**Mr CRISP** — Congratulations to the Hopetoun community for its first successful pop-up market. This was a wonderful community event in Hopetoun, which I was privileged to attend. Thanks to Mildura Fruit Company for a tour and a briefing on an improved citrus industry outlook for the coming year, particularly the growing market to China. The Minister for Agriculture and Food Security was entertained in Mildura last Thursday.

### Southvale Primary School site

**Mr PAKULA** (Lyndhurst) — Almost two months ago I raised a matter during the adjournment debate for the Minister for Education. It related to the abandoned Southvale Primary School site in Athol Road, Noble Park. At the time the minister provided a rambling answer regarding a new ‘condensed’ pilot program, but towards the end of his answer he indicated that Southvale was not part of that trial, he was ‘not aware’ of the Southvale block and he would get back to me ‘regarding details of where it is in the process at the moment’. The Southvale situation was followed up by the *Sunday Age* of 6 April this year, and the response of the local community has been swift and unambiguous. It wants the site cleaned up, it wants some certainty about its future and it wants that certainty now. I have had countless emails, letters and calls to my office in recent weeks regarding the site, and as a consequence we have been there in recent days to see if anything has changed.

Speaker, you have to see this site to believe it. It is a pigsty, it is a health hazard and it is attracting all the wrong elements to what is otherwise a quiet suburban area. There was nothing in the budget that gave any clue to the site’s future, and no word from the minister after two months. I would have imagined that if the minister really wanted to get back to me with details of where Southvale is in the process at the moment, he could have ascertained that information with one phone call. I say to the Minister for Education that the people who live around Southvale Primary School have waited long enough. It is time to clean up the site and end the uncertainty.

### St Kilda drug forum

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) — On Monday, 12 May, I co-hosted and spoke at an open forum which addressed the epidemic of ice use in the community. The forum dealt with questions of the impact of ice and provided attendees the opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns. I wish to thank Peter Gallagher,

CEO of the St Kilda Police & Citizens Youth Club for his efforts in making the forum a success and all the great work that the club does in empowering youth in our community. I also wish to thank the City of Port Phillip and its mayor, Amanda Stevens, who co-hosted the forum, and Prue Healy who assisted in the forum’s organisation.

### Rabbi Meir Schlomo Klugant

**Mr SOUTHWICK** — I congratulate Rabbi Meir Schlomo Klugant on his recent appointment as president of the Organisation of Rabbis of Australia. He has excelled in his role as president of the Rabbinical Council of Victoria, and I greatly look forward to his continuing work in the community.

### Just Learning

**Mr SOUTHWICK** — On 28 May I will be hosting an education and youth round table in Parliament with Just Learning, a not-for-profit organisation whose primary goal is to support young people to stay at school. I applaud Just Learning and its president, Simone Szmoor, for her strong advocacy in education and youth. I thank her for her efforts in organising this important round table. I also welcome Galia Arieli, founder and director of Israel’s most successful Maleh program.

## 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 Tuesday, 27 May, to be incorporated into *Hansard*.

### Motion agreed to.

## GAMBLING AND LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MODERNISATION) BILL 2014

### *Statement of compatibility*

### **Mr O’BRIEN** (Treasurer) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the ‘charter act’), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2014.

In my opinion, the Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2014, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights as set out in the charter act. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

### Overview of the bill

The Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment (Modernisation) Bill 2014 makes a number of amendments to simplify the operation of the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 and to implement recommendations made by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office to increase the effectiveness of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm.

### Human rights issues

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

#### *Privacy rights — section 13*

The bill creates a new offence for a bookmaker to employ a person who is not a fit or proper person. This will restrict persons convicted of a serious offence within the last 10 years from working with a bookmaker. In order to satisfy the requirement not to employ persons in contravention of this offence, bookmakers may be required to collect personal information. The section 13(a) charter act right to privacy is relevant.

In order to comply with section 13(a) of the charter act, a person's privacy must not be unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. The circumstances in which the bill obliges bookmakers to collect personal information is limited. Bookmakers are only obliged to obtain information in relation to persons who have applied for employment with a bookmaker. The purpose of obtaining this information is to ensure that bookmakers and their employees are of good repute and to prevent unsuitable persons from entering the Victorian bookmaking industry. On this basis, the amendments do not unlawfully or arbitrarily interfere with a person's privacy.

#### *The right to be presumed innocent — section 25(1) of the charter act*

Section 25(1) of the charter act provides that a person charged with a criminal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law. This right requires that the burden of establishing guilt is borne by the prosecuting authority.

The bill will amend an existing reverse onus offence that prohibits a licensee or permittee from permitting a drunken and disorderly person to be on the licensed premises. The bill will amend the existing defence to provide that it is a defence to the offence if the licensee or permittee can provide that neither the accused nor an employee, agent or nominee of the accused knew that drunken or disorderly persons were on the premises and either the accused or employee, agent or nominee had taken reasonable steps to ensure that the drunken and disorderly persons were not on the premises.

The effect of the amendment is to extend the liability of the licensee or permittee for the offence to include the conduct and knowledge of their employees and agents who are on the premises. By imposing a legal burden on the defence to

satisfy the court of this element of the offence, the bill may be considered to limit the right to be presumed innocent. However, in my view, this amendment is reasonable and proportionate for the following reasons.

First, the offence reflects the importance of licensees assuming responsibility for managing their premises. The impact of alcohol-fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour on public safety and public health has been well documented. The offence, in part, seeks to address these issues and codify licensees' responsibilities and balances the rights of the licensees against the strong public interest in licensees responsibly managing alcohol consumption on their premises.

Secondly, the offence carries a relatively low penalty with no prospect of imprisonment.

Thirdly, whether the accused knew or had taken reasonable steps to ensure drunken or disorderly people were not on the premises will be entirely within that person's (or their agent's) knowledge. In the absence of requiring the accused to establish knowledge, it would be extremely difficult for the prosecutor to establish this element of the offence.

Fourthly, under the new provisions, the licensee or permittee continue to be liable for the offence. The bill does not extend the application of the offence beyond the licensee or permittee to other persons such as their employees or agents and therefore the scope of the offence is not significantly extended.

Finally, it is a legitimate objective of the regulatory scheme to minimise the harm arising from the misuse and abuse of alcohol by providing adequate controls over its supply and encouraging a culture of responsible consumption. Licensees and permittees participate in a highly regulated industry. As such, it is a generally accepted premise that there is an expectation of a higher level of regulation and accountability than in other contexts and participants may be expected to know their duties and obligations.

Consequently, whilst the clause does limit the rights to be presumed innocent by extending the existing reverse legal onus, it is reasonable and justified under section 7(2) of the charter act.

Finally, I note that there are no reasonably available alternative means by which the objectives of the offence provision could be achieved. Imposing an 'evidentiary' burden on the accused (as opposed to a legal burden), which would merely require the accused to point to evidence that may suggest the existence of a defence, would mean the burden would be too easily discharged by the accused. In such circumstances, and given the seriousness of the issue the offence seeks to address, it is imperative that the onus is on licensees and permittees to take appropriate steps to ensure that they can demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the bill.

### Conclusion

I consider that the bill is compatible with the charter because it raises human rights issues but does not limit human rights.

Hon. Michael O'Brien, MP  
Treasurer

*Second reading*

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Treasurer) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Speech as follows incorporated into *Hansard* in accordance with resolution of house:**

Since its election in 2010, this government has been working to implement its comprehensive plan to restore integrity, probity and responsibility to the forefront of gambling regulation in Victoria and to implement its commitments made in the Victorian Liberal-Nationals coalition plan for liquor licensing.

This bill continues to build on the government's work by amending the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 and the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 to implement the government's commitments and to respond to recommendations made by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

**Modernisation of the prohibition on illegal gambling**

The bill will simplify the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 by modernising the general prohibitions on illegal gambling contained in chapter 2 of the act.

The purpose of chapter 2 of the act is to impose a general prohibition on gambling and to create certain offences. Chapter 2 is largely derived from the Lotteries, Gaming and Betting Act 1966 which, in turn, incorporated significant portions of part IV of the Police Offences Act 1958. A number of the definitions and concepts in chapter 2 of the GRA can be directly traced back to the original Police Offences Act 1890.

Today, chapter 2 of the act is complex, difficult to interpret and outdated. Many of its provisions have not kept pace with the changes in Victorian government policy in relation to gambling that have occurred since 1990.

The bill simplifies and streamlines chapter 2 of the act by consolidating a range of prohibitions on various forms of gambling into provisions that prohibit the conduct, advertising and housing of all forms of gambling that are not authorised.

This approach accords with more modern consolidated gambling legislation in other jurisdictions.

The provisions are intended to simplify the prohibition on illegal gambling in Victoria to make it easier to understand by those regulated by it. It is not intended to prohibit activities that were previously permitted or to permit those previously prohibited. Rather they maintain the status quo.

**Ministerial power to obtain information from commercial gambling licensees**

The bill will create a new power for the minister to seek information from major commercial gambling licensees to support policy development, implementation and evaluation.

A review of the operation of gambling legislation identified that the minister's powers to obtain information from the various major commercial licensees varied significantly.

It is vital that the minister has sufficient power to obtain information from all major commercial gambling licensees to assist the proper development of policy in accordance with the objectives of the gambling legislation, including to foster responsible gambling and to ensure that minors are neither encouraged to gamble nor allowed to do so.

This power is limited to obtaining information that the minister considers will assist in the development of policy in accordance with the objectives of the gambling legislation.

This power may be used, for example, to obtain information relating to the implementation and evaluation of the government's precommitment scheme.

It is important to note that a licensee will not be in breach of the requirement to provide information if the information does not exist or is not held by the licensee.

**Trade promotion lotteries**

The bill will remove an existing prohibition on the holder of a keno licence from conducting a trade promotion lottery to promote keno games. The keno licence, which has been operated by Tabcorp Investments No. 5 Pty Ltd since 15 April 2012, authorises the conduct of keno games such as Keno Classic and Heads or Tails. The act currently restricts the keno licensee from conducting trade promotion lotteries to promote these keno games. The restriction is an oversight and the bill will allow the keno licensee, like other commercial gambling licensees, to conduct trade promotion lotteries to promote its business.

**Employees of bookmakers**

The bill amends the act to ensure that persons employed by a bookmaker are fit and proper persons to be associated with the business.

The racing integrity commissioner expressed concern that the employment of disreputable persons by bookmakers may undermine the integrity of Victorian bookmakers.

The bill creates a new offence for a bookmaker to employ a person who is not a fit or proper person. This will restrict persons convicted of a serious offence within the last 10 years from being employed or working with a bookmaker.

Similar offences for employing persons who are not fit and proper apply under the Motor Car Traders Act 1986 and the Estate Agents Act 1980. As with the bookmaking industry, the purpose of these offences is to maintain the integrity of those industries.

**Increasing penalties that apply to the provision of alcohol to minors**

The bill will double the penalties that apply to eight offences under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 to create consistency with similar offences under gambling legislation and the Tobacco Act 1987. The increased penalties only apply to offences relating to the supply of liquor by others to minors rather than to minors for possessing or obtaining liquor.

This is consistent with a recommendation made by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in its report on the effectiveness of justice strategies in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm.

**Drunk and disorderly persons on licensed premises**

The bill will resolve an issue identified with an existing offence under the liquor legislation of permitting drunken or disorderly persons to be on a licensed premises.

The Victorian Auditor-General identified that the offence was not being sufficiently enforced by Victoria Police and the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation due to licensees being able to successfully defend an action on the grounds that they were not on the premises at the time of the offence and that their staff had completed responsible service of alcohol training.

The bill amends the existing defence to provide that the conduct and knowledge of relevant persons, for example, managers and employees of a liquor licensee, can be attributed to the licensee for the purposes of this defence. This means that the knowledge and conduct of an employee or agent of the licensee in knowing that a drunken or disorderly person is on a licensed premises and failing to remove that person can be attributed to the licensee.

This is appropriate as a liquor licensee is liable for the offence and must put in place sufficient arrangements to ensure that their employees and agents take all necessary steps to comply with the liquor legislation and to reduce alcohol-related harm.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

**Debate adjourned until Tuesday, 24 June.**

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

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 8 May; motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Treasurer).**

**Mr WAKELING** (Minister for Higher Education and Skills) — It gives me pleasure to continue my contribution to the debate on the budget. This has been an outstanding budget for Victoria, and I would like to congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on the great work that they have done. As I mentioned during my earlier contribution with respect to my portfolio, we are seeing a \$1.2 billion contribution not only for this current financial year but for the next four years. That is in stark contrast with where we were when the former government was in charge of this portfolio and was investing just over \$800 million. So that is a 50 per cent increase.

As a consequence of that we are now seeing a 50 per cent increase in enrolments. More importantly the number of people who are undertaking training in identified skills shortage areas, in areas involving specialist training or in foundation skills, which are those key skills to get into the education system, has

increased from 49 per cent under the former government to 70 per cent under this government.

We have a pipeline of jobs that are being delivered by this government in this budget: in the Melbourne rail project, east–west link stage 2, the Tullamarine Freeway widening and a range of other projects — all opposed, I should note, by those opposite. They are key projects that in the future will have key jobs for which we will need to ensure that we have trained workers. A significant part of this budget is to ensure that we have adequate funding to train the workforce of Victoria's future.

What can be seen in regard to the training that has been undertaken is that we have had a very clear focus on ensuring that training is focused in areas that lead to a job, as I mentioned before. What we saw in 2013 was that 60 per cent of all training was in the six highest employing industries. What has that seen year on year? It has seen 10 000 additional enrolments in construction, 10 000 additional enrolments in health care and 8000 additional enrolments in transport. Members can see very clearly that the focus of this government has been to ensure that we are training the workforce of the future. Certainly that is something that is opposed by those opposite, but we are very clear in our resolve to ensure that we are training the workforce of the future.

Where does that place Victoria? Victoria accounts for about 24 per cent of the nation's population, but with respect to vocational education and training we have the highest number of enrolments of any state. According to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, we provide 33 per cent of the total state and territory funding for the vocational education training sector. Members can see very clearly that we have invested significant funds in that area, which ensures that more people are undertaking significant training.

Earlier I mentioned foundation skills training. It is very, very important that we are providing adequate funding to ensure that people who find it difficult to get into the education system have that opportunity. Under this government we have seen a funding increase of 116 per cent for unemployed people getting into training. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who is at the table, would be very pleased to see that under this government we have had a 35 per cent increase in training for the Indigenous community. Over the same period there has been a 49 per cent increase for people who are disabled undertaking training. For people with a non-English-speaking background we have seen a 95 per cent increase.

I know those opposite have been trying to raise issues regarding regional Victoria. I am sure that many on this side of the house who represent regional Victoria are very strong advocates of training. We on this side are very pleased to see that under this government we have had a 33 per cent growth in subsidised enrolments of people in regional Victoria, which has been a very positive outcome for people in regional Victoria.

What has the community said about our budget with regard to my portfolio? I would like to quote Bernadette Gigliotti, the CEO of the Career Education Association of Victoria. She stated:

As the state-based peak association for career advisers across Victoria we are pleased to have seen a genuine and extensive commitment on the part of the state government to improving access to careers advice and training to so many in our community. We would like to acknowledge that this budget is both robust and extensive in its capacity to move critical agendas of infrastructure, skill development and employment in Victoria forward.

Clearly that is just another example of how our investment is ensuring that we are training the workforce of the future.

What does industry say about this? I would like to quote Mr Fabrizio Giulianini, the CEO of Selex ES, who said:

Victoria was considered the best location for the company because of the skilled labour available in the state.

You do not have a skilled workforce unless you train people and you do not train them unless you invest. It is fairly clear that unless you have a government that is willing to invest in training and to ensure that that investment is in key areas that deliver jobs, then businesses such as Selex ES are not going to make the decision to establish their base here in Victoria. I can tell the house that if another state was seen as the leader of the skilled labour force, that organisation would have chosen that state, but no, it chose Victoria.

On top of our \$1.2 billion investment, which is 50 per cent higher than the funding committed by those opposite when they were in government, we recognised in this budget that the automotive components sector is going to feel the effects of the announcements of the major automotive manufacturers, so we have invested in a \$30 million funding package over two years to provide key support for those who work in the automotive supply chain, which is upwards of 16 000 people.

As a consequence we are going to work with communities in Barwon and the north and south-east of Melbourne where those workers are located. We are

going to assist them through the workforce development centres in those areas. They will provide career advice to ensure that those workers who have identified the need to exit their current employment and look at other areas can retrain and reskill. This budget not only ensures that we will deliver \$1.2 billion for the next four years, which is five straight years of \$1.2 billion of funding commitments; it will also provide assistance to those workers who work in the automotive supply chain.

When the budget was handed down those opposite were all waving their hands and flapping their arms about. My opponent, the shadow minister for higher education, was running around saying that this budget has delivered '\$124 million less in the higher education, training and skills budget output for next year'. That is a quote from his contribution in *Hansard*. I am very concerned that the shadow minister does not actually understand how the budget papers work, because if he had taken the time to read them, along with the footnotes, he would have known that there was an accounting change in the budget which applied to the four dual-sector universities, which include the University of Ballarat — now Federation University — RMIT, Victoria University and Swinburne University.

In the past, when those universities provided services for which they received a fee — which has nothing to do with government training — they were required by legislation to report on those fee-for-service dollars in the Victorian state budget. Just this year the Education and Training Reform Amendment (Dual Sector Universities) Bill 2013 went through Parliament. On page 4 of the explanatory memorandum it spells out — in plain English for the shadow minister — that as a consequence of this legislative change there would be changes to the way in which those organisations have to report their finances for accounting purposes.

I would have thought that before the shadow minister took to his feet in this house and started bleating to the community about this issue he would have taken the time to read the footnote in the budget, the legislation and the explanatory memorandum. He would have then understood, if he knew how to read a budget paper — and we know the desal economics that are applied by those opposite when it comes to the budget — that in fact there had not been a cut. But again Labor cannot be trusted when it comes to money. Victorians do not trust what Labor has to say. What they know is that this government has committed \$1.2 billion, and we will continue to commit \$1.2 billion, which is a 50 per cent increase on the funds committed by those opposite.

The shadow minister also talked about the fact that the budget papers had an identified reduction in the number of people enrolling in higher level certificate courses. He was attacking the government for the fact that there would be a lower number of enrolments. Unfortunately what the shadow minister did not understand was that the changes put in place by the former federal Labor government, under the leadership of Julia Gillard, changed the education system with respect to universities in order to provide Australians — and obviously Victorians — with greater opportunity to move into the university sector to undertake courses. The Labor Party championed the fact that it was broadening the opportunity for Australians to move out of the TAFE system and into the university sector; it touted this as a boon for education in this nation.

As a consequence, if you are going to be increasing the opportunity for people to move from the TAFE sector into the university sector to undertake their education, then it stands to reason that the number of people who would be undertaking those in Victorian government-funded training courses would reduce. In fact that is what the federal Labor Party actually wanted — it wanted to increase the opportunity — so I do not understand what the shadow minister is talking about. If he is opposed to the policy put in place by Julia Gillard and the former federal Labor government, then he should stand up and say so.

However, I do not think he actually understands how the policies work. We saw this with his \$124 million funding allegation, which he clearly did not understand. This is just another example of the fact that those opposite do not understand how the budget actually works.

In the short time I have left I will just say that the government has been very pleased to support the work of our TAFEs. Recently I joined the Premier in Bendigo to announce that the government has committed \$64 million in funding — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr WAKELING** — I am very pleased to hear the responses of those opposite. We have had Bendigo Health, the business community and community leaders like Gordon McKern, former Bendigo Citizen of the Year, all come out and say that this is a good result. On 27 May Gordon McKern said:

This is an outstanding result, not only because a significant number of new opportunities will be made available for students and the cooperation that will be developed between TAFE and both La Trobe University — —

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

**Ms KNIGHT** (Ballarat West) — I am pleased to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014; actually, I am not so much pleased as compelled. I want to pick up on a few things the Minister for Higher Education and Skills said. I was listening to only half of what he said, but the bits I picked up on were not too impressive. I suggest that the minister might want to spend a bit of time actually talking to — I do not know — some teachers!

**Mr R. Smith** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The Minister for Environment and Climate Change is out of his place and out of order.

**Ms KNIGHT** — He may also want to spend a bit of time talking to a student or two, and I will tell him — as he is walking out the door — what Labor understands: Labor understands education. Labor understands how important TAFE is to young people, to all people, to people who need retraining, and how important TAFE is to regional communities. We understand how devastating those cuts have been; that is what Labor understands. Unfortunately the minister is not here to hear that, but perhaps he could go back through *Hansard* and underline it.

I am pretty disgusted at the priorities of this government. This is a budget that is more concerned with looking good than doing good. This budget is a case of too little too late, and it is a desperate attempt to persuade voters that the government is in control. It highlights the disparity between what might win some votes and what is truly important. The quick fix seems to prevail over long-term planning. This budget is an ad hoc attempt to justify three years of inactivity by an uninterested government and is offensive to the people of my electorate and to regional Victoria generally. Here we have a government that prefers to bury its head in the sand when it comes to owning up to its failures. Pretending that there is not a crisis in our health system will not make that crisis go away. Pretending that our economy is flourishing will not create jobs. Closing the gates on TAFEs will not erase them from our memory. There is no hiding from the inadequacies of this government, regardless of how preoccupied its members are with trying to keep their position.

Omitted from this budget are any attempts to fix the big problems. Instead we see a haphazard attempt to win voters over with unsubstantiated promises. Apparently ignorant of the needs of regional Victoria, the

government has presented a budget that is big on spending in Melbourne and light on addressing the needs of the rest of the state. Just have a look at the figures for unemployment in regional Victoria; they are worse than those for anywhere else. It is something a responsible government would acknowledge — but not this one. The urgency of building a tunnel through Melbourne seems to be of more interest to this government than acknowledging the unemployment crisis that we have in regional Victoria. It is a disappointing blow to the rest of the state.

I am disappointed for the people of Ballarat West. I am disappointed because in this budget, the needs of my community seem second rate. Inside this budget, regional Victoria receives only 4 per cent of infrastructure funds, despite making up about a quarter of the population.

Now let us get local: not a scrap has been allocated to the redevelopment of Eureka Stadium or the upgrading of sports and community facilities in Ballarat. The Eureka precinct redevelopment is a project that would create economic benefits for my community and provides cultural experiences of which all would be beneficiaries. We can see the benefits of this sort of precinct in Geelong. This project would create jobs in the region, it would boost tourism and it is another step to Ballarat hosting more world-class sporting events, notably AFL matches.

Labor acknowledges the importance of community sport, and therefore we would commit \$29 million to the project. Of this, \$15 million would go to Eureka Stadium to build a 5000–6000-seat undercover grandstand, new AFL-standard lights and a video scoreboard. We would provide \$9 million for basketball and netball courts at the Wendouree Sports and Events Centre, and there would also be \$2.5 million, should we be elected, for the Lakers football netball club that covers cricket and athletics as well — grassroots sport. Those communities absolutely deserve that funding.

It is not just community infrastructure that suffers under this government. Instead of a budget concerned with fixing the basics and building on what is important, we have a last-ditch attempt to gloss over the real concerns of my community. I point out the problems facing the Wendouree campus of Ballarat Secondary College in my electorate. As is the case with many educational facilities in the state, the campus has a real need for improved facilities. This is a great school with terrific students and dedicated teachers. They deserve a facility whose quality matches their endeavour. It saddens me that such basic infrastructure needs have been forgotten at this school.

As a result of the lack of capital and maintenance funding, a couple of years ago students had to perform their own repairs to their school buildings, with the help of Bunnings. This was required for them just to have rooms barely adequate for the delivery of educational programs. This is the reality for the students at this school. The effect of poor infrastructure flows on from educational spaces to community perceptions of the school. Unfairly, I think, a school is often judged by the quality of its facilities rather than the difference it makes in the lives of its students. At schools like the Wendouree campus of Ballarat Secondary College, the school community needs to be able to have pride not only in the great education it provides to kids, but also in the structure of the school.

Phoenix P-12 Community College at Sebastopol is another great school in my electorate, and it has staff who work really hard to provide great opportunities for students. They are doing amazing things at that school but not one further dollar has been allocated to complete the redevelopment of this school. By contrast, if elected in November Labor will fund a \$10 million stage 3 upgrade to Phoenix P-12 Community College. That is money I believe will be very well spent and is very well deserved. Providing a dynamic and rich learning experience is important to Labor. It is important because the kids in classrooms today are our future. Turning our back on them is unwise. Investing in their future is an investment in the state's future.

I am pleased that Ballarat High School has received budget funding, but I think this government just does not understand that the need for capital funding goes beyond one school. This budget does little to fix the schools the Napthine government has abandoned. It is clear that the government's priority is to win an election, not properly fund our schools. The government's report card has a big red 'F' drawn down the middle of it: it has failed the schools of our state, with an average of \$278 million a year spent on school capital, compared to Labor's average investment in our last term of \$467 million a year. The choice to ignore the needs of schools across Victoria will form part of this government's legacy.

A budget is more than balancing figures on a ledger sheet — it is a demonstration of what is important to the government that submits it. I submit to you that this government has shown its true colours, bold and blue as always, tugging at the purse strings of the most needy in our community. This budget does nothing to fix the basics. No clear or concise solutions are offered in respect of the crisis facing our hospitals and paramedic services, our crumbling schools, our TAFEs struggling

after millions of dollars in cuts or the growing number of people who are experiencing unemployment.

Importantly, many of these problems are connected. Increasing delays at our emergency departments, like at the Ballarat Base Hospital, cause delays for our dedicated paramedics. The new businesses that I hope will one day move to the Ballarat West employment zone may well struggle to find the highly trained staff that were once trained at TAFE. The \$20 million cut from TAFE at Federation University has the potential to undermine the investment in the Ballarat West employment zone. We need to look at both the human capital and physical infrastructure that will attract business to Ballarat.

Make no mistake, providing greater employment opportunities in Ballarat is critically important. Since this government was sworn in the unemployment rate in my region has increased from 3.8 per cent to 6.5 per cent. Thousands more people are unemployed. Instead what we have is a document written in a state of panic. It is comparable to a university assignment left to the last minute, where anything will do. No apparent thought to the big picture has occurred. Instead we have a cut-and-paste approach that offers the best sounding solutions. The promises made are big — that is for sure — but this is a government that has always been big on promises and lacking in substance, like the promise to build a police station on Albert Street in Sebastopol, which is a broken promise the government is desperate to paper over. If a new police facility is needed in the western part of Ballarat, of course it should be built and I support its construction, but this must not be done at the expense of the police station promised to the people in Sebastopol.

The promise of hospital beds is undelivered. Instead within the pages of this budget the priorities of this government are starkly on display; here we have a commitment to spend more on prison beds than on new hospital beds. It is obvious that the austere mentality becomes more open minded at election time; if only the promises made could be trusted and meaningful. Instead we have favouritism and neglect all drafted in this document called a budget. If you live in metropolitan Melbourne, you will be favoured. If you live in regional Victoria, you will be neglected. But make no mistake, the sum of all parts will leave the whole of the state worse off.

This government has had three years to demonstrate to the Victorian people how much it cares for them. It has had three years to make a difference to this state, and it certainly has done that. Here are the differences: schools are crumbling, thousands of patients are

waiting too long for treatment in hospital emergency departments and the unemployment rate in Ballarat has almost doubled. Many of the projects outlined in this document are worth little more than the paper they are written on. They are an attempt to convince voters that the government has done something with its time, and we know that it has not. They are an attempt to deflect from the reality of the situation — that is, that a government as unmotivated as this has no chance of delivering anything meaningful in the future.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — I congratulate the Treasurer and his team for an outstanding budget. This is a budget of real vision for the future of Victoria. It is a budget that provides record levels of funding for essential services and an absolutely fantastic amount of funding for vital infrastructure to build a better, stronger Victoria. This is a budget genuinely about building a better future for our great state. It is a budget built on hard work and sound financial management. It delivers a AAA credit rating. It delivers a surplus of \$1.3 billion in the 2014–15 financial year, building to \$3.3 billion in 2017–18. It is a budget that delivers strong economic growth.

The budget delivers strong employment growth, and in respect of the last speaker we on this side of the house are proud that Victoria has the fastest growing rate of new jobs in regional and rural areas of any state or territory. The previous speaker should refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics before making statements in this house. This budget also delivers a reduction in state debt, something which is foreign to the opposition. It delivers record levels of funding for key services and delivers a \$14.9 billion budget for our health services across the state. It also delivers our ongoing commitment to health infrastructure. We are fixing the problems we inherited from the neglect of the Labor government.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Albert Park will desist.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — We are spending \$4.8 billion on new health infrastructure, rebuilding the Box Hill Hospital, building the Monash Children's hospital, building \$50 million worth of development at Ballarat hospital and \$90 million at Geelong Hospital, as well as building at the Frankston Hospital, Northern Hospital and Werribee Mercy Hospital. In this budget there is an additional \$73 million for Latrobe Regional Hospital, \$14 million for Boort hospital and \$28 million for Barwon Health North. What we are doing is rebuilding

a health system that was mismanaged by the previous Labor government.

There is \$9.2 billion for school education in 2015 and over \$500 million for capital for new schools and refurbishment of schools. There is record funding for vital community safety and 1500 more police on the beat working in Victoria today than when we came to government. There are 750 protective services officers at our railway stations, and we are providing record funding for Victorians in need, including concessions for people with a disability and low-income families.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Albert Park will desist from interjecting.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — There is no doubt this budget delivers key savings for Victorian families and businesses — for example, the decision made by this government that from 1 January next year, if you are in zone 2, you can travel through to zone 1 on a zone 1 fare. What a fantastic benefit for families and individuals. There will be free trams in Docklands and the CBD, cuts to payroll tax from 4.9 per cent to 4.85 per cent and, from 1 September, first home buyers will benefit from a 50 per cent concession on stamp duty, which is up from 40 per cent today. There is the removal of stamp duty on life insurance, the recently announced cut of \$100 per year to Melbourne residential water bills, which will benefit families in Albert Park, in Brighton — —

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Albert Park is warned.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — This will benefit families in Preston and right across the Melbourne residential area. We are the government that had the courage to introduce a fairer, more equitable fire services levy system. Labor was in government for 11 years but would not tackle the hard issues. Labor knew the fire services levy on insurance was unfair and inequitable and did nothing about it. This government had the courage to deliver, and the recently announced new rates show we are reducing the impost on Victorians in real terms through the fire services levy.

Let me talk about what I believe is one of the key features of this budget and that is the game-changing infrastructure that this budget delivers. This budget delivers on significant infrastructure that the coalition is already delivering on. The regional rail link is a great project that we inherited from the previous government,

but it is a project that was absolutely off the rails under the previous government; it had no trains and no signals, and was certainly over budget and mismanaged. We have it back on track, under budget, on time — —

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Albert Park has been warned. If he interjects again he will be suspended from the house.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — We are delivering stage 1 of the east-west link and the port capacity project both at the port of Melbourne and at Hastings. In this budget we deliver even more important and vital infrastructure for the people of Melbourne and Victoria, including the Melbourne rail link project and the airport rail link project. What a disgrace that the Labor Party opposes an airport rail link. We are seeing a massive increase in air traffic through Tullamarine airport that needs a rail link. The member for Albert Park is saying time and again that Labor opposes the rail link project. Let that be put on the record. He says it is a hoax. We know it will be delivered by a coalition government.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Debate interrupted.**

## SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

### Member for Albert Park

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Under standing order 124, I ask the member for Albert Park to leave the chamber for 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Albert Park withdrew from chamber.**

## APPROPRIATION (2014–2015) BILL 2014

### *Second reading*

**Debate resumed.**

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Premier) — We will also build the \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor upgrade. This is our busiest rail corridor and we will invest in new trains and high-capacity signalling that will increase the capacity on that rail line. We will build the \$220 million Murray Basin rail project, standardising the line from Mildura to the port of Portland, to Geelong and Melbourne, and lifting the capacity on that line from 19 to 21 tonnes. That will improve productivity and efficiency and will connect

the port of Portland to the Mallee and the Mallee basin. This was a project promised by John Brumby under Labor in 2001. There was \$96 million in the 2001 budget that John Brumby said only a Labor government would provide. It did what it normally did; it announced it and did nothing. There was not one metre of track standardisation under Labor, but under the coalition government that game-changing project in western Victoria will be delivered.

We have already removed, are removing or are in the advanced planning stage of removing 40 level crossings across the state, including the level crossing in Main Road, St Albans, one of the most dangerous level crossings in Victoria. Labor had 11 years to remove that level crossing in its own heartland and did not deliver. That is an absolutely disgraceful performance by Labor in its own heartland. We went out to St Albans and we will deliver the St Albans level crossing removal.

What about the western section of the east-west link, giving us that vital second river crossing? We have heard Labor member after Labor member for the last three or four years saying that a second river crossing is the highest priority infrastructure project for Melbourne. They said they needed it for the western suburbs, and for Wyndham, Geelong and Ballarat. We agree with them. That is why in this budget the coalition government will deliver the second river crossing by delivering the western section of the east-west link. It will give us that vital second river crossing, take the pressure off the West Gate Bridge, and remove trucks once and for all from all those streets in Yarraville, Seddon and Footscray. Again Labor heartland is benefiting from a Liberal coalition government action because Labor treats the western suburbs with absolute and utter contempt. Labor takes their votes and does not deliver the services they need. This western section of the east-west link is absolutely vital for the growth and development of productivity and transport efficiency in the western suburbs.

Similarly, the \$850 million Tullamarine Freeway widening project is a great project for the people in the north and north-western suburbs. I am pleased to have been with the Minister for Roads at Winchelsea announcing \$362 million for the duplication of the Princes Highway west between Winchelsea and Colac. That is on top of the \$500 million program for the Western Highway duplication through Beaufort and Ararat and on to Stawell. Then there is the \$86 million Ravenswood intersection in the heartland of Bendigo East. The member for Bendigo East was a senior minister in the Labor government for 8 of 11 years and would not turn a hand to fixing the Ravenswood

intersection. It takes a Liberal coalition government to fix it.

What is more, these projects will create 26 000 new jobs. These projects are about transforming Melbourne and Victoria, reducing congestion, improving transport productivity and efficiency, improving public transport, improving local amenity, increasing the livability and quality of life in our city, boosting jobs and boosting our economy. These are a series of projects that this government is proud of, which will change Melbourne and Victoria for decades to come.

Is it any wonder that we have enthusiastic support from people from organisations like Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), which stated:

VECCI welcomes the strong infrastructure focus of the budget that will create jobs and support the Victorian economy to grow.

The Victorian Council of Social Services stated:

This budget delivers a range of big infrastructure programs that will create jobs and drive the economy.

The Master Builders Association also stated:

The Napthine government has today unveiled an ambitious infrastructure agenda that will stimulate investment and drive new jobs into Victoria's construction industry.

So time after time people are endorsing our projects.

Let me talk about regional cities. In Geelong there is \$28 million for Barwon Health North, \$50 million for the Great Ocean Road upgrade, \$12.9 million for the duplication of Pioneer Road, and funding for many local schools. We have comments from the local mayor, who said:

I am pleased to see such a significant investment in road, rail and other transport given the significant growth pressures experienced in this area.

There is also a quote from Elaine Carbines from G21, who said:

These announcements have exceeded our expectations. The acceleration of western access to the east-west link will hugely benefit the region's business growth, investment and socioeconomic health.

The *Geelong Advertiser* says that this is a 'good budget for our city'.

In Ballarat we have \$30 million for the Ballarat West employment zone, \$14 million for a new rail loop at Rowsley and, of course, a new Ballarat West police and

emergency services centre. Is it any wonder that the mayor has said of the budget:

It's a fantastic day for Ballarat ...

In Bendigo there is \$15 million for the aquatic centre and \$86 million for the Calder interchange at Ravenswood. The mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo, Barry Lyons, said:

The \$15 million announced in the state budget exceeds our wildest dreams ...

In Shepparton there is \$73 million for a new court complex, and in the Latrobe Valley there is \$73 million for the upgrade of the hospital. The mayor of Mildura said that the budget allocation has given the region everything it asked for and more.

In my last 1½ minutes let me talk about my electorate, which also benefits from this budget with \$5.3 million for the upgrade of the vital Woolsthorpe-Heywood Road, a road ignored for 11 years under Labor. We are continuing to upgrade that road, which is important for our farmers in that area and important for commuters and tourists in that area. There is \$2.3 million for a new school at the Narrawong Primary School to replace a school that is well past its use-by date. There is \$3 million towards a \$4.5 million redevelopment of community health facilities at the Moyne Health Service, which is a great facility in Port Fairy delivering outstanding health services in that region. It is terrific that the local community will raise the other \$1.5 million to support that development. In Warrnambool there is \$4.3 million for new mental health prevention and recovery services. This will provide eight new beds and two day places for people with a mental illness for clinical support stabilisation and rehabilitation.

This is an outstanding budget. This is a budget that provides vision for Victoria and provides key infrastructure for Victoria. It provides responsible economic management. It delivers improved services and better support for health, education, law and order and community services. It provides a real vision and direction for game-changing infrastructure. It provides for jobs growth, and it also looks after regional and rural Victoria and my electorate of South-West Coast. This is a fantastic budget, and I am pleased to support it.

**Mr CARBINES** (Ivanhoe) — I am pleased to rise to make a contribution with regard to the state budget. It says a lot about a government when it is providing more prison beds and less funding for hospital beds. I note that in the 15-minute contribution from the

Premier not once did he find time to mention any initiatives in the Ivanhoe electorate, and not very many at all in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, an area that has been neglected these past three years and certainly in four budgets under this Liberal government. The Austin Hospital is one of many health services that is contributing now to expanding elective surgery waiting lists that have grown by 10 000 patients; that is what it has grown by under this government because of a lack of investment in health services.

I will go to some of the particular capital works issues that will be the basis of my contribution in relation to the Ivanhoe electorate. I note that the \$40 million mental health facility on the repatriation site in the Ivanhoe electorate was funded by the Labor government in 2010 and, despite being completed in August last year, sat idle for some seven to eight months. It was only after we brought it to the attention of the media in March that the Minister for Community Services finally went out to Heidelberg on Good Friday eve to officially open the facility. She was embarrassed about the fact that despite this project being funded by Labor in 2010 it had taken some three and a half years for the government to get it constructed. It then sat idle and unopened for seven to eight months, not providing its 22 beds, because the government would not provide the recurrent funding to operate it. An article in the *Age* of 20 March states:

The community care unit at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital has lain empty since construction finished almost seven months ago.

A much-needed \$14.2 million health facility that includes 22 new beds for mentally ill patients has sat idle since construction was completed almost seven months ago.

Even after it was opened it still had no patients, and it is still unclear whether the 22 beds are now in operation.

I also note an article in the *Age* of 15 March about elective surgery at the Austin Hospital. It is headed 'Patients suffer for years in surgery queues, say GPs'. The article relates in particular to Barbara Lowe, 76, of Bellfield, who is a resident in my electorate, who points out that she has been waiting much longer than the reported median waiting time of five months for a knee replacement. The article states:

Her GP referred her to Austin Health for an outpatient appointment in May 2011 and her surgery occurred last month — almost three years later.

'It's a long time to wait for a new knee', she said.

I know Mrs Lowe and her husband, Hugh, well — and I wish them well. It is a disgrace that she had to wait that long because elective surgery waiting lists have

now grown by 10 000 and are at almost 50 000 patients under this government's watch. That is a full Docklands Stadium of people on the elective surgery waiting list waiting for their surgery under this government. It has grown by 10 000 patients since the government members began to occupy the Treasury benches some three and a half years ago. It is a disgrace. I note that the outpatient process is now being investigated by external auditors at the Austin Hospital because patients have either not been getting letters for appointments or have been getting five letters, and that process needs to be investigated immediately and fixed.

In relation to public transport, despite raising an adjournment matter on 13 March seeking from the minister an explanation as to why four extra peak services operating from Eltham to the city have not been provided on the Hurstbridge line — a \$60 million capital works investment by the Labor government for stabling and signalling works at Eltham station was made to ensure that there would be four extra peak services on the Hurstbridge line — there has been no response from the minister.

This clearly relates to the provision of capital works from previous budgets for services to people on the forgotten Hurstbridge line. Despite having raised a point of order on 8 May in relation to the lack of a ministerial response in an appropriate 30-day time frame to an adjournment matter from 13 March 2014 on this subject, I note that the Minister for Public Transport has still not provided a response as to why those four peak services have not been made available at the six train stations in my electorate: Macleod, Darebin, Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, Heidelberg and Rosanna. There is also a critical service from Eltham that runs through the Ivanhoe electorate. Despite its claims that it would provide four extra peak services, I think it is most likely that the government has swiped those services from the Hurstbridge line to prop up its political fortunes in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne and is stabling those trains at Eltham. In the middle of the night and early in the morning those trains are being run across to the south-eastern and eastern suburbs.

I note that after four consecutive years of asking questions about having the Rosanna Road safety issues fixed, the issue has again been ignored by the government in the budget. There is no funding available via VicRoads because the government has cut funding to VicRoads. There is also no funding for speed restrictions on trucks or for the policing of load limits, and no funding to fix the Greensborough Highway–Lower Plenty–Rosanna roads dogleg intersection,

which is the scene of very many accidents. Again it has been ignored by this government.

Due to cuts to the pedestrian safety program by the government in its budget, I note there is no money for 40-kilometre-per-hour zones in Burgundy Street, Heidelberg, Lower Heidelberg Road, East Ivanhoe, and Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe. VicRoads has no opportunity to implement 40-kilometre-per-hour speed zones in those shopping strips, which is something that has been sought desperately by all the traders associations, residents, local schools and Banyule City Council. Again we are being ignored in this budget.

The Chandler Highway bridge duplication has again been ignored by the government. It is described in the RACV's annual reviews as one of the three red-spot areas for congestion. We have collected many hundreds of signatures from people not only in my electorate but from people in the electorate of Northcote and from many people who are seeking additional crossings over the Yarra River. They encounter the congested Fitzsimons Lane or are trying to get across at Burke Road or the Chandler Highway. The Chandler Highway crossing is a bridge with a single lane each way. It is a disgrace that this government through its cuts to VicRoads has again ignored people in the northern suburbs and has not provided the ability to duplicate that Chandler Highway bridge. The costings have been done. The RACV continues to lobby, and all its surveys show that this is a priority for the local community.

La Trobe University also expressed disappointment about the budget in a media release headed 'State budget misses shuttle bus service'. La Trobe University has sought to have a shuttle bus running from the Reservoir train station through to the university campus. It wants a two-year trial of that service. It is offering to fund half of that two-year campaign, yet it cannot get the other half of the necessary funding. Vice-chancellor Professor John Dewar is quoted in the media release as saying:

Bundoora campus students, staff and on-campus partners currently face poor and confusing public transport options and longer travel times than those travelling to other metropolitan Melbourne universities.

There is no doubt that it is a disgrace. It is an indication of the government's lack of commitment to the northern suburbs and the area's key university, which provides great employment and educational opportunities for northern suburb residents.

After enduring four coalition budgets I would like to draw attention to one announcement. Finally the

government has made an educational announcement of a \$5.6 million capital commitment in the Ivanhoe electorate to the Rosanna Golf Links Primary School, which is also a regional deaf facility in the northern suburbs, although I noted when we finally got the budget papers, as is stated in budget paper 4 at page 24, only \$1.2 million has been allocated next financial year for that \$5.6 million project. We have made it very clear to the local community that it is being duded by the government. Why come out and announce \$5.6 million for a school refurbishment modernisation project but only allocate \$1.2 million next financial year and in that budget paper 4 have a project completion date as the fourth quarter of 2017–18?

What is going on there? Is it because the master plan for the school's project, which was completed in 2010 but which the government has sat on for four years, is now out of date and the \$1.2 million is being spent to redo a modernisation master plan instead of being used to implement the project that was ready to go some four years ago? What a waste of money! On 12 May I wrote to the Minister for Education seeking an explanation from him as to why only \$1.2 million of the \$5.6 million allocated for this project is being cashflowed next financial year. What amount of work is going to get done in that time, and why is not all that money being allocated in the next financial year? It is not that complicated to get a primary school project of some \$5.6 million built when a master plan already exists to get that work done.

The *Heidelberg Leader* of 5 May states:

Rosanna Golf Links Primary School is dusting off shelved plans from 2010 to upgrade the junior school building ...

Acting principal Kelly Morrow is quoted as saying:

The whole planning began in 2010 but funding cuts meant we were not able to proceed with initial plans.

That is not surprising. I note that some people in the Ivanhoe area who sought to communicate these matters to local residents, apart from me, have been too embarrassed to include the local media report on these matters because the headline of that article is 'State budget pledge will end five-year wait for Rosanna school'. Relief is in sight, but only \$1.2 million has actually been committed. We are going to continue to hold the government to account on that matter.

Another extremely important matter is the Olympic Village children's hub in West Heidelberg. Two years I remember going to the announcement made by Craig Ondarchie, a member for Northern Metropolitan Region in the other place, because I had just left the

hospital where my wife had had our daughter, Ava, who had her second birthday on the weekend. Since that announcement not one sod has been turned on that project. Two years later no builder has been appointed. Two years later there has been no action from the government in relation to delivering on the project. It goes again to show very clearly that West Heidelberg residents are sick of people walking into their community, waving around commitments and promises and then disappearing in a cloud of dust in the big white cars. They never see them again and never see any projects delivered. It has been two years.

I note that in a letter in response to my adjournment debate contribution of 27 November 2013 from the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Ms Lovell — my adjournment contribution was on 27 November 2013; I got the response on 20 February 2014 — she blames the Banyule City Council. She said:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has advised me that the project was delayed during negotiation of the funding agreement and lease arrangements between the department and Banyule City Council.

She went on to say:

The council is anticipating awarding the contract by the end of February 2014.

This was in the letter I received on 20 February. She continued:

Construction is anticipated to commence by April 2014 and to be completed by the end of 2014.

This is a project that was announced in May 2012 by this government. It has not appointed a builder, it has not turned a sod, it has not started — and it is still trying to tell us that it is going to deliver the project. Capital works in this budget are clearly not something that the government can be trusted to deliver, because it has not delivered on past projects that it has committed to in the Ivanhoe electorate.

An article of 20 May 2014 headed 'Work on learning hub now for September start' states:

Construction of the Olympic Village learning hub is due to start in September after a two-year delay.

Banyule Council will continue to search for a builder this month for the \$2 million project in what will be the second tender process so far since the state government money was promised for the learning hub in early 2012.

I can tell you, Deputy Speaker, that children like my daughter will not be able to use the Olympic Village learning hub because, like many other children in the

West Heidelberg area, she will be too old to get in by the time this government actually gets the project built. There has been a massive failure by this government in meeting its commitments to the West Heidelberg community.

In talking about the West Heidelberg community I turn to public housing. In August 2012 the government said that it would sell some 300 public housing dwellings in West Heidelberg as part of its plans to deliver some 600 new public housing dwellings. I go to budget paper 4, page 89. For the item ‘Heidelberg redevelopment — 600 units/sites (Heidelberg)’ the total estimated investment is \$160 million. This project has been going for several years now, yet to June this year only \$12 million will actually have been spent. We are still unable to find out from the housing minister how many public housing properties have been sold in the 3081 postcode and how many public housing dwellings have been commissioned by the government under this Olympia housing initiative that is proving nothing but a dud for the people of West Heidelberg. There will be no net extra public housing for people in West Heidelberg through this project. This is all smoke and mirrors by this government to look busy.

We know quite clearly, and I point out again, that on 7 May Premier Denis Napthine shut the door on some 36 000 Victorians languishing on the state’s public housing list, and for the first time this state will sell more social housing than it will build. This government budget might have a surplus, like every other state budget has had for over a decade, but it lacks a decency surplus. It is in deficit in relation to those matters.

**Debate interrupted.**

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall)** — Order! I would like to acknowledge in the gallery Mr Brown, former Liberal Premier of South Australia. Welcome.

### APPROPRIATION (2014–2015) BILL 2014

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed.**

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Innovation) — I am delighted to contribute to the debate on the Victorian budget 2014–15, *Building a Better Victoria*. What a fabulous budget this is that we are debating today. In the first instance we have an operating surplus for 2014–15 of \$1.3 billion, growing to \$3.3 billion in 2017–18. I note with interest that the member for

Tarneit has some significant difficulty in understanding what a surplus is. I see in today’s *Australian* the heading ‘Victorian Labor makes \$1 billion blunder in budget analysis’. The member has got all his figures confused — a \$1 billion blunder. There is a picture of the member for Tarneit, and under that is the caption ‘Victorian shadow Treasurer Tim Pallas has made an embarrassing mistake for Labor’ — again, a wrong categorisation of numbers. But it is no surprise to anyone on this side of the house, of course, because we know that Labor cannot manage money, and there is no doubt that there would be a \$1 billion blunder in terms of its budget response.

We have a AAA credit rating, we have a significant infrastructure program of up to \$27 billion, with the Melbourne rail link; the east–west link, the western section — which previously the Labor Party supported and now it does not — the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor; the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening; and so on. We have also seen in this budget a cut in the payroll tax rate, from 4.9 per cent to 4.85 per cent. This will save businesses \$234 million over four years, 39 000 employers will benefit from this and we will have the second lowest rate in Australia.

I move now to issues within my own portfolio areas. First of all, trade. It is very encouraging to see the latest export figures for the state of Victoria. We are growing, despite difficult conditions. In 2013 the total value of Victorian exports was \$36.1 billion, as per the latest figures. This represents a 7.1 per cent increase on 2012 and marks the fourth consecutive year of growth in the value of Victorian exports. The value of Victorian goods exports was \$22.9 billion, or 63 per cent of total exports, and services exports made up the remaining 37 per cent of Victorian exports, or \$13.3 billion. China, of course, continues to be our biggest trading partner.

We have embarked on a vigorous program of trade missions, with 71 trade missions since we were elected to office, yielding a total of \$4.3 billion of benefit and investment to Victorian businesses. Last year the government managed 11 outbound trade missions. All of these have been very favourably received by the sector. What do we see in response from the Labor Party? Not even a shadow minister for trade. That is the level of interest in the important area of export, but the government is growing that.

I refer now to page 48 of budget paper 3 to look at some individual items in this area. We are going to reopen the Seoul office in South Korea, which will be at a cost of \$300 000 per annum. This is an ideal

opportunity for us to take advantage of the free trade agreement negotiated by our federal counterparts. I noted with some interest the other day that the member for Yan Yean, in a question in this place, sought to trivialise the opening of a government business office. All I can say to the Labor Party is how wrong that is. These are significant opportunities, especially for our smaller sector, and we need to seize every available opportunity for export that we can possibly have.

We also have 'Fostering international business partnerships', a line item of \$3.3 million overall. That will fund a Victorian exhibit at Expo Milano 2015 at \$1.25 million. Again I note that the former government put \$6 million into the Shanghai world expo. We previously have put money into the Yeosu expo. The member for Yan Yean sought to trivialise this sort of investment in trade shows, even though former Labor Premier John Brumby had put \$6 million of Victorian taxpayers money — as he should have — into the Shanghai expo to gain that opportunity for the state of Victoria.

I also invite members to look at budget paper 3, page 15, in relation to the food and agriculture into Asia strategy, which will receive \$35 million over four years; that is in the area of the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security. Again this is something that dovetails very neatly with our export efforts.

I also want to mention international education, which is referred to at page 55 of budget paper 3. International education is our no. 1 export, and in this budget — this is funded by my department, I might add — we have introduced transport concessions for international students. It is very important that we safeguard and protect our no. 1 export. New South Wales previously announced a limited concessional scheme for international students. It did not allow what we would call a zone 1 ticket concession, but we have announced that from 1 January 2015 we will have a trial of discounted annual tickets covering all zones for international students. That is a significant initiative to protect our no. 1 export market.

Members will see that tourism, which is in budget paper 3 at page 48, is a significant winner in this budget. There is a \$69.7 million boost for the tourism sector. We have \$17 million for Melbourne marketing. We want to market Melbourne to our international visitors, and we also want to retain our no. 1 domestic visitation win. We are the no. 1 destination for domestic visitors. We are more popular than the Gold Coast and more popular than Sydney, and this money will protect that no. 1 position. In terms of regional marketing — and it is very important to spread the benefits of tourism

into the regions — there is \$14 million for interstate marketing and to encourage Melburnians to take a short break in regional Victoria and contribute to the economies there. There is \$13 million in air services attraction, which is on top of \$2.6 million in the 2012–13 budget. Again it is very important to attract direct flights into Melbourne. We are doing that, and we are also embarking on a cooperative marketing program with airlines. Melbourne Airport estimates that an international direct flight into Melbourne is worth \$240 000 to the economy, so it is very important that we keep those planes coming, and we have had some success in that area.

Business events are worth \$1.2 billion, and in this budget there is \$25.7 million to make sure those business events keep coming. The visitors they bring are often high-yield tourists, who often come with partners, and we get some real benefit from that. On top of that we see in this budget that there will be free travel in the CBD and Docklands. Whilst that will be excellent for people who live in Victoria, it will also be terrific for tourists. I think it will be extremely popular. There is also the airport rail link. The Minister for Public Transport talks about people from Victoria leaving, but having that airport rail link will make things a lot easier for international visitors coming here.

Tourism is a significant driver of economic growth in Victoria. The latest figures indicate that tourism contributes \$19.6 billion to the state and employs over 200 000 people. Our aim in our 2020 tourism strategy is to grow this industry to a \$34 billion industry with over 310 000 jobs. It is our no. 2 export and is also a very important domestic industry. We have done particularly well in terms of growth in international visitors, and as I said earlier, we are the no. 1 domestic destination, which is something we wish to protect. In the 2013 calendar year more than 30 million passengers passed through Melbourne Airport, which is a 4 per cent increase on the 2012 figure.

We continue to pursue major events. We have a long list of major events the government has secured on top of the traditional major events. We have secured *War Horse*; *King Kong*; the Australian Goldfields Open snooker in Bendigo; the Grace Kelly — Style Icon exhibition in Bendigo; the Liverpool versus Melbourne Victory match at the MCG; White Night Melbourne, which is an event devised by the former Premier and which was a great success in 2013 and 2014; the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 final at the MCG; and the Ironman Asia-Pacific Championship Melbourne. The list goes on and on in terms of the events we are securing to help underpin an industry worth \$1.4 billion to the state of Victoria.

In terms of innovation, as can be seen at budget paper 3, page 48, around \$2.4 million of new funding was allocated in the 2014–15 budget towards innovation initiatives. This is on top of \$78 million allocated in this portfolio area since 2010. The government will provide \$600 000 to continue to award two Victoria prizes worth \$50 000 each and 12 Victoria fellowships for a further three years. The 2014–15 budget also provided new funding of \$1.8 million for a second round of the Victorian postdoctoral research fellowships. These were first funded in 2012–13. They were a coalition election commitment. The fellowships awarded up to six early career Victorian researchers with a three-year fellowship, comprising two years overseas and a third year spent back in Victoria. This policy obviously represented an attempt to get the best and brightest and allow those students an opportunity to study internationally but then encourage them to come back to Victoria to use their brainpower here.

I want also to make a brief mention of the investment support program. All ministers in this portfolio had access to the investment support program. Most of the government's facilitation work does not, of course, involve money; it involves a whole heap of other strategies, such as helping in planning, helping in the finding of new premises and so on, but that investment support program has been topped up again in this budget. This is a very important tool of the government in terms of our investment attraction and in terms of ensuring jobs are growing in the state of Victoria.

I turn now to my electorate of Brighton. We see in the budget, in the state capital program, mention of two previous programs that have now been completed in Brighton. At Brighton Secondary College we now have a new science and technology facility funded by this government. I was delighted to be present at the opening of that facility, and again I thank the Minister for Education. I remember the day when we were in opposition when we were at the school promising upgraded science facilities. It had science facilities that were as old as the science facilities in the school I attended in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There had been no improvements at all under the Labor government, but this government has seen that project completed.

I am also delighted that the New Street crossing — again, this is mentioned at page 118 — is now a completed project. This crossing was shut by the Labor government, blocking access and causing huge congestion in Hampton Street. I am sure that the member for Broadmeadows is familiar with Hampton Street, Brighton, because it used to be one of his haunts. The opening of the New Street gates was a critical

project. It is very unusual for a member of Parliament to hear such things, but everywhere I go in Brighton people say thank you for that project. The more the Labor Party complains about the opening of the New Street crossing, the more people realise that if you want anything done in Brighton, you should vote Liberal: vote Asher, best for Brighton.

That is the sort of thing we will continue to do, because in this year's budget we see an allocation of another \$8 million to Brighton Secondary College.

**Ms Miller** interjected.

**Ms ASHER** — I hear the applause of the member for Bentleigh. Indeed, a number of students at that school live in Bentleigh. Brighton Secondary College is the only government secondary college in my electorate. It is very important to help those students whose parents cannot afford to send them to one of our many private schools. It is very important to help that particular school, and another \$8 million is on the table to effect the modernisation for facilities for the year 7 and year 8 students. It was a great day when the member for Bentleigh and I attended that school in the company of the Premier and that money was announced. It was a complete delivery on the commitment made in opposition by the then shadow Minister for Education, the now Minister for Education, to actually get this school up to the proper standard befitting a highly credentialled government school.

I am delighted with this budget. It builds a better Victoria. I am delighted to be speaking on it today, and I am also delighted that we are finally getting some funding opportunities in the electorate of Brighton.

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** (Mill Park) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014, which presents the coalition government's fourth and last budget before the state election. As the member representing the hardworking communities and families of Mill Park, it is another sad day for me because these communities are missing out yet again. This is the fourth budget in a row, the fourth time, that my communities are missing out on their fair share. It shows that when it comes to the Premier and this government, people in my community are very much on their own — and they tell me this every single day. There was not so much as a mention in the budget about the growing infrastructure and service needs of new suburbs such as Wollert, Epping and South Morang, nor of the need to upgrade many of the schools with less than adequate facilities in longer established communities in Mill Park and Epping so

that our kids will get the education and support they deserve.

Instead we have a government that is panicked after three and a half years, with no plan for jobs and no funding to close the gap in infrastructure and services for families living in outer Melbourne and the rest of Victoria, families such as those in the Eucalypt estate in Wollert and the Hayston Valley estate in Epping. I ask one simple question of this government, and that is: why? Why is this the case? Why did the Liberal Party seek to take government in 2010 if it had no intention of governing for the whole of the state? Why did it seek to take government if it had no intention of making good its promise to 'fix the problems' and 'cut the cost of living'?

Victorians are fast drawing the conclusion that, far from doing all this, this government has taken us backwards to a state where jobs have disappeared at a rate so fast as to leave Victorians dizzy and sick with the fear that their kids will not have a job to go to when they finish school.

What of our TAFE system, which is so important to the thousands of young people in my electorate who rely on the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, for example, to get those hands-on skills needed for the job they really want to have? Sadly only two weeks ago we learnt that the Northern TAFE finances had plunged to a \$30 million operating deficit. Courses have been cut and funding support has been gutted. There is no jobs plan and no viable TAFE sector for the many young people who desperately need a place in their community, in their society and a role that is fulfilling and meaningful in life.

Ford will soon close its Broadmeadows site, causing significant direct job losses and thousands more indirect job losses in automotive components and other industries in our region of Melbourne. There are real families with real jobs now but not for long, and the Victorian certificate of applied learning and TAFE system have been absolutely gutted. I ask the Premier where the support is for our young people. Where is the support for families who are struggling with congestion on our roads and our public transport? There is congestion on Epping Road, which services Wollert and Epping. It is an area with one way out, where bottleneck is the theme of the day. Families wake up to bottleneck congestion on their roads, and they go home after work with the bottleneck on that road. We all know there is no support from this government. This government is incompetent, falling over itself in the rush to empty the sack of projects on the eve of an election. You cannot describe it any differently. The

government has taken a sack, stuffed it with toy trains, rail tracks and Mattel model cars, emptied the lot into a pile of one unholy and costly mess, and it expects Victorians to say thank you.

I can tell this government that people in my electorate are not thanking it when they are not convinced that an \$8 billion road tunnel is going to do much to relieve the congestion on the roads they travel on and to get them home sooner and when they are not convinced that the Liberals Metro rail proposal is anything but a costly, botched and panicked project that will disaggregate the rail network and not deliver a proper and fully fledged Metro rail link that doubles the capacity of the city loop so that all lines benefit with more and better train services. This is Labor's plan, not the government's.

There is no money to duplicate Epping Road although 17 000 vehicles a day use that road. The Wollert and Epping North population is expected to exceed 25 000 within two years. The only way out for families in the Eucalypt and Hayston Valley housing estates is via that one choked single-lane road. They are still waiting. Labor went to the last election promising to duplicate the road. That project has gone by the wayside. This government failed to take up that very important road project. More and more families are moving into that area and are desperately seeking ways out of their estate so that they can be connected to other services, other transport nodes, jobs, schools and shopping centres. They are left stranded with this government's turning its back on them.

There is no money for the O'Herns Road interchange as an alternative route to Epping Road. Those communities have been crying out for that alternative road if for nothing else but pure public safety. When there were grassfires in that area several months ago the only way out for families living in those estates was via Epping Road. There could be devastating consequences for the safety of the public. Again, the budget shows the government has no concern whatsoever for the need to develop the O'Herns Road interchange as an alternative route, let alone for duplicating Epping Road. The Aurora Community Association and the Access Denied campaign have thousands of local residents signed up to their petition demanding action for this road and for better public transport, including the extension of the rail line to Mernda. Facing congestion and getting stuck in traffic is what it is like living in those communities.

Recently I have held several street meetings in Wollert and Epping North. People are worried and disheartened that they are living in beautiful homes in lovely landscaped estates but are spending longer stuck in their cars inching towards the Epping station on their way to

work and inching their way back home. They would be lucky to get home to have dinner with their family or to enjoy bath time or indeed read to their kids before bedtime. This is not the dream of families in the outer suburbs of Melbourne. This might be Denis Napthine's dream, but it is not a dream that is shared by communities in my electorate.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall)** — Order!  
The member will refer to members of the house by their correct titles.

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** — There is no money for improved bus services. The people who live in the Eucalypt estate, which is a new community, have no bus service at all to connect them to the Epping stations, shops, connecting buses or secondary schools. There is no money to complete walking and bike trails. For example, there is no money to complete the Yan Yean track on the eastern side of my electorate by taking the Metropolitan Ring Road through to Gordons Road. There is no mention whatsoever of when the government will actually extend the South Morang rail line — the rail line that Labor built and that Labor spent money on and invested in for the growing communities. There is no mention whatsoever in this budget as to when the rail will be taken to Mernda. Government documents put the project out to 2032. That is an absolute disgrace and an insult. Despite a local campaign and my lobbying the Minister for Public Transport, there is no mention of funds to increase car parking spaces at the South Morang rail station. I am still waiting on the minister to come good. Hopefully he will come good and start to pay attention to the needs of the community.

Schools have fared no better. No schools in my electorate have received any funds from this budget. Plenty Parklands Primary School needs a library upgrade. The Findon Primary School toilet block needs improvement. At Mill Park Heights Primary School, of 42 classrooms, 26 are portable classrooms. Morang South Primary School totally missed out on Gonski money and its utility costs are around \$60 000, but the budget for it is only \$14 000. The Lakes P–9 School and Merriang Special Developmental School need stage 2 funding for a multipurpose room, an art room and physical education. They got zero. The Lakes South Morang P–9 School is a large school that can accommodate many more students, but there is no bus that can take students from Plenty Road to the school precinct. While I acknowledge that the government has promised to build a new school at Mill Park Lakes East near The Lakes, priorities need to reflect that the government has failed to make an existing school easier to get to for the thousands of families living in South

Morang and further north. This is a government that is indeed panicked and is not delivering the services the community needs when it needs them.

I wish to comment on some portfolio matters that overlap with issues in my electorate. The City of Whittlesea, together with the other nine interface councils in Melbourne, is struggling to build infrastructure and provide services for new communities. There are many needs which require a state component of funds, but very little is being spent by this government to help growing populations get the services that make their communities better places to live and to raise a family: maternal and child health services, playgroups, kindergartens, sporting and recreational facilities, walking and bike tracks, local buses and better roads and rail services which relieve congestion and allow people to move around freely.

The interface councils have been asking for some years for this government to provide them with a dedicated outer suburbs growth fund for infrastructure so that they can start to meet their funding shortfalls and deliver facilities and services when communities need them — when families are moving in, not when the kids have left home. They have been sadly let down. Labor has promised to deliver a dedicated outer suburbs growth fund if elected and it will not let down communities living on the outskirts of Melbourne, because Labor members know that communities that are well supported with services, schools, hospitals, transport and jobs become strong communities with strong families, so that they have a good and happy life. That is the dream of every family.

Not only have the interface councils called for this fund but the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also called for it, because its members too recognise that infrastructure and services are vital to a more productive and job-supporting economy. On both counts, this government fails.

The cost of living for Victorians is getting harder and harder to afford. This government keeps feeding itself on actions such as repeated increases in car registration charges, frequent hikes in public transport fares, eliminating the education maintenance allowance and scaring low-income families that use too much electricity or gas with threats to cut their concessions by imposing caps.

This is also a government that on the decision of the Abbott government to cut concessions to transport, energy and council rates in the order of \$73.7 million to Victoria simply said it would pick it up for one year. What is missing in this statement? There are two

primary things missing from that statement that the people of Victoria need and deserve to know in order to remove uncertainty. What is the government going to cut to meet this one-year commitment? You have the Premier saying it is going to come out of Mary Wooldridge's budget and the Minister for Community Services saying that it is not going to come out of her budget but is going to come out of the surplus. Who is going to win that argument? I dare say it will be the Premier.

I ask the Premier to tell Victorian concession card holders what he is going to cut to meet this funding shortfall and why he will not commit beyond 12 months. What is going to happen after the first 12 months when that money runs out? Victorian low-income earners and concession card holders deserve answers from this government, not excuses or hiding behind its friend in Canberra, Prime Minister Tony Abbott. I say to you, Acting Speaker, when it comes to the Liberals they cannot be trusted. They cannot be trusted on the key issue of support for low-income families, on the issue of health, on the issue of jobs or on the issue of good, affordable education. All we are getting is the Liberals turning their backs and leaving Victorians on their own. This is the hallmark and the legacy of the Napthine government and Tony Abbott, the mate in Canberra who will deliver a disastrous federal budget. This is a state government and a state Premier who knows no better than to hide behind the skirts of Tony Abbott.

When it comes to the cost of living for families in Victoria things have only got worse, not better. Problems have not been fixed; they have only got worse. The cost of living has not been cut; it has only got worse under Denis Napthine, because he does not care. Victorians are on their own under this government, and this government will rue the day when it decided to play ideological games, ignore Victorians who are doing it tough, and promise one thing and deliver the absolute opposite.

If anything, Tony Abbott has learnt many lessons from this government but they have all been the wrong lessons — that is, saying one thing in opposition and doing the exact opposite in government. We now have university students and secondary students with aspirations to do further study who are panicked and concerned about where they are going to get the money to pay their higher education contribution scheme debt. Where are they going to get decent jobs when there is no jobs plan from this government? The Victorian community knows that what you see is what you get, and what they are seeing and what they are getting from

Denis Napthine is a terrible story that is not in their interests.

**Mr BULL** (Minister for Local Government) — It is a pleasure to rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. The Liberal-Nationals coalition government has delivered a very responsible budget which provides a \$1.3 billion surplus and delivers record investments in our schools and hospitals. It is strong, it is positive, it is forward looking, and East Gippsland families and businesses, and indeed families and businesses right across the state, will benefit from improved infrastructure and services.

The government is putting more money into health and education so we can treat more patients and better educate our children. But first let me talk about my electorate of Gippsland East, and what a wonderful electorate it is. I was very pleased to see that all the hard work of the families and supporters of the Sale Specialist School has paid off, with the announcement that land has been purchased and \$4.1 million has been allocated for stage 1 of that project. What a pleasure it was to join the Deputy Premier and my colleague in the other place, a member for Eastern Victoria Region, Mr Danny O'Brien, for that announcement. It was a great announcement for the people of East Gippsland with the facility serving a number of communities in my electorate, including Maffra, Heyfield, Stratford, Boisdale, Briagolong, and even up to Dargo. All families that have children with special needs will benefit from this great facility and it will make an enormous difference to them.

We have \$5.5 million for an overall \$11 million upgrade of the Princes Highway, which includes three overtaking lanes between Orbost and Nowa Nowa. This is a much-needed upgrade. There is a substantial increase in traffic along this road during the holiday months and this funding will certainly see that stretch of road become far safer for not only local motorists but also those that are heading to far East Gippsland to enjoy their holidays. Another \$3.38 million has been earmarked for works further east, including a major upgrade of the very well used rest area at Murrungowar, which is a little place just east of Orbost. There are many Gippsland businesses that use this route to transport produce up and down the highway and to and from markets in New South Wales and Queensland. This facility will provide a great safe place for road users and truckies to take a break and have a rest.

The budget also contains a \$130 million boost to general road maintenance in this state, taking the

overall total to half a billion dollars. This announcement will certainly be welcomed by all Victorians, and I expect to hear some further announcements in relation to additional capital and maintenance programs in Gippsland East which will consolidate the government's already great investment into roadworks in this part of the state.

From a wider Gippsland perspective, we have \$73 million to upgrade the Latrobe Regional Hospital, which delivers the best health care possible to many East Gippslanders. Investment in the eastern metro rail corridor will see additional trains, high-capacity signalling and power upgrades that will provide a far more reliable journey for Gippsland V/Line passengers travelling from the East Gippsland region.

From a statewide perspective this government will deliver additional services for Victorians, including additional health funding of \$1.4 billion over the next four years, which includes \$190 million to boost elective surgery and record amounts into bushfire protection, allocating around \$358 million to land and fire management in our state. This record funding will largely benefit my electorate of Gippsland East, one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. Even subsequent to the budget, Bairnsdale's firefighting base just last week received an additional \$1.6 million upgrade because this coalition government realises the important role our emergency services and volunteers play during fire season.

The Victorian coalition government has increased the Country Fire Authority budget to \$457 million and will deliver crucial extra equipment, including 78 new fire trucks to protect our communities across the state. I had the pleasure of being at the Toorloo fire brigade last weekend to hand over a new state-of-the-art tanker. Other communities have also benefited from new vehicles in the last two years, including Briagolong, Orbost, Kalimna West, Ensay, Omeo, Sarsfield and Coongulla, and that is just in my patch. In this year's budget we announced a program to continue that vehicle renewal. I am looking forward to some more great announcements for brigades in the Gippsland East electorate. I thank all the 55 000 volunteers for their service in protecting more than a million homes and properties across the state. When we were threatened by fire last summer, we saw brigades from all over Victoria in the electorate defending our patch.

The coalition government also recognises the important job done by those who keep Victorians safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a record police budget of \$2.43 billion, including \$13.5 million for the rollout of tasers to all 24-hour police stations, including

Bairnsdale. This will provide our police officers with modern equipment and an alternative option to using firearms, helping them to manage the complex situations they are often confronted with and minimising the risk of serious injuries and fatalities.

The budget has delivered a further \$12 million of funding to improve boating infrastructure, including a boost of \$3 million to the boating safety and facilities program. I know the Minister for Ports was absolutely delighted to make that announcement. This will further benefit my electorate of East Gippsland, which is home to the largest commercial fishing fleet in Victoria based at Lakes Entrance and on the Gippsland Lakes, with recreational boating also being a favourite pastime in towns such as Metung and Paynesville. There has been \$14 million allocated for regional tourism marketing, which the previous speaker mentioned. This will benefit not only the Gippsland East electorate but also the many great regions of wider Victoria.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this is a very strong and positive budget, with some great announcements in it for East Gippsland electorate families and indeed families statewide. There is an additional \$204 million for disability support; \$198 million to better support vulnerable children and families, with specific funds to better protect women and children at risk of family violence; a \$1.6 billion boost to the education budget over five years, including an additional \$305 million to support students with a disability within our school sector; and an increase in stamp duty concessions from 40 per cent to 50 per cent for first home buyers. From a business perspective we have seen announcements that will have very positive impacts, including \$35 million to boost agricultural exports, which will support the many food and agriculture businesses in regional Victoria. In my patch locations such as Tinamba, Maffra, Stratford, Boisdale and Lindenow — all very high food-producing areas — will benefit from this announcement.

The budget demonstrates that the coalition government is building a better Victoria. I am proud to say that because of our sound financial management the people of my electorate will continue to benefit across a range of areas. Victoria's regional unemployment rate of 6.3 percent remains well below the regional average of 6.8 per cent for all states. We have heard some on the other side saying there has been a lack of investment in rural and regional Victoria. This is just rubbish. There has been significant investment in rural and regional Victoria through the Regional Growth Fund, which is creating jobs, and that is reflected in the regional unemployment rate being so low compared to the rest of the country. Victoria has the second-lowest regional

unemployment rate of any state behind Western Australia. When federal Labor lost office in November 2010, Victoria had the highest regional unemployment rate in Australia. It is now the second lowest, which is a great indicator of our terrific investment.

Regional and rural Victoria will also reap enormous benefit from the government's investment in major infrastructure investments, including jobs, improved freight efficiency and greater connectivity. Labor has claimed that the forward estimates in the budget papers do not include the next \$500 million of the Regional Growth Fund. In particular I quote the member for Bendigo East, who said:

A further sign of disrespect is the hoax that is being perpetrated on the state about a \$1 billion growth fund. The budget papers do not reveal one cent of the forward allocation for this \$1 billion growth fund.

This is an existing program and is therefore included in the existing appropriation and output costs of the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation. In fact a funding allocation of \$500 million for the second stage of the Regional Growth Fund from 2014–15 to 2017–18 is included in expenses by government purpose and by department. That is at page 31 of this year's budget paper 5 so that claim is completely inaccurate and wrong.

I would now like to have a look at the portfolios for which I am responsible. In relation to Aboriginal affairs, significant progress toward closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people will be strengthened with funding of \$4.2 million in the budget. An investment of \$525 000 will underpin the Victorian coalition government's Aboriginal economic strategy. This will deliver very strong outcomes for all Aboriginal Victorians in securing employment opportunities, with career pathways a key focus as well as growing Aboriginal business enterprise and investment. The protection of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage will be well supported, with \$3.1 million allocated to implement coalition government reforms that strengthen the Aboriginal Heritage Act. This includes additional support for registered Aboriginal parties to perform their very important duties around the state.

The budget extends the Right People for Country program and provides a certificate IV course in Aboriginal cultural heritage management. An additional \$488 000 will also be provided to support the management of Lake Tyers in its transition to self-management. More than \$4 million will be spent to ensure that all Aboriginal Victorians have better access

to opportunities that will strengthen their education, training and chances of securing future employment.

In relation to local government, a further \$12.5 million will be directed to the local government sector to drive the most extensive reform agenda of the past two decades. This coalition government's investment will provide Victorian households with greater transparency and accountability of how their local council delivers services for the local community. Over the next four years a total of \$9.9 million will fund the local government inspectorate to expand its role in generally overseeing the sector and improving governance and conduct. The coalition government's investment is part of a suite of vital improvements to governance and conduct arrangements designed to improve the standing and confidence of ratepayers in our local government sector.

Funding of \$2.5 million will also be directed to drive improved performance amongst the state's 79 councils, and the development of the new user-friendly My Council website give communities greater opportunity to see how their rates are being spent. This will be an easy to use website that will allow ratepayers to jump online, go to the website and compare themselves with like councils in Victoria. It will not only be a more open and transparent way for people to check the performance of their local council in a whole range of areas, it will also make councils more responsible. It will also allow some councils to better investigate what is best practice when they can see the figures that will be put up on how other councils are spending money. It will encourage communication and best practice.

The Living Libraries infrastructure program continues, with \$17.2 million allocated and record recurrent funding of \$39.52 million. I have had the great pleasure of seeing firsthand the great benefits of this program over recent weeks: the new library in Bendigo, the new library in Ashburton and indeed the fantastic new facility in my hometown of Bairnsdale, which I had the pleasure of opening as my first job in the ministerial position. The quality of those libraries and the great services they are providing to the community are a great example of how effective this funding stream has been.

This is a great budget for East Gippsland; it is a great budget for Victoria. It contains significant infrastructure spending that will result in jobs and improve our economy, and it also includes record funding for health and education, which is important in helping us to deliver and provide those essential services that are keenly sought by Victorian families across the board. I

have great pleasure in commending the bill to the house.

**Mr BROOKS** (Bundoora) — Many of us in this house have elderly parents or, if not, people we know and are close to who are in that older age bracket. I want people and members of this house to think of those people while I relate the story of an 88-year-old woman and her husband in suburban Greensborough. In April last year, despite having mobility problems, they were going up the street in their car to pay a few bills and to pick up a few essential items from the shops. As they were leaving the house to walk up the driveway, the 88-year-old woman fell over and broke her hip. She was lying on the ground in extreme pain and calling for help. The screams alerted neighbours, who rushed to help. Her panicked elderly husband immediately rang for an ambulance.

In these sorts of circumstances I am sure people would understand that minutes can feel like hours and that the time it can take for an ambulance to arrive, even in a short period of time, could feel like an eternity. These people, who have paid taxes all their lives, waited 5 minutes, then 10 minutes. They were waiting for an ambulance while this woman was screaming in agony on the ground in her own driveway. Her neighbours had tried to pick her up and get her onto her feet or move her, but she was in such pain that she could not be moved.

After 10 minutes her husband rang the ambulance service again to find out where the ambulance was. They waited 20 minutes for an ambulance. They waited 30 minutes for an ambulance. They waited 40 minutes from an ambulance. They waited 50 minutes for an ambulance. They waited an hour for an ambulance. They waited 70 minutes for an ambulance. In extreme pain and with a broken hip, this woman waited. They waited 80 minutes for an ambulance. They waited 90 minutes for an ambulance. They ended up waiting over 100 minutes for an ambulance for an elderly woman in extreme pain, laying in her driveway in suburban Melbourne.

This is not an isolated incident; you would hope it was. There are examples like this that are being reported to members of Parliament and to the media on an all too regular basis. I can relate a number of other similarly extreme examples of the failure of our ambulance service over the last 12 months, in fact over the last couple of years. We know from the statistics that more than a quarter of ambulance callouts to urgent code 1 cases have not arrived on time. We know that one in six ambulances is taking over 40 minutes to get its patients

to a hospital bed. In a first-world country, in the city or in a suburban area, this is just not acceptable.

The fact that this budget does nothing to fix this problem is on its own reason enough for this government to hang its head in shame, because this budget fails the Victorian people. Just on this one issue this is a failure of this government to recognise something that is causing extreme pain and extreme suffering to the Victorian people. This government should be ashamed of itself instead of patting itself on the back, coming into this place and telling everybody that it has been doing such a great job. It is an absolute insult to the Victorian people.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BROOKS** — Members on the other side say there were 11 long, dark years under the previous government. To that I say, this never occurred under the Labor government. We never turned our backs on the Victorian people the way government members have turned their backs on the Victorian people and ignored the concerns that are being raised about ambulance services. The way an 88-year-old woman in my electorate was treated was shameful. There has been no apology from this government to the woman or her husband, just a media release saying what a great job this government is doing. It is outrageous.

An issue about which I am passionate is education. What we have seen again from this government is a continuation of the neglect of education in Victoria. Putting to one side that we have seen capital funding cut in half and maintenance funding under this government at a fraction of the level it should be, according to the Auditor-General, there is a serious human problem. Recently it was revealed, according to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development figures, that over 10 000 young people are disengaging from education every year. A further 6000 are disengaging from training and vocational education within a year of taking up a course. This is a massive problem, and will become a massive social problem. This is at a time when the federal government has just cut the really important Youth Connections program, which works with young people individually to help them with jobs, support and training.

What do we see in this budget from the Napthine government? We do not see a reinstatement of the Victorian certificate of applied learning coordination funding that was cut by this government. We do not see Youth Partnerships funded — it is finished. We see TAFE gutted: \$1.2 billion over the term of this government has been ripped out of the TAFE sector.

I was amazed today in this debate to hear the Minister for Higher Education and Skills say what a great job he is doing in TAFE and skills training. Listening to that contribution you would think that everything is fantastic. What an insult! The annual report of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE is a shameful document, an indictment of this government dripping with red ink. There was a nearly \$30 million loss this year, with government cuts directly responsible for \$40 million ripped out by the Napthine government. The only reason it was not a \$40 million loss is that the TAFE was able to make some of that money back by jacking up fees and sacking staff — what a disgrace!

**Dr Sykes** interjected.

**Mr BROOKS** — I challenge the member for Benalla. If he thinks it is such a — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall)** — Order! The member will not respond to interjections.

**Mr BROOKS** — If members opposite think their government is doing such a great job in TAFE, I challenge them to come up to Greensborough TAFE college. I was there early last week, and it is shut. It has relatively modern facilities — a great training facility on the edge of a growth corridor in Melbourne's north-east closed at the end of last year by the Napthine government. What a shame! At the very time the automotive industry is shutting down and jobs are leaving this state, the government is shutting the TAFE in my local community. It is outrageous, and it is now going through the process of being put up for sale. It is going to be flogged off by the Napthine government — what a disgrace that not only has this government cut vital programs, it is now flogging off the only TAFE campus in close proximity to my local community. This is a disgrace, and the Victorian people will remember it.

One of the meanest cuts which this government has inflicted on the community and which it is saying very little about is the cut to the education maintenance allowance (EMA). I have mentioned this in this house before. It is a payment of a few hundred dollars. You would call it a modest payment to the low-income families of this state to help their kids with educational payments. The rationale for this cut when it was announced by this government was that it was signing up to the Gonski Better Schools funding agreement and there would be funding for disadvantaged students applied through that Gonski Better Schools money that would pick up the shortfall for the loss of EMA funding. What a con! We know now that this government negotiated a six-year funding agreement with the federal government but back-ended all of the

big money, which means that while other states are reaping the benefits of the Better Schools agreement, now that Prime Minister Tony Abbott has walked away from years 5 and 6 of the Better Schools agreement Victoria has been duded.

It is not just the Labor Party saying this. The Victorian Principals Association and the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals have written to the Premier this month outlining their concern that Victoria is being duded. Victoria is receiving \$23.7 million from the federal government — that is, from the figures they were able to obtain — whereas New South Wales is receiving \$118 million and Queensland is receiving \$131 million. I am not sure you would want Martin Dixon or Denis Napthine negotiating an agreement on your behalf.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ryall)** — Order! When addressing other members in the chamber, the member will use their correct titles.

**Mr BROOKS** — The other cut that will impact on families right across the state is the end of the national partnership agreements for kindergartens. My local council, Banyule City Council, reported to its councillors last week that if that cut is passed on to families, it will mean a 129 per cent increase in fees. It is shameful, and the Premier was in here before bragging about reducing the cost of living.

We have seen this government in this budget cut \$25 million from public aged care. Two nursing homes in my electorate are up for sale. It is a disgrace, and one of those is a specialised psychogeriatric facility that the private sector will not be able to maintain in the same way the government runs it at the moment. The families at that aged-care facility are terrified of what is going to happen if it is privatised.

My local community has seen fewer police on the front line — fewer police in the Banyule area, fewer police in the Darebin area and fewer police in the Whittlesea area. There has been a drop in all of those police service areas. At the same time we have seen crime up in Banyule by 12 per cent, in Darebin by 6 per cent and in Whittlesea by 21 per cent. You will have to forgive me, Acting Speaker, if I do not think this is a good budget. It is a disaster for my community and for Victoria.

In conclusion, I have to echo the comments made by the member for Mill Park. People cannot trust the Abbott government and they cannot trust the Napthine government. The Victorian people know you cannot trust the Liberals or The Nationals with hospitals. You cannot trust the Liberals or The Nationals with

ambulances. You cannot trust them with schools or TAFEs, and you cannot trust them to protect jobs. We do not need any further evidence than this budget before the house today.

**Ms VICTORIA** (Minister for the Arts) — I am very proud to be part of the Napthine government, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to give a response to the wonderful budget delivered by the Napthine government for 2014–15. We are building a better Victoria despite what we hear from other sources. This is something we have an opportunity to talk about today, and I intend to talk about why it is we are doing so very well here in Victoria.

We are investing record amounts in infrastructure, with \$27 billion for things like road and rail infrastructure. I hear a lot of rhetoric, with people talking about how we should be spending more on rail or we should be spending more on roads. We are actually spending money on both. We are also creating some 26 000 infrastructure-related jobs, which means more Victorians doing more work and contributing to the economy. We also have a surplus of over \$1.3 billion, which enables this type of unprecedented investment in Victoria, in both infrastructure and other programs.

As I said, I am very proud to be a part of a government in which we have a Treasurer and a Premier who actually understand what is needed not just for now — not putting things on the credit card for instant gratification — but looking to the future and making sure in the medium and long terms that this state is carrying its weight in Australia and also providing good opportunities for its citizens. We are also providing more money for education, health, law and order, and other essential services.

I want to start by talking about how we are building a better Bayswater district. I am very proud to have been the member for Bayswater for nearly eight years now, and what we have done is invest very heavily over those nearly eight years. This budget has been no different. This year there has been \$2.3 million of school capital works at Bayswater North Primary School, with much needed work being done for a tight knit school community that is really deserving of this type of investment. Boronia Heights Primary School has benefited from nearly \$850 000 worth of capital works.

When the redistribution of the electoral boundaries was first announced, pretty well on the very first day the school president got in touch with me and the school community leaders got in touch with me and they said, ‘We have been neglected over many, many years. What

is it that you are going to do with us that is different from what has happened in the past?’. I say to those people that I am going to treat them with respect. I am going to say their children are as important as any other children in the state, and we are going to invest in the infrastructure so that they can learn in the best possible surroundings. As a first step at Boronia Heights Primary School, a very deserving primary school and community, we are putting forward \$849 000.

I have been around long enough to see the abolition of public transport zone 3, which was an initiative proposed by the former Premier, the member for Hawthorn, when he was opposition leader, and something that overjoyed us in the outer east. We were badly discriminated against. We have gone one step further in this budget, and now people accessing public transport in zone 2, which is pretty well everybody who is living in the Bayswater district, are able to travel into town on a zone 1 fare. What does that mean? It means that hardworking people who are travelling into town on a daily basis are going to have \$1200 a year more in their pockets to use if they want to take their kids on a holiday or if they want to invest that in their mortgage or perhaps if they want to do something else constructive to increase the value of their home. Maybe they are having trouble and struggling, to make ends meet, because we all know that the cost of living is difficult for some, so with \$1200 a year in their pockets instead of in the government’s pocket, people are rejoicing.

We are celebrating for those who travel only in zone 2 because we are still going to offer a discounted zone 2-only fare. Those who, once they are in the city — perhaps they get a lift in — move around by tram are not going to have to buy a ticket at all. Of course that is on top of the initiatives which we have already announced in the Bayswater district and which are being delivered. They include projects such as the planning and preconstruction works for the dual-grade separation at Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road — the biggest grade separation undertaking, with two level crossings and the railway sidings and maintenance sheds there, which is well under way.

The expansion of Maroondah Hospital, where many of my constituents seek medical treatment, has had \$22 million invested there in health care for them. We have protective services officers stationed at places like Bayswater and Boronia, and there is also a \$3 million contribution to the Aquanation swimming and diving centre at Ringwood, which is something I am very proud of. Also of course there is the new 24-hour ambulance station in Knox. There is much happening in my electorate that I am very proud of and that we

fought for. The government has listened, and I am so pleased with what we have been able to achieve.

I also want to touch on the three portfolio areas that I am responsible for. I am going to start with the arts because, again this is something that everybody in this house would know, I am incredibly passionate about it. Sometimes the arts are treated as discretionary. I stand here today and say that nothing could be further from the truth. As a government we recognise the value of the arts to not only our society but also our economy. Every year the arts sector contributes some \$11.4 billion to Victoria's gross state product and makes sure that 110 000 full-time equivalent jobs are filled by Victorians. That is a huge number. This budget has delivered a funding commitment of \$44.9 million, which is an unprecedented level of new investment in securing our reputation here in Victoria as the cultural capital of Australia.

For example, \$16.4 million is being spent on building upgrades and maintenance packages for the arts centre in Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria. You might ask why that amount has been allocated for maintenance. It is because when the recommendation was brought down in the early 2000s to replace the chillers and boilers — not the most enticing of subjects people want to talk about, but absolutely vital to service delivery in those two very important buildings that see thousands of people come through every year — the Labor government was told if that were not done and those chillers and boilers were not replaced, they would be at end of life, and service shutdown was a very big possibility. Labor did nothing, so we are now making that investment, and those chillers and boilers will be replaced and be guaranteed to serve Victorians for many decades to come.

Also as part of a sustainability package Arts Centre Melbourne is well on its way to becoming the jewel in the crown not only in Victoria but across Australia. There is \$8.5 million for the redevelopment of the Victoria Police mounted branch stables in Dodds Street. This is part of the big package we have put into the Victorian College of the Arts to ensure that we are training our young artists and our young people working within the arts and culture space to the highest possible level anywhere in Australia and possibly in the world. We have given that commitment about the stables. Arts ministers and police ministers have been talking about this project for 40 years, and this government has delivered it.

There is also \$3 million for Museum Victoria for gallery renewal. This is incredibly important to make sure it has the most vibrant and current exhibitions so

people keep coming back and have continuing interest. The money will be spent on the children's gallery. What has benefited from this type of investment has been, for example, the First Peoples exhibition and Bunjilaka at Melbourne Museum. I am proud to say that the exhibition has taken out first prize at the American Alliance of Museums Excellence in Exhibitions competition, which was held in Seattle last week. That is first prize in the world for this wonderful exhibition, and I encourage everybody, if they have not seen it, to make sure they get over there to discover how we have interpreted the wonderful story that is Aboriginal culture here in Victoria.

There is also a commitment of over \$1 million for Summer in Southbank. This is a way of us activating the Southbank precinct, which of course is part of the recommendations in the blueprint that was handed to me earlier this year. There is \$5 million for maintenance. We have over \$2 billion of cultural assets in Victoria, and we have to maintain them. There is also additional funding for the VicArts grants program to make sure we are supporting the independent arts sector. It is an incredibly important grassroots way of us making sure that people are able not only to work in their field but to be sustainable within their field.

In women's affairs we have committed to improving the economic and social wellbeing of women in Victoria. Since its election in 2010 the government has been extremely proactive in this area and has delivered a raft of initiatives. Further investment this year shows that we will be investing in full and equal participation of women in the Victorian economy, something we know is good not only for the women concerned but also for the economy. We are also developing women's capacity to exercise leadership in business, community and government by giving them more opportunities to fill those roles and build a stronger Victoria.

The Victorian women's governance scholarship program is run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and I was speaking with the latest group of recipients of those scholarships yesterday. They are 34 outstanding women who want to know how they can contribute further on non-government boards and committees. This was a great initiative started by the former Minister for Women's Affairs, and we have continued to get funding. I am very happy that we will now have that on an ongoing basis, and I thank the Treasurer for his commitment to that initiative.

There is the Pathways to Exit program for sex workers who want to leave the industry and who want to seek genuine alternative employment. This program gives them an opportunity that nobody has given them

before. Whether it be training and education or whether it be the support they need, it is about making sure they have alternative opportunities. There is also the Pathways to Employment program, which will assist about 180 women into employment. They could be at risk of homelessness, mental illness or family violence, and this program will help to support them.

We also have our non-traditional careers program, part of which includes 13 workshops for up to 260 women of all ages including young women who might be looking at, for example, a trade as a career. I have been along to one of the workshops in the last couple of weeks. The women were genuinely having a fabulous time in a very supportive environment and saying, 'This may well be something that is good for me'. It is a great opportunity, and it is a great alternative to being thrown into one of the traditional career pathways that women quite often take. I congratulate the Minister for Community Services for her ongoing commitment to protecting women and children, especially in family violence situations. I know that comes under her portfolio, but of course in so many ways it comes under the women's affairs area as well.

In consumer affairs we have allocated \$123.4 million in this budget to make sure we are protecting businesses and consumers around Victoria. This is an increase of over \$35 million in this portfolio. As promised at the 2010 election we are focused on making sure that people have access to the information they want when they want it and making sure that there is lots of front-line service delivery. There has been a great increase in Victorian Property Fund grants for those who can least afford housing, including in places like Bendigo, with 18 to 35-year-olds under the Haven; Home, Safe program and also under the Kids Under Cover program, which helps kids to stay in a supportive environment when they may not be able to live under the same roof as their carers.

There is also money for small business assistance. There is money allocated to all sorts of different reforms. Importantly, there is rooming house reform. We have done a great job in this space, and I congratulate Consumer Affairs Victoria for what it has done. In 2008–09 under Labor only 42 inspections were conducted. Under this government there are well over 1000 in any given year. We are making it easier for consumers to compare apples with apples when it comes to, for example, retirement villages for those who choose to go down that path or find it is a time in their life when they want to go into a retirement village. The contracts are incredibly difficult to understand, and it is incredibly difficult to compare one village with another, and people have been quite confused in the

past. We have made those sorts of reforms, and I am very proud of the work that is being done in that space.

Whether it be investment across the state in infrastructure that benefits all Victorians, whether it be the amazing investment that this government has put into the arts, consumer affairs and women's affairs or whether it be what we are doing for small communities around the state, this government is building a better Victoria. I am very proud to be a minister within this government. I am very proud to be the member for Bayswater and to know that this government has helped the people of Bayswater in many major ways, not just in this budget but in budgets past. This is a good budget for all Victorians.

**Mr McGUIRE** (Broadmeadows) — 'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results'. Albert Einstein's wisdom holds pride of place in my office in Parliament House because it underscores the folly in this budget. One of its key narratives reveals a tale of two cities, the systemic and historic failure, particularly on infrastructure, that I anticipated and took steps to try to avoid. In February I wrote to the Premier and to the Prime Minister seeking a coordinated, bipartisan strategy to ensure that the so-called end of entitlement did not also deliver the end of prosperity and a fair go. You could see this coming. You could hear the rhetoric, and you knew where these Orwellian propositions were going to end up. Here was a proposition that it was going to be the end of entitlement. Look how well this has gone. Look at how people have got onto this, how it has exposed the end of the fair go, as I predicted and called for and tried to get some coordination on between the leader of the state and the leader of the country to avoid this folly.

What was the response? After writing as the member for Broadmeadows, which is the capital of Melbourne's north and an economic engine room that for generations has underwritten Victoria's prosperity, the response was silence. This is the shame that highlights systemic failure and political bias. Broadmeadows matters because it symbolises hope. My call has always been to place it above politics because it has evolved into a United Nations in one neighbourhood and it highlights defining issues that we must face as a country and a state: globalisation and local manufacturing, innovation and new jobs, population growth and multiculturalism.

Families from more than 140 countries have displayed the imagination to dream of a better future and the courage to cross the world to pursue it, as my family did before them. Only the accents, not the aspirations, have changed. When my family settled in Broadmeadows in 1959 it was a raw fringe at the end of

the line. It was the same year the Ford Motor Company began local production after Liberal Premier Henry Bolte, accompanied by dancing girls and an orchestra, opened the car plant. That was the last Liberal fanfare that we saw in Broadmeadows. The historic neglect was underscored more than three decades ago when Victoria's leading public servant confessed to me on his retirement that Broadmeadows was the biggest failure in the previous generation of conservative administrations.

The lack of coordination failed to deliver the basic infrastructure most suburbs had taken for granted long before Melbourne evolved into one of the world's most livable cities. The neglect also defines the cruel cynicism of politics: that funding is too often gifted to marginal seats ahead of those of greater need. That is what we have seen repeated yet again in this budget. Rather than investing where you would get the greater return for the good of the state and from that perspective a budget in the public interest, it was just about political self-interest. That is the absolute pattern, clear-cut in the way that my electorate and my community has been treated.

My offer to Mr Abbott was a blueprint for jobs, growth and infrastructure. Ford had just brought forward to June the axing of 300 jobs in Broadmeadows and Geelong. We are 1 minute to midnight on this; it is about to occur. What have we got from this government in the way of getting new companies into Broadmeadows? I am still waiting to hear what its response is on how to actually make this happen. We have to remember that the issue with Ford is that it intends to continue local production until 2016. But this is not a promise, far less a guarantee; it is only an intention, so it should never be underestimated how close this is.

My offer included harnessing the global learning village model to coordinate the three tiers of government, business, philanthropists, universities and institutes to deliver lifelong learning, enterprise and innovation, a model that I have helped pioneer in Broadmeadows since 1999. The model's success has been internationally acclaimed because it invests in the attributes that largely determine where everyone ends up in life — attitude, education and opportunity — instead of simply continuing to increase funding for bigger police stations, grander courthouses and more prisons. Have we not realised the insanity of repeating this same pattern? Einstein was right.

The global learning village model delivered the first public library in Broadmeadows only a decade ago, followed by a maternal and child-care centre, with

skills and business training in Meadow Heights. It had collaboration between international leaders in information and communications technology — Microsoft, Intel and Cisco Systems — to help connect the disconnected. Then we have been building the next step, which is Australia's first multiversity, designed to deliver the TAFE courses and university degrees crucial for 21st century jobs in community hubs in Broadmeadows, Craigieburn and Sunbury through partnerships between Deakin and Victoria universities and Kangan Institute.

Victorian and federal Labor governments and the City of Hume funded the projects for enlightenment. Business leaders who appreciate that companies compete in markets but exist in communities added value. They understood the concept of enlightened self-interest. They understood that you actually have to make a contribution to different communities. They understood it more than this government understands that when you say you are supposed to govern for all, you actually have to deliver in this way. That is the point of what the Labor government did. It was an era of enlightenment that delivered on this concept in the best interest of the state, the economy and communities.

But what has happened since the coalition won government in Victoria? It has axed almost \$100 million in infrastructure projects funded by the Bracks and Brumby administrations. Instead of investing in this growth area in Broadmeadows it has redistributed the money to sandbag its marginal seats. That is what it did; that was its strategy. It was self-interest ahead of the public interest and ahead of the best interest of the state and of the economy. Ford's closure will shed 650 jobs in Broadmeadows — more than will be lost in Geelong. Yet when the Deputy Premier was reeling off a whole series of projects to create jobs, all in marginal electorates around Geelong, he mocked my calls in this place to name one project in Broadmeadows. That is what happened in the budget. That is what we got. We got next to nothing — yet again — and that is the way we have been treated repeatedly.

The coalition's lack of coordination displays its lack of sincerity and its lack of care, because it knows that this has been going on historically. It only gets worse. Melbourne's north is an economic engine room that for generations has underwritten Victoria's prosperity. It is growing on average at twice the rate of the metropolis, and its population will soon top 1 million people, but it receives only half the taxpayer dollars for public infrastructure that the eastern and southern suburbs receive. Historic disparities in public funding and private investment have triggered a multiplier effect.

Five times more private funding has subsequently been invested in Melbourne's east and south than in the north.

The City of Moreland CEO, Peter Brown, recently disclosed such insights while introducing the *Northern Horizons* report to civic and business leaders. Immediate public investment in Melbourne's north is critical to increase productivity and livability and redress infrastructure deficits, according to the report produced by the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and La Trobe University in conjunction with the municipalities of Melbourne's north — Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Mitchell, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.

Political bias and systemic failure through the lack of a coordinated system remain the biggest obstacles. Here is another clear example of the evidence to support this proposition. Prime Minister Tony Abbott's stated ambition was to become Australia's so-called 'Infrastructure Prime Minister', yet despite months of attempting to secure his Deputy Prime Minister and infrastructure minister, Warren Truss, to launch the *Northern Horizons* report, or the Victorian Premier or Victorian Minister for Planning, not one minister from either coalition government attended the release of this forensic analysis in the countdown to their budgets.

Snubbing Melbourne's north echoes historic neglect and defines the cruel cynicism of politics. The eight councils of Melbourne's north called for cooperation with the Victorian and Australian governments concerning infrastructure, but the coalition governments rejected this opportunity.

The Prime Minister has now broken a whole series of promises. Another one that should be added to this list is his promise that an independent Infrastructure Australia would assess the cost-effectiveness of projects, publish the analysis and rank infrastructure in order of pay-offs. This is exactly what should have happened with the Victorian infrastructure propositions, plans and payments — exactly the same. Instead Victoria's Minister for Planning has legislated to exclude councils from negotiations between the Victorian government and property developers over their contributions for infrastructure in the state's growth areas. We have seen that; he has put it into law.

The stakes are so high they can be life defining. Infrastructure is a foundation for increasing prosperity and a fair go. Just so you understand my point about repeating the same mistakes being the road to insanity, three decades ago Victoria's leading public servant confessed to me on his retirement that Broadmeadows

was the biggest failure in the previous generation of conservative administrations because the lack of coordination — even within one tier of government — resulted in a failure to deliver the basic infrastructure that other communities had long taken for granted. Despite the wealth created by the sweat and nous from one of Victoria's poorest communities, I have not found one plaque in Broadmeadows bearing the name of a Liberal Prime Minister or Premier for a Liberal-funded project. This neglect marks an abandonment of care.

Recently there was an opening at CSL Behring. The Premier was there, and so was the federal Minister for Industry. CSL Behring is right in Broadmeadows. It is one of the brands that actually says what we should be doing as a nation. We need another dozen CSL Behrings. Yet the strategic co-investment that had been made to develop this company was \$30 million from the former federal Labor government and another \$18 million from the Brumby state Labor government. This is, again, an enlightened view on how you actually invest and get a company that has elegant science. It is cutting edge in an international science. It produces life-saving plasma. This is the kind of company that we should all be getting behind and promoting. Yet the closest thing the Premier, who was there, could do to make a connection with CSL was make an agricultural reference to 'gelding' from the time when he was a veterinary student. The federal Minister for Industry made a similarly off-key connection as well. That is all they could say. These are the kinds of companies we need to develop. They will bring export dollars into our community. This is how you build communities, this is how you build economies, this is how you build states.

We are now left with the proposition for what is going to happen with Kangan TAFE in Broadmeadows and the proposed merger with Bendigo TAFE. I want it on the record now that the people of Broadmeadows should not be disadvantaged again, they should not lose any courses and they should not lose any money. We have already had to deal with taking care of what was going on with local students after — two years ago — this government gutted the Kangan Institute. It cut \$25 million from the institute. At the time when Ford was announcing that it was closing, at the time when it could not be more relevant to actually invest — to actually see a bigger picture and to understand its responsibility — this is what the government did. It just made across-the-board cuts.

If it needed to make cuts, they needed to be forensic. There was no appreciation of the value and the public interest benefit that Kangan Institute was delivering. I want it on the record today — and I want to hear back from the Premier a full assurance — that

Broadmeadows will not be duded again. Despite all these cuts, we are opening Australia's first multiversity. Ten years ago we did not have a public library; we are going to open Australia's first multiversity, and Kangan Institute is one of the partners, along with Deakin and Victoria universities, and La Trobe University wants to get involved as well.

This represents the work of people who have an enlightened view of what community means, of the importance of education and of investing in attitude, education and opportunity instead of just building bigger police stations, grander courthouses and more prisons. Doing those things is to enact Einstein's view of insanity as repeating the same pattern that leads along the road to perdition. We on the Labor side will build an enlightened economy, and we need an enlightened government from November.

**Mrs POWELL** (Shepparton) — I am pleased to speak on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. I do so a bit sadly, because this is the last budget I will speak on in this house, after 18 years of speaking on budgets both while in government and while in opposition. I am really pleased to do it today, however, because it is a wonderful budget. As the former Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I am also proud to have had some input into this budget. It was ably finalised by the new Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I put on the record my congratulations to our Treasurer for what a great budget this is. It delivers an operating surplus of \$1.3 billion that will grow to \$3.3 billion by 2017–18. Victoria is the only government in Australia forecasting operating surpluses over the next four years. We have retained our AAA rating, which is the strongest of any state. This is also a great budget in terms of supporting families and businesses.

From 1 July payroll tax will be reduced from 4.9 per cent to 4.85 per cent, saving Victorian businesses about \$234 million over the next four years. Also from 1 July duty payable on life insurance will be abolished, saving Victorian consumers \$16 million over four years. From 1 September stamp duty concessions for Victorian first home buyers will rise from 40 per cent to 50 per cent. There is a reduction in the fire services property levy, which I know will be welcomed by families and businesses right across Victoria.

The Napthine coalition government is engaging in a massive infrastructure spend of up to \$27 billion, providing thousands and thousands of jobs. There is the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, which I am extremely proud of. I also acknowledge the Minister for Regional and Rural Development, who is also very

proud of this initiative and has worked hard to make sure that rural and regional Victoria meets, as it deserves to, the growing demand occurring in it. There is a lot of growth happening in rural and regional Victoria.

In Shepparton the Regional Growth Fund has invested about \$15.3 million in 23 local projects, and there has been about \$93.5 million worth of associated investment from other investors. That is a lot of money dedicated to the greater Shepparton area and for jobs. It includes \$700 000 towards the \$2.37 million Vaughan Street urban renewal project, \$2 million towards the \$6.57 million Mooropna West growth corridor project, \$500 000 towards the \$1.1 million Shepparton showgrounds project and \$2.5 million towards the Dookie robotic dairy, in relation to which the Victorian government is in partnership with the University of Melbourne — and I was proud to open that last week.

I understand the member for Bendigo East suggested that that \$500 000 Regional Growth Fund amount was not in the budget. I know that the Minister for Regional and Rural Development answered that criticism in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing and said that money was in fact in the budget. That is not a new initiative this year, so it does not have a specific line item. That is the general practice that has been happening for many budgets. Page 31 of this year's budget paper 5 shows there will be a continuation. The Treasurer has confirmed there is a continuation of the Regional Growth Fund funding and that it is factored into the forward estimates. We are therefore really proud of that growth fund.

In terms of the Shepparton electorate, there are some wonderful announcements in this budget. I am particularly proud of the \$73 million for the new Shepparton court complex. Shepparton has been waiting for over a decade for this announcement, and I am proud to say that our government has been able to announce that funding and put it in the budget. I particularly thank the Attorney-General, the Minister for Regional and Rural Development and the Treasurer. The Attorney-General and the Minister for Regional and Rural Development came to Shepparton a number of times and spoke with court staff and solicitors to ensure that this would happen. It has taken a while, but we will now have a modern, state-of-the-art precinct that will include five new courts — three magistrates courts and two higher jurisdiction courts — and 14 new staff, including a new magistrate. The project will create 100 new jobs during construction, and hopefully most of the construction will be done by local people and businesses.

As I said, the community has been waiting a long time for this announcement. I first found out about the issue in December 2009, when I was advised by David Faram, a then local solicitor who is now a magistrate, about the appalling conditions of the Shepparton courthouse and court complex. I visited the complex as soon as I could, which was in the following few months, and with David and the registrar I saw for myself the overcrowding, people spilling out onto the streets, people in the corridors, witnesses mixing with perpetrators and perpetrators mixing with children; it was an appalling situation. There were not enough interview rooms, and it was hot in summer and cold in winter. I also met with the former CEO of the Magistrates Court of Victoria, Charlotte Stockwell, and the former Chief Magistrate, Ian Gray. They spoke about the opportunities for a new complex and what other facilities could be in it.

I raised the matter with the Labor government, but I got no response. I was told that it was on a priority list of the Labor government. That was for 11 years. Labor members did nothing. This was therefore an election commitment of mine. I said we would put in \$200 000 for a scoping study to look at whether the complex should go on that site and what other opportunities there were. Last year \$2.5 million was put in the budget for essential works, and this budget has the money to complete those works.

In this budget we also have \$7.5 million funding from state and commonwealth governments for a major upgrade of the Shepparton alternative route roundabout at the intersection of Doyles Road and the Midland Highway. This is a very busy and congested roundabout which is very dangerous. Last year we put \$4.9 million into duplicating the Midland Highway between Florence Street and that roundabout at the Doyles Road intersection. We are now going to be putting a dual lane around the roundabout to make it safer.

There is \$5 million over four years in the budget to operate a 40-bed Shepparton youth foyer. That is on top of the \$10 million in last year's budget to build the youth foyer. It will be built opposite Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE. There will be three youth foyers built in Victoria: one in Shepparton, one in Broadmeadows and one in Glen Waverley. The youth foyers will provide people aged 16 to 25 with access to education, training, employment services and a safe, secure and affordable place to live while they study. They will also be supported by trained staff.

There will be \$1.635 million over four years to administer concessional loans to farmers who were

affected by the reduced fruit intake. It is to administer the funding of a \$16.25 million loan pool through the Rural Finance Corporation, although from 1 July the loans will be available from Bendigo Bank at no disadvantage to those applying for the Goulburn Valley fruit-growing industry concessions loan package.

We have \$6 million for the Tungamah pipeline project. I would like to pay tribute to the Minister for Water and Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, who is at the table, who has worked really hard with me to make sure that the \$6 million was in the budget. This has been an issue for people in Tungamah. Those 112 properties will now have reliable water quality all year. It will replace ageing, inefficient channels, and it will save 830 megalitres of water for other purposes. I would like to acknowledge the great work of the minister for water and agriculture.

There was \$22 million of SPC Ardmona funding. We have spoken about this before in this house and about the benefits to the Goulburn Valley area. It will conserve 2700 jobs. There is \$5 million for the Goulburn Valley Industry and Employment Plan over 15 years to look for new markets for our horticulturalists and our farmers and to look at what innovations they need. There is also a great budget of \$35.4 million for food and fibre into Asia. As the minister for agriculture has said before, there are now 3.2 billion people living in Asia, so it is a large market.

The government is providing \$72 million for agricultural research, development and extension, which will be of great benefit to my electorate. It will also establish the horticulture centre of excellence at Tatura, something my electorate will look forward to. I think there will be three scientists there to look at what we can do to make sure we produce the best, the cleanest and the highest quality food to go out into the world. There is a \$2 million fruit industry employment package to assist those whose fruit was not taken by SPC. The government also provided \$1.2 million to Pactum Dairy Group, which is a UHT milk plant, to upgrade and move into the Asian markets.

On another issue there are tasers for the 24-hour police station in Shepparton. There is \$240 000 for a new Country Fire Authority (CFA) station in north-west Mooroopna. There is a replacement tanker for the same station and \$380 000 for that. I had the honour of opening that fire station, and I would like to congratulate the captain, Craig Goodwin, and the former captain, Tom Dumaresq, and all of the firefighters who do such a great job in the north-west CFA.

We have a new police station at Mooroopna which cost \$1.8 million. It was something I had lobbied for over many years, even under the former government. The former government put a lick of paint over the area. The communities in Mooroopna presented petitions to me, and they and all the service clubs lobbied. This government finally built that Mooroopna police station, with \$1.8 million for a brand-new state-of-the-art police station. The government is completing an upgrade of the Shepparton Library for \$500 000. The Shepparton sporting precinct will receive \$750 000, and I thank the former Minister for Sport and Recreation, who came to Shepparton to announce that funding. There is \$1.5 million for Goulburn Valley Health to expand its services for people recovering after a hospital stay, after illnesses or after an accident.

There is \$2.1 million for Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative to address family violence. This government takes the issue of family violence very seriously. That funding was put into some areas in the Aboriginal community to make sure we can actually assist Aboriginal people in working through those issues of family violence, because it is so important that we stamp that out. There is also \$300 000 to Campbell Soups to take a new soup line and canned food products to the Asian market.

I could go on and on. I could ask for extra time to speak on this budget. In the Shepparton electorate we rely very heavily on our agriculture. We rely very heavily on the government supporting those areas, and we have been very fortunate that we have ministers in the cabinet who understand what happens in rural and regional Victoria. We have a government that supports rural and regional Victoria. As I said before, we have funding in the budget for the Shepparton region, but we also rely heavily on the Regional Growth Fund, which provides so much for all of our regional areas. The councils in regional areas, about 40 of them, receive up to \$1 million per year over four years, so that is \$4 million over the term of this government to assist them in building and maintaining roads and bridges. That allows those councils to put downward pressure on rates, which means families and businesses do not have to pay higher rates. This government has put \$64 million of increased funding into those councils to make sure they do not have to go back to their communities to ask for extra funding.

This government is supporting the councils in those areas. It is supporting the maintenance of those areas. It is supporting jobs. Whenever we build anything in rural and regional Victoria, we allow jobs to stay in those communities and in those industries. If we support rural and regional Victoria, it means that people will stay on

the farms to provide opportunities for businesses. Our ministers have been overseas a number of times on delegations. They go for tourism and agricultural opportunities. I know there have been a number of trade missions with ministers who have brought back ideas and also information about networks where we can gain benefit by opening up new markets, which is vital to rural and regional Victoria. The government has made sure that water is as accessible and affordable as possible so that our irrigators have access to that good quality water at the time they need it.

I am really delighted to be part of a government that understands rural and regional Victoria. As I have said, over the last 18 years I have stood up in this place either supporting a budget or not supporting a budget and talking about what very little we opposition members got for our communities when in opposition. I am delighted to be part of a government that does support country Victoria. Even after I leave this place, I hope The Nationals candidate for the seat of Shepparton, Greg Barr, will continue the representation that so many members for Shepparton have provided to make sure that Shepparton and the district remain at the forefront of this Parliament and to make sure that everybody understands that Shepparton is a very important place for the economy of that area as well as for the economy of Victoria. Again I say congratulations to the Treasurer, and I commend this absolutely wonderful budget.

**Ms EDWARDS** (Bendigo West) — I congratulate the member for Shepparton on her last speech in reply to a budget. I do not agree with anything she said, but congratulations anyway.

Some years back in a speech in reply to the budget I referred to this government as a back-to-the-future government with the same faces, same policies and same disregard for regional Victoria that we saw under the Kennett government. Of course this budget is clear evidence that the government has learnt nothing from its three and a half years in office and that it continues to rely on outdated policy ideas and old policies, driven by an ideology that does not include care for the people who most need government support.

Even more telling than that is the total disregard for regional Victoria in favour of development in Melbourne at the expense of regional Victorians and the vital services they need. It is a city-centric government, just like the one we saw last time those opposite were in government. In fact on the weekend someone said to me, 'We've been Jeffed again'.

There is no social justice with this government. Its members have turned their backs, just as Tony Abbott and the other members of the federal government have, on any genuine social policies to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities, preferring to suck money out of education and health in favour of putting billions of dollars towards a road and a tunnel in the middle of Melbourne that nobody wants and nobody voted for.

Education in Victoria is on a precipice. Future funding from the federal government is not guaranteed, and regional students are being left behind. The Auditor-General's report tabled just last month reinforces this fact. It would seem that this government has little understanding of the impact of its cuts to education funding and its regressive education policies. Sadly, this budget does not return any of the \$630 million that we have seen taken from our education sector. Absentee rates are much higher in rural and regional schools. In fact in my electorate the Mount Alexander shire has one of the highest absentee rates in Victoria. Access for regional students to bus services is limited, and social disadvantage is exacerbated by distance, by the increase in the cost of living, by lack of access to affordable housing, by the increased transport costs we are seeing with the rising cost of car registrations and the federal government's fuel tax and by the highest rate of absenteeism in Victoria.

While Castlemaine Secondary College received some funding from this government for stage 2 of its building works, the reality is that the \$5.5 million it received is well short of the \$8 million that the school requires to build stage 2. This funding will mean that the school will build a much smaller stage 2 that will not deliver for growth at the school but is based upon current enrolment figures. That is just not good enough. We have a shire with a growing population, and we have a very successful school that looks to the future and to grow its enrolments. It cannot do that with a building that is a much smaller stage 2 than was anticipated.

While I am speaking about education, I point out that this government has returned none of the funding taken from the Victorian certificate of applied learning coordination. We have seen the education maintenance cut, the School Start bonus cut, Reading Recovery cut and the school maintenance and capital works programs cut. That is on average \$189 million a year less than when Labor was in office. Schools across my electorate are suffering from this lack of maintenance funding. Some have leaking roofs, some have fallen into disrepair, some have no air conditioning and some are putting up with outdated and dysfunctional portables.

Sadly, this budget has failed to provide to the schools one cent of what was promised as part of its Gonski agreement with the federal government. This government should be absolutely ashamed of that fact.

There is a further \$200 million worth of cuts over the forward estimates. Student support services have been cut by a further \$25 million, and early childhood funding has been cut by a further \$21 million. The most diabolical cut of all is the cut of \$1.2 billion to our TAFE sector. That has resulted in a great regional city such as Bendigo, with a strong, vibrant social and cultural life and manufacturing sector — a city that you would expect could be a leader in skills and training with a stand-alone TAFE provider — having its TAFE forced into a takeover by a Melbourne-based TAFE. That Melbourne TAFE, like Bendigo TAFE, has reeled from the cuts, with hundreds of jobs lost, cuts in courses — including courses where the skills need is the highest — and course fee hikes, placing many regional students out of training.

Last year in this house the Premier said that he vehemently opposed any merger of regional TAFEs. He said:

We have rejected the recommendation to merge TAFEs in regional and rural Victoria. I make it very clear that we have rejected that recommendation, because I believe and the government believes that having local management, local input and locally based TAFEs is really important to make sure those TAFEs deliver the right sort of training, that they are in touch with local industry and that they provide the training that local people need. We have rejected the recommendation to merge country TAFEs.

That is a quote of the Premier in *Hansard* of 20 March 2013. Last week the Premier signed off on the merger between Bendigo TAFE and Kangan Institute. The \$64 million he supported this merger with not only shows that the Premier cannot be believed in anything he says but also shows that both TAFEs are in desperate need of funds to keep them going. What a disgrace it is that this money could not be found months ago to support both TAFEs independently to prevent the job losses, to prevent the course cuts and, in Bendigo's case, to prevent the closure of the TAFE's child-care centre, which has forced many families to seek alternatives and in some cases to pay much more for their child care. Of course this decision was made without any consultation with the community; it was made behind closed doors.

What we now need — and the Premier has admitted this — is a business case for the merger. There is no business case and no indication at all of where the money for this merger is going. What exactly is it going to be spent on? I note also that Northern Melbourne

Institute of TAFE has just been given a \$16 million bailout for its short-term insolvency. What a shame that Bendigo TAFE was not given a similar TAFE bailout to prevent its takeover.

We have a youth employment rate of 23 per cent among 15 to 24-year-olds in regional Victoria. The Attorney-General's report this year shows that apprenticeships, commencements and completions have decreased to levels not seen since 2004. The report also noted that the abolition of apprentice support programs, including the apprenticeship trade bonus and apprentice completion bonus, was made without any analysis of their likely effect on apprenticeship numbers. Since then we have seen the scrapping of the apprenticeship accommodation allowance, which has especially helped apprentices in regional areas who needed to travel for their training and also needed accommodation. We have also seen the cutting of the Youth Employment Scheme and the Youth Partnerships program.

On top of the Napthine government's horror budget for education, Victorians — especially those in regional areas — have been dealt an even harsher blow, with the federal Abbott government withdrawing millions from education and support services such as the Youth Connections program. The vitally important work of our local learning and employment networks is also under threat. It beggars belief that funding for services to help young people at risk of falling through the cracks at a time of higher than ever youth unemployment can in any way be justified. One in four Australians are not engaged in education and can kiss goodbye to any support, care or help from either the Napthine or Abbott governments.

Victorian hospitals are in crisis under the Napthine and Abbott governments. This government has let Victorian patients down by cutting over \$830 million from our health system, and now Tony Abbott wants to take a further \$1.4 billion. The national health reform is dead in the water and every Victorian will suffer as a result. In Bendigo over 900 people are on the elective surgery waiting list. In Bendigo's emergency department, if you present as a category 2 patient you will not be treated within 8 hours. In Bendigo if you are a mental health patient and present at the emergency department, you will probably be sent home because there are no beds available. If you are a mental health patient in Bendigo, you will struggle to find follow-up community support because all services are stretched to the limit. If you require an ambulance in Bendigo, expect a very long wait. If you live in Castlemaine, Heathcote or any of the other smaller regional towns, you will find that an ambulance may not be available because your local

ambulance has been called out to cover the shortage in Bendigo.

We have an ambulance system in crisis, a mental health system failing patients on a daily basis, a health minister who continues to deny there are problems and continues to demonise and insult hardworking paramedics instead of investing more resources, and a government that has its priorities all wrong in spending more in this budget on prison beds than on hospital beds while at the same time cutting funding to legal aid and providing not one single cent on adult diversion programs.

While our regional hospitals are in crisis, our TAFEs are being taken over, our young people are being denied access to training and jobs, and our prison system is out of control, it is still not enough. Inflicting even more pain on regional Victoria, this budget reveals that to the Liberals and The Nationals, regional Victorians, who make up 25 per cent of the population, are worth just 4 per cent of the infrastructure spend. The \$15 million provided for the Kangaroo Flat aquatic centre is entirely dependent on federal funding to make up the shortfall, and while Damian Drum, a member for Northern Victoria Region in the other place, has said that funding from the federal government will not be available, nevertheless the council holds out, visiting the federal government this week to try to get the additional \$5 million to complete this project. This funding is entirely dependent on the state Liberal-Nationals government convincing the federal government to come on board with this project. Good luck with that.

It would certainly seem that regional Victoria has indeed been Jeffed. Another Liberal-Nationals government that reveals its city-centric nature and a Nationals party that has lost respect and credibility in the very regions it purports to support. It cannot and will not even stand up for the National Centre for Farmer Health. It is unbelievable.

Regional Victorians will be hit hard by the government's scrapping of the Victorian energy efficiency target. This scheme supported 2000 jobs, which will now be gone, adding further to the growing unemployment queue. In fact the renewable energy industry in Victoria has been killed off by this government; there is no doubt about that.

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

**Ms EDWARDS** — I will pick up where I left off by saying the renewable energy industry in Victoria has been killed off by this government, and regional

Victoria can say goodbye to hundreds of jobs and new businesses that could have been created in this industry.

With regard to housing, I would have to say that this budget does not provide any new funding for new public or community housing, and this government will sell more social housing than it will build. This government should be — and will be — condemned for its failure to address the growing list of people waiting for housing and for its callous attitude and policies that will see homelessness become a massive social problem in regional Victoria.

The hit list on our aged population is enormous: the rising car registrations, the increased cost of utilities, the rising public transport fares and the increase in public housing rents. Of course let us not forget the double whammy on seniors, with the Abbott government's cuts to the pension and to concessions and its demand that 'You will work until you are 70 or until you drop'.

Between the federal Liberals and the state Liberals there is not much difference; they are cut from the same cloth, tarred with the same brush. After two coalition budgets there is absolutely no doubt that under a Liberal government, state or federal, if you are young, if you are a student, if you are old, if you are disabled, if you are sick, if you are a family struggling to make ends meet — in fact, if you are anyone at all — you are on your own.

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) — It gives me great pleasure to rise and make a contribution on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. This is quite a fine budget, with a \$1.3 billion surplus — a rising surplus. 'Surplus' is a foreign word now in Australian politics; Victoria is the last jurisdiction standing with one. I must pay great credit to the Treasurer, who has made his way up to the back bench tonight to support his backbench colleagues. I must give the Treasurer great credit for framing such a fine budget, which delivers, as I said, a \$1.3 billion surplus. Economic growth of 2.5 per cent is forecast for the next financial year, employment growth will strengthen next financial year and we have maintained our AAA credit rating, which is a fine effort in light of every other jurisdiction in Australia running deficits and having downgrades in their credit rating. That shows the hard work that has been done over the last three years to get Victoria into the position it is in now. Running these surpluses allows us to invest in infrastructure.

Let us look at the infrastructure spend, which is \$27 billion, of which \$24 billion is to be spent on rail and road projects. There is the Melbourne rail link,

which is a far superior project to what has been proposed previously, and which will provide higher capacities in peak hour. The western section of the east–west link will be a fantastic outcome not only for Melbourne's west but for Geelong, which I represent. I will touch on that more fulsomely shortly. We also have the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail project and the removal of four additional rail crossings.

That infrastructure focus also has a jobs focus, with many jobs being created: 3000 jobs will be created in the east–west link western section, 3700 jobs will be created by Melbourne rail link, 700 jobs will be created in the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening, 3200 jobs will be created by the eastern section of the east–west link and 1000 jobs are to be created in the metropolitan level crossing blitz. That is more jobs being created by this government's ability to run surpluses, be a good economic manager and invest money back into infrastructure. The western section of the east–west link will be brilliant for Geelong. Those who have to drive up from Geelong and from Melbourne's west will know that with all the growth in Melbourne's west the car park usually starts at approximately the Maltby bypass, so it is vital that we get another east–west crossing and another crossing of the Maribyrnong River.

That is the important thing about the western section of the east–west link. It will service Melbourne's west, which is growing, but it will also service Geelong and will provide that additional river crossing that will get people into Melbourne more quickly. It will take an estimated 15 to 20 minutes off the travel time from Geelong, but currently on that M1 corridor — the West Gate and Monash freeways — if there is an incident, as happened the other day when a gentleman in a truck was driving on the wrong side of the road, it shuts down and becomes gridlocked. It is vital that we have the western section, and it is strongly supported by the government; I do not know why — given all the members it has, particularly in western Melbourne — but for some unknown reason Labor is against a project that will deliver great outcomes not only for people in Geelong but in Melbourne's west as well.

Touching on the budget locally, I will first touch on the South Barwon electorate and then might expand to refer to the broader Geelong region. There is a \$12 million investment in Pioneer Road, Grovedale. Pioneer Road is around the busy Waurin Ponds shopping centre and has already received an upgrade of \$5 million. Before the coalition came to government there were limited turning lanes in and out of the Waurin Ponds shopping centre and Leisurelink on the other side of Pioneer Road. There was also limited capacity at the

intersection of the Princes Highway, so first of all a \$5 million expansion was done that increased capacity.

Now we are going to duplicate Pioneer Road and the bridge over Waurm Ponds Creek up to Meadowvale Drive, which will provide additional capacity. At the moment approximately 21 000 vehicles a day use Pioneer Road, and that is forecast to grow. It is very important that we invest in this important piece of infrastructure, as it is in a growing area of Geelong. Just recently the first stage of the expansion of the centre was opened by the Premier. There were 200 jobs in the construction phase and 500 retail jobs in that centre. More people are coming into the centre, and more people are using Pioneer Road as an east–west linkage between the Princes Highway and the Surf Coast Highway, so it is vitally important that the upgrade take place to allow that capacity.

A great thing in this year's budget was two school announcements for the electorate. The Minister for Education has visited Montpellier Primary School. At the moment it sits in the Geelong electorate, but it is on the border between Geelong and South Barwon. The students at that school are mixed — half are coming from the South Barwon electorate and half from the Geelong electorate. I asked the minister to come out and have a look at the school in 2012, and he came in early 2013. There are 550 students at that school at present.

The only growth in the suburb of Highton is in the new Highton estates where there are some 800 lots left in Province estate, Highview estate and Riverfalls. They are all zoned to Montpellier Primary School, so as growth takes place all the students will be coming to that school. Incidentally, there has been virtually no state funding of Montpellier Primary School since 1999. Apart from a Building the Education Revolution program building grant, which I venture to say most schools got, there has been no investment in the school since Jeff Kennett was Premier. It is important that we invest in the school, as it needs to have increased capacity. There is \$4.8 million in the budget allocated to Montpellier Primary School.

The other school I am pleased to see benefiting in this year's budget is Torquay North Primary School, which will be one of 11 schools developed as a public-private partnership (PPP) in a \$191 million investment across Victoria. As a coalition we went to the last election with vastly different policies to those of Labor on education in Torquay. We committed to a full secondary college and then a primary school, and now we are building a second primary school. Labor wanted to put in a P–12 school and have some 1500 children all on the one site,

which would have had preps mixing with students through to year 12, and Grossmans Road would have been a complete disaster.

We had a vastly different policy. We were elected and have built the secondary college. It is a \$37.5 million investment, and the school is running with a capacity for 900 students. There are presently 400 students at the school, so it has a lot of scope for growth. Torquay P–6 College at the moment has some 920-odd students, which is massive for a primary school, so I have been lobbying the education minister and the Premier around the need for a second primary school in Torquay. Hence Torquay North Primary School will be built on Horseshoe Bend Road about 200 metres south of South Beach Road. That will be delivered under a public-private partnership. This was a model used successfully by the Labor government, and another tranche of PPPs will be delivered. I am very proud that we will be building that school in Torquay, as Torquay was seriously neglected by the previous Labor government. The growth was allowed to happen in Torquay and infrastructure, in particular educational infrastructure, fell behind. Not just educational infrastructure, I might add, but sporting infrastructure and social infrastructure in Torquay were neglected badly under the Labor government.

Another school to be built under that public-private partnership model will be the Geelong North Special Development School. Although that will be in Quamby Avenue opposite Bell Park football club, which is actually in the Lara electorate, I have been advocating for another special school for Geelong. I have raised it in the house and presented a petition about the need for another special school in Geelong, so I was particularly pleased to see that the Minister for Education, who is at the table, and the Premier were listening with open ears when it came to that school. That will be Geelong's third special school, and at Armstrong Creek in my electorate we are also acquiring land for what will be the fourth special school in Geelong. I am particularly pleased that that has happened, as these things were neglected for quite a while.

Although it is not in my electorate but in the Lara electorate, Barwon Health North will see \$28 million invested in the northern suburbs of Geelong, creating a new health hub for the northern suburbs. That is excellent because it will take pressure off Geelong Hospital, which is good for the entire city. I thank the leadership at Barwon Health — John Stekelenburg, the chair, and David Ashbridge, the CEO — who have done fine work there. Although it is not in my electorate, I am particularly pleased they are doing that

in the Lara electorate and looking after the health needs of the entire city.

There are a number of other things that are funded in this year's budget. There is \$362 million for the Princes Highway duplication from Winchelsea to Colac. Again, although not in my electorate that section of road is very close, and that will provide very good freight and passenger linkage and complete the freeway duplication between Colac and Geelong. There are \$50 million upgrades to the Great Ocean Road. While the Great Ocean Road starts in Torquay in my electorate, the very straight bits and not many of the winding parts of it are in the South Barwon electorate.

I am very pleased to see disability access at Geelong railway station has been provided, something that the member for Geelong was hounded about for the 11 years that he was here. I recall that in the first adjournment matter he raised after we took office, having had 11 years to do something, he asked the minister for disability access for platform 2 of Geelong station. The coalition government is delivering that \$5 million commitment for disability access, which goes hand in hand with the \$25 million commitment to the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) headquarters in this year's budget.

There were also a number of other schools, and one in particular, Roslyn Primary School, which under the redistribution is now in the Geelong electorate, which I asked the Minister for Education to come out and have a look at. That school was built in 1951 as a light construction school. It was falling apart; it simply was not able to stand the test of time after 50-odd years. It had been seriously neglected by Labor with no investment in it for a long time. There is a \$2.1 million commitment for Roslyn Primary School. Although I have lost the area where it sits in the redistribution, I was very pleased to see a \$3.5 million commitment to Barwon Heads Primary School to construct permanent buildings there. There are quite a lot of portables at Barwon Heads Primary School and a very old and decrepit portable toilet facility, which is no good. I am very pleased that this has also been funded.

Overall I think that this is a fantastic budget for Victoria. It demonstrates that when you have sound financial management and sound financial people at the helm who know what they are doing, surpluses can be invested back into the infrastructure for the benefit of the community. I am more than happy to commend this bill to the house.

**Mr CARROLL** (Niddrie) — I am pleased and privileged to rise on behalf of the electorate of Niddrie

to speak on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. I wish to dedicate my budget response speech to the hardworking local school principals in the Niddrie electorate, including David Adamson at Essendon Keilor College, Peter Rouse at Rosehill Secondary College, Nathan Chisholm at Buckley Park College, Paul Mulroyan at Avondale Primary School, Michael Giulieri at Keilor Heights Primary School, Brett Millott at Aberfeldie Primary School and Mary Thomson, acting principal at the Western Autistic School in Niddrie.

First and foremost, I want to state that the Niddrie electorate did not receive one red cent in this budget. Subsequent to my election on 24 March 2012 I conducted a survey of residents living in the Niddrie electorate. Out of the thousands of responses, education followed by public transport were raised most by respondents as the areas that needed my attention. Any conversation about opportunity must include education, the most fundamental building block to success. Education can be a great social leveller. It provides opportunities for self-actualisation. It provides pathways to jobs, to higher incomes and even to better health. With good quality education, it is possible to transcend disadvantage and to choose your own future.

I have often stated in the Parliament that Niddrie is blessed with a great network of schools. It is. That is a fact. But it is also a fact that some of our schools are in urgent need of assistance. It is difficult to inspire students on the relevance and importance of education when the school around them is in disrepair or falling down.

For Essendon Keilor College (EKC) it has been four budgets and four strikes. I have raised EKC many times in this place. In fact I used my inaugural speech to request that EKC's master plan for its Niddrie campus be funded. Essendon Keilor College has a rich history and forms an important part of the local community of the north-west with its three campuses at Essendon, Keilor East and Niddrie.

On 24 March last year I celebrated my one-year anniversary as the state member for Niddrie. I marked this occasion by attending the centenary celebration of education at Essendon Keilor College, formerly Essendon High School. Essendon Keilor College joins an elite group of Victorian state secondary schools that have provided a century of quality education. It was a wonderful day but also a reminder that the facilities at the school need an urgent upgrade.

Discussion on the need for investment at EKC is not new. On 6 April 2011 in the *Age* newspaper the

Minister for Education said this of Essendon Keilor College:

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

On 1 September 2011 my predecessor in the seat of Niddrie tabled a petition of almost 1600 signatures demanding that the then Baillieu government honour the former Labor government's \$10 million commitment to upgrade Essendon Keilor College.

On 3 November 2011 the *Herald Sun* newspaper published a report based on documents obtained through freedom of information that found Essendon Keilor College was the state's most run-down school with over 1341 items requiring attention.

In 2012 the principal of Essendon Keilor College, David Adamson, wrote to the Minister for Education. I quote from principal Adamson's letter, which states:

I am writing to you to seek your support for improved facilities at Essendon Keilor College. The college did not receive funding for facilities in the 2012–13 budget, but you are aware, having visited the school, of the very poor state of the buildings at our Niddrie campus.

...

... looking to the 2013–14 budget, I would request your strong support for further funding to bring the Niddrie campus up to the standard required to deliver the excellent programs that we offer.

History will show that in last year's state budget EKC received nothing. In the lead-up to this year's state budget Essendon Keilor College was once again subject to statewide media. Channel 7 on 3 May 2014, the weekend prior to the release of the budget, aired a story on its nightly news that stated that if it was based on policy, Essendon Keilor College would get the funding it deserved. Instead the following Tuesday we got a budget based on politics.

While Essendon Keilor College was not funded, Frankston High School received a whopping \$18.5 million, with \$8.5 million committed in this year's budget and a further \$10 million committed if the Naphthine Liberal government is returned to power. This funding was not sought, asked for or needed. Even the local Independent member for Frankston described it as pork-barrelling and too much money for one school, saying in the *Age* newspaper of 6 May that 'they should spread the money to all schools in need'. That is four Liberal government budgets and four strikes for Essendon Keilor College.

As I have grown in this role, I have also come to appreciate how important my job is in advocating for

all schools in my electorate. Following the state redistribution of electoral boundaries the suburb of Aberfeldie now falls within the Niddrie electorate, taken from the neighbouring seat of Essendon. I am now in regular contact with Aberfeldie Primary School principal Brett Millott. In fact I have got used to Brett's weekend emails to me advocating for his school.

On 13 February I had the pleasure of visiting Aberfeldie Primary School to talk to both staff and students and to see firsthand the wonderful programs on offer at the school, but also the need for capital works. Shortly after my visit I wrote a letter to the Minister for Education outlining the need for investment at the school. In particular the school has an urgent need for a new perimeter fence to deter vandalism and trespassing, which are ongoing issues. Since his appointment in July 2013, principal Brett Millott has also taken up the cause to fight for new and improved facilities and most urgently the need for a new perimeter fence. In fact, in addition to my letter, Mr Millott wrote a similar letter to the local education department office. Unfortunately neither of us received a favourable response.

Following the release of the budget I met with both principal Brett Millott and school council president Peter Wood. Both Brett and Peter asked me what had to happen for them to get the funding they so deserve. I assured them that so long as I have this job I will lobby on their behalf both inside and outside the Parliament for the funding they so richly deserve.

I have also met with the school council at Avondale Primary School. Its principal, Paul Mulroyan, is a longstanding head of the school and member of the local community. Paul has been very welcoming since my election two years ago, and Avondale Primary School has many plans, one of which is to update its sporting oval.

On the 14 August last year I was fortunate to be principal for a day at Keilor Heights Primary School. This was a special day for me because I got an experience like no other in seeing the school operate close up, including how the teachers go about their work and how the students learn. Principal Michael Giulieri is also at the forefront of teacher development, and I appreciate his taking the time to always keep me up to date on the latest developments within the teaching profession.

The electorate is blessed with a great network of schools. I was fortunate to attend St Bernard's College, and I am regularly invited back to the school. I am also in regular contact with staff and students at Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School, in particular principal

Tony Larkin. To be frank, the disparity in terms of school facilities could not be more stark between the government schools and the catholic and private schools. You only have to drive down Rosehill Road in Essendon to see how the facilities at St Bernard's compare to those at Rosehill Secondary College, which is directly opposite. However, despite the lack of resources, the students still receive a first-rate education, and the programs are nothing short of world class at Rosehill Secondary College as well as at all other schools in the Niddrie electorate.

Having been out to Rosehill Secondary College regularly, I know that principal Peter Rouse gets straight onto any maintenance issue that arises. I met with Peter on 1 May in my office and only recently addressed students undertaking a course on government as part of their Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL) at Rosehill. I have nothing but admiration for the principal and his staff in the face of devastating cuts to the VCAL program. The program was developed in response to the *Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria — Final Report*, known as the Kirby report. Released in August 2000 it targeted disaffected students from mainstream education with alternative pathways.

Rosehill Secondary College, formerly Niddrie Technical School, offers VCAL at years 11 and 12. VCAL is an intermediate and senior course that supports students in seeking employment through a tertiary pathway. It is designed to prepare students for their chosen career path and to teach them vital employability skills, team building skills, industry skills and practical literacy and numeracy skills. I have witnessed firsthand the VCAL program at Rosehill Secondary College. It offers authentic and practical learning. But Rosehill, like other schools delivering VCAL, has had to endure some \$48 million in cuts to the Victorian certificate of applied learning program, directly impacting students in the Niddrie electorate.

Let us not forget that cuts to VCAL have been followed up with devastating cuts to TAFE. Over \$290 million has been stripped from TAFE budgets, costing as many as 1500 jobs. Conservative estimates show that at least 550 TAFE teaching and support jobs will be lost in the near future. The \$290 million cut to TAFE represents a 20 per cent to 40 per cent cut to the average TAFE institute. In this context it is worth noting that on page 73 of the report of the ministerial review the importance of TAFE is highlighted. The report states that TAFE provides:

... support for some young people who have the poorest educational experiences and most difficult personal circumstances.

I often meet with staff and teachers from Victoria University (VU). In fact last night during a dinner at the Keilor East RSL an academic from Victoria University approached me and outlined the university's predicament. Reductions to TAFE funding have seen almost \$30 million cut from VU's annual vocational funding. Last month it was announced that the university will cut about 300 jobs in a bid to save up to \$50 million by 2016. Victoria University is an important institution in Melbourne's west. In fact almost one-third of VU's 50 000 students are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and more than 20 per cent come from low-socioeconomic families. Despite this, I record my thanks to and appreciation of the staff at Victoria University for their commitment to providing opportunity to students living in Melbourne's western suburbs.

When I was preparing my budget reply speech today I received an email from the principal of Buckley Park College, Nathan Chisholm, who joined the school last year following the retirement of longstanding principal Tony Tartaro. In his email the principal sought my assistance in advocating for a much-needed theatre for the school to complement its growing performing arts program. Nathan said that apart from seeking my support he just wanted to catch up for the purpose of furthering our relationship. In my short time as the member for Niddrie one of the most satisfying parts of my job has been getting to know the local school principals.

I also highlight the work of Mary Thomson at the Western Autistic School. A couple of weeks ago I was out at the school in Niddrie, which is a marvellous facility catering for young people and their families with the most serious needs. The school is trying to help families and young ones to get the best start in life when they are already facing very trying circumstances.

There can be no greater task or priority for me as the local member than to focus on education and my local schools. This task will be so much better with a change of government on 29 November. On behalf of my local schools I hope a future Labor budget will deliver the funding they so much deserve.

**Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield)** — I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014, and what a fantastic budget it is. It is a budget that builds a strong economy based on strong budget surpluses and major infrastructure that will lead to job creation, which in turn will build a better Victoria. It is

important that when any government sets a framework for a budget like the one we see here it ensures that it has the sorts of major projects that not only look after today but also ensure that we have proper infrastructure and support for Victorians into the future. That is what this budget does, and I commend the Treasurer, the Premier and the ministers who have put a great deal of effort into ensuring that it positions Victoria and Victorians for the future.

At the outset we see a record amount of infrastructure spending — \$276 billion — and a large proportion of that focuses on public transport and roads, which are the major vehicle to move Victorians around. We are ensuring that we remove the congestion, that we unblock the blockages and that we are able to get to and from work with less time spent travelling and more time spent with family and friends. That is what this budget does.

When it comes to the contribution to roads and rail, in my electorate of Caulfield one of the big concerns has been a number of the level crossings that have been earmarked in this budget. I draw attention specifically to the North Road level crossing, which is part of the metropolitan level crossing blitz to remove a number of the most notorious level crossings. This funded component allows for the removal of three of Melbourne's most notorious level crossings, the other two being at Glen Iris and Blackburn. I know the member for Bentleigh shares my concerns because her electorate borders the North Road level crossing and Ormond station.

This has been a huge issue, and I recall when campaigning for the election back in 2010 that I would turn up in the morning to watch the traffic banking up at the level crossing. In fact vehicles waiting for those boom gates to rise would attempt to go around the boom gates, which is very dangerous. This level crossing removes the boom gates and allows for a rail-under-road tunnel, which is more expensive but more important because it protects a lot of the retail precinct around the area. If it had been an above-road crossing, a lot of those shops would have suffered as a result. Local retailers, residents living around the station and the amenity of the area are protected, because it is certainly a prettier way to do things than putting a bridge over the top of the area.

The budget also allows for a new premium station below North Road with a new entrance. Construction of a new pedestrian crossing on North Road will start in the second half of 2014. North Road carries over 41 000 vehicles a day, 188 bus services a day and 3000 vehicles per hour. It holds up drivers, commuters,

pedestrians and cyclists for significant periods of time. The boom gates are closed for some 30 per cent of the time in the morning peak and 39 per cent of the time in the afternoon peak. This is a very important project.

Two other crossings signalled for removal in this particular budget are the crossings at Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena, and Koornang Road, Carnegie. These roads border my electorate and the electorates of Oakleigh and Bentleigh. They are very important crossings that again hold up commuters, and they have been a bugbear for many people. I know that many people who live around that area are significantly relieved by the fact that we have put up our hands and said that we are going to get rid of these level crossings.

There is more than a billion dollars in the budget to remove notorious crossings. We have committed to remove up to 40 level crossings in total, a number of which are already well and truly under way, with the removal of crossings completed at Mitcham Road and Rooks Road in Mitcham and Springvale Road in Springvale. We are getting on with the job and doing what we said we would do. I note that the opposition had 11 years in government and had nowhere near the sorts of achievements that we have in this particular area.

This government has a AAA credit rating and a budget surplus of \$1.3 billion in 2014, rising to \$3.3 billion in 2017. A budget surplus and a AAA credit rating mean that we are leading the pack when it comes to other states and territories and even at a federal level, and what that enables us to do is build the sorts of projects that we have in this budget. In this budget a number of schools have been earmarked for upgrades, and we will build new schools. This again shows the difference between a government that knows how to manage money and manage projects and the Labor Party, which only knows how to spend money and mismanage projects.

On the subject of education I draw the attention of the house to the allocation of \$2.8 billion for future initiatives for schools — the construction of 12 new schools and the more than 70 schools set to receive upgrades. I note that the Minister for Education is at the table; he has done a tremendous amount of work in this area. Not only are we building the schools, but with the signing of public-private partnerships we are ensuring that those schools will be maintained. That is very important because what we saw with the previous government was that it builds something, runs away from it and lets it fall into disrepair. That is not what this government will be doing. We know that teachers want to teach. We know that teachers are not

maintenance contractors. They are not in the business of fixing faulty windows and schools in disrepair. They want to teach. We are ensuring that those teachers are best able to do what they are paid to do — that is, teach.

Putting in these contracts as part of our school building program means in the first place that when the schools are built the quality is a lot better because the contractors that are building them are the ones who will then have to turn up and fix them if they fall into disrepair. They build it and they build it well. That is one thing we know on this side of the house.

**Mr Nardella** interjected.

**Mr SOUTHWICK** — The member for Melton is shaking his head. When his party was in government a lot of *Fawlty Towers*-type incidents took place. It had absolutely no idea when it came to building anything at all. We saw it with the desalination plant and with a whole range of projects. Everything it touched fell by the wayside.

I turn to the part of the budget that deals with ensuring that we have a strong health-care and community services area. There is funding for 961 more doctors, 1748 more nurses and 856 more allied and health professionals. There is \$1.4 billion for health services on top of the \$1.8 billion over four years from the 2013–14 budget. This is record funding that has been applied to these areas to ensure that we get things right.

I draw the attention of the house to the allocation of \$156 million for mental health and drug services, in particular to cope with the issue of ice, which is a growing problem in our community. I am a member of the Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, which is investigating this problem, and it is great to see that the Minister for Mental Health and the government have already put in some money to ensure that more beds are available. In fact 2000 more beds will be available to ensure that there are places for addicts as we try to reform them and get their lives back in order. I commend the minister on the work being done here; it is a very important initiative. These people do not only ruin their own lives; they ruin their families' lives and the lives of the people around them. The fact that we are being proactive when it comes to mental health and drug issues is very important, and I am glad that this is signalled in this budget.

To ensure that we build a safer Victoria there is \$447 million to expand our prison capacity. We saw that the former government had absolutely no interest in building prison beds to look after the people who were doing the wrong thing. It had no interest in taking

them off the streets, no interest in policing and no interest in ensuring that our community was safe. All its members were interested in was carping, whingeing, moaning, and opening stuff up in their lovely bright fluoro jackets and hard hats. This government is ensuring that it is getting on with the job and is expanding prison capacity. We have led the way when it comes to law and order, we have led the way when it comes to putting more police on the streets, we have led the way with putting protective services officers on train stations — and now we are backing that up and expanding prison capacity to ensure that Victorians feel safe. In any state, in any jurisdiction, your starting point is to ensure that people feel safe — and that is what we are doing.

Opposition members just wave their hands in the air and abdicate any responsibility, as they always have, but let me just say that government members are focusing on ensuring that Victorians feel safe. There are 1700 additional police officers and 940 protective services officers, and there is equipment to allow the police to do their job and more police stations. There is a police station in Echuca, the St Kilda Road station gets a replacement and there is a new police and emergency services precinct in Ballarat. There is a commitment of \$56 million to upgrade more than 100 police stations. This is very important in ensuring that police have the best equipment and facilities available to get out and do their job.

On the other side of the coin, I talk about fire services. The coalition government has invested more than \$3.1 billion in Victoria's fire services and a further \$783 million. It will increase the Country Fire Authority (CFA) budget by 2.5 per cent, increase the Metropolitan Fire Brigade budget by 3.1 per cent and purchase 78 new vehicles for the CFA. Under the previous government we saw CFA vehicles that were 20-odd years old and were left in disrepair. No-one cared; no-one did anything about it. This government is ensuring that these great volunteers — these 58 000-odd volunteers we have through rural and regional Victoria — have the right equipment to get out and do the job that we ask of them every day. We thank them every day for the work they do.

It is a very strong budget, a budget that delivers on so many different fronts, a budget that ensures that we have the road and rail infrastructure we need. It is a budget that delivers an east–west link that looks after the west, which has been absolutely neglected by the opposition. I do not know how opposition members can even go to their electorates.

**Mr Nardella** interjected.

**Mr SOUTHWICK** — The member for Melton carries on. Is he looking after his constituents? We are building the western link; what are they doing in terms of servicing the people of western Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo, Footscray, Geelong — all areas that are crying out for a better transport system? They are locked up on those roads day in, day out. Every year they are facing between a 2 and 5 per cent increase in the time it takes to go to work, and they are held up. That is time they could be spending with their families. The opposition is happy for them to spend that time on the roads, away from their families and away from their work, because it has not got on and done something about it here. Opposition members carried on when it came to us spending money on roads, and we have committed money to roads in the budget. They carried on and said we are not investing in public transport, and we have committed to public transport — and included, for the sort of money they were looking at investing, a link to the airport. That was completely and utterly refuted and dismissed by them as a waste of an idea.

Let us just hear what they say and see what they do as things get closer to all of those commuters out there having a transport system that will be delivered under this government and that was never delivered in 11 years under the previous government; a road system that is being delivered under this government that was neglected by the previous government; and infrastructure, which blew out time and again under the opposition. It could not build a chocolate stall; it could not build anything at all. We are building. We are getting on and building a better Victoria through a great budget delivered by the Treasurer and the Premier of Victoria.

**Mr FOLEY** (Albert Park) — I rise to make a few brief comments on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. I noted the member for Caulfield's interesting contribution. The honourable member's contribution reminded me of a recent article I read in the *New Scientist* magazine, which indicated that a new species of jellyfish has been washed up on Australian beaches. It is a purple one, and the shade of the purple is particularly dashing. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the member for Caulfield's new hairstyle. I appreciate the member for Caulfield's new colour, and I wish the adjunct professor for Caulfield all the best —

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I take offence to the comments made by the opposition member, and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr FOLEY** — I withdraw.

In responding to the appropriation bill in the limited time available to me, it is probably best to describe this budget essentially as a desperate, hollow shell of a document that really reflects a sad chapter in the demise of integrity in respect of the poor public policy practised on that side of the chamber. It is a budget that really does not reflect much integrity from those opposite. It is a panicked, shallow document that stretches credulity beyond belief. At this time in the political process the Napthine coalition government will say anything, do anything and promise anything. While investing as little as possible in the near term in the forward projections, it will promise something in the never-never when its members know that they will all be long gone in 2028 and beyond, when some of their commitments are supposedly to be delivered.

I will restrict my comments in a more specific sense to some issues that I am happy take to the government surrounding the portfolio areas of particularly, the arts and youth affairs, before I turn to make some brief comments on the implications of the budget for the electoral district of Albert Park. There is plenty to hold the government to account on in terms of the difficulties for the water portfolio with this budget. Most interestingly it continues the projection of The Nationals and their political operation into the operations of the public service through the continued support — indeed the exuberant financing — of the Office of Living Victoria as an arm of The Nationals. This odd and almost Orwellian-tagged Office of Living Victoria has shown itself to be a surprising combination of the dysfunctional, inefficient and expensive and is unable to deliver any of the programs that it has committed to. At the same time it has also proved to be an almost bottomless slush pit of opportunities for The Nationals mates and their hangers-on to get their snouts into. This budget confirms the oddest of approaches of this government to water.

I will highlight two particular examples, one of which the Minister for Water fortunately highlighted in the recent Public Accounts and Estimates Committee budget estimates hearings. The capital expenditure paper in the budget papers refers to a range of investments of the state-owned water companies. In the instance of South Gippsland Water, in a small but significant and growing area of the state in, oddly enough, South Gippsland, there is a commitment to some \$20 million of capital infrastructure to link the areas of Korumburra and Poowong to the Lance Creek Reservoir, which is in turn — and I note the entrance by the member for Bass — linked to the Victorian desalination project facility.

Interestingly enough that \$20 million is there to provide a pipeline for the booming communities in those areas, and particularly the booming dairy industry in those areas. Oddly enough it will then connect those booming areas in the north of the South Gippsland Water catchment area to the Lance Creek area, which in turn is already linked — but it is not turned on — to a 10-gigalitre pipe that runs directly to the Victorian desalination project. This is in a different catchment of course, and this government has an ideological view that it is not going to allow that.

Here we have South Gippsland Water having been funded for a project that its board has determined it wants, that the dairy industry in Korumburra and surrounds wants and that the booming population of the areas also wants — it is largely a commuter population, but there are some other areas of growth as well — in what is fundamentally a shallow catchment area in terms of dams. Through their boards and their community arrangements those people have sought to be plugged into what they have identified as the cheapest and most efficient way to fund their growth. Oddly enough it is also in the budget, yet the Minister for Water, when quizzed on this odd arrangement — given that he has a pathological opposition to the notion of moving water from areas of supply to areas of need — indicated that this funding would not be occurring.

On the one hand we have the dairy industry, the base of The Nationals, calling for these arrangements, yet at the same time the minister, who claims to represent that sector in his portfolios, is knocking it back. I can assure members here tonight and the honourable minister that this is causing significant disquiet in that community. We see plenty of other examples of the water portfolio suffering a similar dysfunction — in between what the minister says and what the government does.

One further example is in the area of the northern irrigation districts. This minister made a significant issue of trying to transfer and successfully transferring the delivery of the \$2 billion of infrastructure funding — it must be said that the \$2 billion was from both state and federal Labor governments — to the modernisation of both the collective infrastructure of water agencies and the on-farm industry infrastructure to deliver water savings which would be responsibly shared between the environment and industry in those northern irrigation areas. That is managed through the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and through the Living Murray project.

It is a clear position that this minister is shortly to be caught out on in the reporting he has to do. Whilst he

can claim he is spending the money, this minister is going to be held to account in the very near future for failing to meet the water saving targets and the rollout of the on-farm efficiency targets. He can claim to be spending the money, as I said, but he is not getting the signed up results that he, on behalf of the state, has promised not just to irrigators in his own community — and in the community of the honourable member for Shepparton, who I see in the chamber — but to the communities of all the northern irrigation districts. Through intergovernmental agreements substantial financial returns to the state of Victoria are also linked to that. I could go on, but those two examples reflect some of the difficulties in the water portfolio.

In regard to the arts portfolio I will refer to one particular area of difficulty that this government has got itself into. On at least four occasions this government has promised to establish a framework for investment in the arts portfolio. On each of those occasions it has backed away from those promises. Most recently, in January of this year the Minister for the Arts committed to a process whereby she would charge the now appointed director of Arts Victoria to modernise the Arts Victoria Act 1972 and to deliver a framework of investment.

Oddly enough, while that was the position in January, at last week's Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing, when the minister was asked where that commitment was and what the consultation process would be with the sector and with the communities that have a clear interest in this area, to the surprise of nobody on this side the minister said there had been a change of mind and that the government would in fact have no framework for delivery with respect to how it would invest in the arts. There is no policy. There is no framework. We have a rudderless patronage model of the minister and members of the government slushing around the valuable yet limited resources of Arts Victoria to their favourite projects.

Finally, I turn to the portfolio of youth affairs. I note that what we have is a crisis in youth unemployment. Under this government's watch we have had a doubling of chronic youth unemployment to over 12 per cent. But what did the Minister for Youth Affairs tell the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee last week? He told the committee that youth unemployment was running at 4.1 per cent by his particular and unique measure. This dysfunctional government will say anything. What we have is young people's opportunities being restricted and time after time this government rejecting arrangements that would provide for the delivery of opportunities for young people.

In the short time left to me I will turn to the failings in this budget with respect to the district of Albert Park. I note the Minister for Education is at the table. Despite the minister having announced over two years ago that the state would purchase a property — the old Melbourne Theatre Company facility in Ferrars Street, South Melbourne — and that it would be a new school, for two years the minister and the government did nothing. It was a very nice press release. It was warmly welcomed by some elements of the community. Only earlier this year did the government get around to purchasing the site, and only then did it fund not the building of the school or the development of an actual school but the design and the potential clean-up of the site.

The Minister for Planning has outlined the process — that in the yet to be seen Fishermans Bend high-rise precinct we will see developer contributions pay for the lot: the schools, the open space, the community facilities. There will be no investment by this minister. All of these arrangements will see the school put off to the never-never whilst we see surrounding school communities burst to overflowing. We will see the school communities of Port Melbourne, Albert Park, Middle Park, South Yarra and surrounding areas, all the way through to North Melbourne, blowing apart in terms of the number of people and families trying to get into them. The minister will be lucky to have that school operating by 2018.

I could of course extend my contribution to other areas, such as the rest of the Fishermans Bend planning areas. We are seeing already the panicked response of this government extend to its inability to even identify the most fundamental of planning arrangements. The Premier, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Public Transport have been unable to even identify where the most fundamental things such as railway stations might be going.

We are seeing an arrangement whereby there are over 13 different applications on the minister's table for Fishermans Bend ready to be appointed, ready to go, but no plan in terms of open space, no plan in terms of community infrastructure and no plans for funding it beyond a vague commitment which we expect to see in the near future around the balance of contributions being delivered to pay for the lot, which of course means it is on the never-never. We have Shanghai-like densities brought into the arrangement whereby the government's own figures say some 80 000 people — —

**An honourable member** — How many?

**Mr FOLEY** — Eighty thousand people, together with 40 000 people working in the precinct — a town the size of Bendigo being forced on an area the size of Violet Town — will see the area put through enormous stress, but this government misses the whole point. In its panic response to its botched transport plan it has missed the need for appropriate planning and appropriate community consultation in delivering on this.

Perhaps most tellingly of all we have seen this government's complete failure to address how it is going to assist a substantial number of manufacturing jobs in my electorate, as we see Toyota's head office, the entire Fishermans Bend Holden engine company and the Holden manufacturing plant disappear. Thousands of jobs in these companies and an even greater number of ancillary jobs of suppliers and high-tech designers are all at risk now, and all because those people on the other side and their mates in Canberra hounded those high-skilled, high-tech jobs into going and we have nothing in response. We have shallowness, we have abuse, we have a badly panicked — —

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

**Mr DELAHUNTY (Lowan)** — I have just seen a most rude and disrespectful speech being given. I think the speaker who was just on his feet not once spoke to you, Acting Speaker, so I will direct my comments through the Chair. I know there is a very attractive lady in the audience — there is a very attractive lady here, and all the attention went to her — but that is my wife.

I am really proud to stand here tonight to speak on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. This will be my last speech in a second-reading debate on a state budget, and I have always argued for a fair share for the western part of Victoria that I represent. This is record funding to build a better Victoria and record funding to invest in infrastructure and services right across Victoria. It is supporting Victorians not only in my electorate of Lowan but right across Victoria. It is a multimillion-dollar investment in things that will build a better Victoria.

As a person who has been in this house for 15 years I am proud of the fact I am the member for Lowan and have represented that area for those 15-odd years. But I am also proud that I was a minister for three and a half years. In that three and a half years we have managed the state finances in a much better way. We have reduced recurrent expenditure to a level which we can cover with our income, unlike the previous

government, which had expenditure that was increasing by over 8 per cent per annum and unfortunately income that was not increasing at that level, so we were going backwards. I am proud of the way we in this government have managed state finances, and I am extremely proud today that we are debating a budget that is delivering on infrastructure, services and programs right across Victoria.

This will be an amazing effort when you think about the unfair distribution of the GST. In comparison with other states, we get 88 cents for every GST dollar while New South Wales gets 98 cents and Queensland gets \$1.08. We have done an amazing job. I congratulate the Treasurer and all the budget and expenditure review committee members for what they have come up with. We have a \$1.3 billion surplus, and with that surplus we can fund infrastructure and services to support our country communities right across Victoria. We are doing that by not going further into debt like the previous Labor government did.

Employment is growing. I take on board the comments made by the member for Albert Park. We have got employment growing in Victoria. There are 26 000 jobs projected in transport projects alone. In rural and regional Victoria we have seen the unemployment rate drop dramatically since the coalition came to government. Between November 2010 and April 2014, a period of 41 months in which the coalition has been in government, 21 000 jobs were added to rural and regional Victoria. This represents 3.3 per cent growth in total employment. When you compare that to Labor and the last 41 months of its term, rural and regional employment grew by 9000 or 1.4 per cent. Again we are seeing most of this government's employment growth in rural and regional Victoria coming from the support given by the Regional Growth Fund, where over \$400 million has been allocated in grants to nearly 1500 projects worth a total of \$1.61 billion. As we can see, there is enormous support going into rural and regional Victoria, and it is creating jobs, livability and importantly a great way of living.

It was interesting to hear the speech of the member for Bendigo East in the second-reading debate on the budget last sitting week. I do not believe she had done any homework at all. I know she has other challenges, but she cannot have done her homework. She does not know how to read a budget paper. That goes to the theme that this government is showing it can manage money. The contrast is that when Labor was in government it could not manage money. The member for Bendigo East claimed that the next \$500 million for the Regional Growth Fund was not there in the budget papers.

As the Regional Growth Fund is not a new initiative this year — as you know, Acting Speaker — it does not have to go in as a line item in the budget paper. It is an existing program and therefore is included in the existing appropriation and output costs of the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, as is the case for health and education. The funding allocation of \$500 million in the second stage of the Regional Growth Fund — the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund — is included in note 12 on page 31 of this year's budget paper 5. As can be shown, it is there. It is just Labor that is lazy. Its members have again shown that they cannot do the work and they cannot manage money.

This is a good budget for the Lowan electorate. It will strengthen the local community and more importantly give great opportunities for us in rural and regional Victoria. It is an economically sound budget backed up with three years of good financial management. We have the \$10 million redevelopment of Horsham College, which is something we talked about for 11 years but which never happened. In fact the education ministers in Labor governments never visited that school. I am proud to say that in a bit over three years the current Minister for Education, Minister Dixon, visited that school twice, and we got \$10 million for an upgrade. It goes on. In the first year we were in government we got \$7 million to build a new special school, which is a fantastic achievement to assist the people it serves.

We also have \$220 million to upgrade the country rail freight lines, including upgrades to the Mildura to Maryborough and Murtoa to Hopetoun lines and the standardisation of the key link from Mildura right down to western Victoria. We also have the \$35.4 million Food to Asia Action Plan. This provides enormous opportunity for local businesses and producers in Lowan to take advantage of the rapid growth in Asia's consumer class. We also see \$14 million going into regional tourism marketing. Whether it be the Grampians, the second most visited place in Victoria, or others, there are a lot of opportunities under that \$14 million marketing program.

As the country member for Seymour, Acting Speaker, you know our road network is very important for our country communities. Whether it be for the safe transport of people or the transport of freight, it is important to have our roads up to a good standard. I am pleased to say that there is an extra \$130 million going into our roads budget, which is now up to \$730 million, to maintain, restore and improve our regional roads. The Western District Health Service, based in Hamilton, will share in \$1.8 million over four years for

bariatric treatments such as lap-band surgery. There is also \$49.5 million going to our fire services personnel. It is important to keep our community safe, and the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Melbourne do a great job in protecting our communities. This will be for equipment and also 78 new Country Fire Authority tankers. Another thing that is pleasing is that we are taking a little bit of pressure off businesses. Payroll tax will be cut from 4.9 per cent to 4.85 per cent on 1 July. This will reduce the costs of 39 000 employers right across Victoria, including those in my electorate of Lowan.

Importantly, whatever the business, it needs qualified skilled employees. We have increased to \$1.2 billion our investment for skills development, which leads to jobs. Since 2010 the number of students in regional Victoria is up more than 20 per cent. Places right across Victoria are taking the opportunity to train more apprentices and more tradespeople more often to support our businesses. I come back to the Regional Growth Fund. Across country Victoria we see that fund supporting our country communities. Each year 40 councils in Victoria get \$1 million extra for their roads and bridges. On top of that, we have other things under the Regional Growth Fund, such as the Putting Locals First program and other regional development programs. In fact, excluding the roads and bridges money, \$35.2 million has come to the five councils in my electorate in western Victoria for 150-plus projects.

A lot of dollars come through the Regional Growth Fund to support our local communities: Glenelg Shire Council has received \$6.24 million; Southern Grampians Shire Council, \$5.06 million; Ararat Rural City Council, \$5.93 million; Hindmarsh Shire Council, \$4.99 million; Horsham Rural City Council, \$8.7 million; and West Wimmera Shire Council, supporting a shire with one of the smallest populations in Victoria, \$4.2 million. There is great support for these communities through the Regional Growth Fund.

In my 15 years in Parliament I have lobbied for a fair share of funding, and this budget delivers on that for our country communities, in particular those in Western Victoria, whether it be through the Regional Growth Fund or funding programs such as those for sport and recreation or libraries. The former Minister for Local Government is sitting here beside me. She provided great support for our libraries, including those at Kaniva and Lake Bolac, where the whole town populations turned out when she came to open those facilities. We are in a good position to grow and prosper in the future.

I will take a couple of minutes to speak about the two portfolios in which I have spent a lot of time in the past

three and a bit years. In sport and recreation, I have to thank my ministerial staff of Darren, Emma, Dianne, Fiona and the departmental liaison officer, Jason. I also thank the department staff, headed by Dr Peter Hertan. Over those three and a half years we achieved a lot. We got more people more active more often, and this budget delivers a lot more that can be added to what we already have. There is \$35 million for the Strategic Sporting Infrastructure program, \$300 000 for the new integrity in sport study, \$2 million over two years for the community sports facility program and \$4.8 million over four years for the Significant Sporting Events program. They are great programs that are being supported by the government on top of the Community Facility Funding program, the Country Football and Netball program, Victalent and the elite athletes grants, which have supported people like David Morris, a young bloke who went on to win a silver medal at the last Winter Olympics.

Sport and recreation is a big part of our culture and our economy. We have done some wonderful things, and I congratulate the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister Drum, on delivering a fantastic budget for the future of sport and recreation here in Victoria.

In the veterans affairs portfolio, again I thank my ministerial staff and my department staff, led by Joshua Puls; David Roberts, who has left to go to Canberra; and Patricia Pollard and a lot of those who have done an enormous amount of work in the lead-up to the commemoration of the centenary of Anzac, which will start on 4 August. A key project is the \$45 million Galleries of Remembrance project at the Shrine of Remembrance, which will be opened later this year. We also have the travelling exhibition going out from the Shrine of Remembrance. We have increased funding for the Community Grants program with grants of up to \$20 000 for community groups. We have the major grants program with grants of up to \$100 000. We have a book called *Victoria at War*, which was commissioned by the State Library of Victoria. There is also additional funding to support the RSL for the larger crowds, not only for this year's Anzac Day ceremonies but importantly for next year's ceremonies held at the Shrine of Remembrance.

One of the great projects we have delivered on is the digitisation of World War I soldier settlement records by Public Record Office Victoria. This is an excellent program in which the settlement records from right across Victoria have been digitised. They provide a great record for people in our country communities, particularly for the veterans in rural and regional Victoria and in Victoria generally. To finish on the veterans affairs portfolio, a lot of work has gone on in

preparation for the centenary of Anzac which, as I said, will start this year. I encourage all members to work with their communities and their ex-service organisations. There are many of them out there. I want to thank the Victorian Veterans Council. Major-General Peter Haddad was the chair for most of the time I was in that portfolio, and Rear Admiral John Lord is now the chair. Members of the council are doing a lot of work with ex-service organisations. Again, there is funding going through. I know that in my time as minister funding of \$25 000 was provided for the Ted Kenna memorial in Hamilton.

There are a lot of opportunities for people to engage with their veterans community and to reflect on the past. There is enormous opportunity for our students also. I want to recommend one of the key opportunities, which is that 80 Victorian students will travel to Anzac Cove at Gallipoli to attend the 2015 Anzac Day service. That program is about to be launched. I encourage members to speak with their local schools and local communities to encourage Victorian students to put up their hands for this enormous opportunity to travel to Gallipoli for next year's Anzac Day service. It is a great opportunity for young people to engage with, to connect with, their forefathers or foremothers and tell their story when they go there, and when they come back to tell the story to other generations in their community.

In finishing, I have to say this is a great budget for Victoria. We have fixed up the problems that were left to us by the mismanagement of the previous government. I have to talk about the member for Albert Park taking on the Minister for Water. Members of the Labor government said they were not going to build a north–south pipeline, but they did — and it is not being used. They said they would not build a desalination plant. Then they did build a gigantic one that is costing Victorians, particularly Melbourne people, nearly \$2 million a day. It is an absolute travesty. That money could have been put into a lot of other projects. I would stack up the Minister for Water against the member for Albert Park any day of the week in relation to water matters.

Whether it be for water, whether it be the budget or whether it be otherwise handling money, members on this side of the house know have to handle money. We can manage the budget, and now we are delivering for Victoria. Whether it be infrastructure or services, we are delivering for Victoria, which is a much better place to live today.

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — It is a privilege to stand here tonight and speak on the budget

reply to the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. With respect, I am going to borrow from the famous words of the Queen of Fountain Gate, the doyenne of great taste and correct manners and the person who is always up to date with everything contemporary, Kath Day Knight, in saying that this was meant to be the look-at-moi budget. This budget is all about allowing the unelected Premier to shout loudly, clap wildly — as we saw on budget day — spin some new slogans and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising in a pitiful attempt to buy himself an election victory and again try to hoodwink the voters of Victoria.

Even some of the media, I must say, have drunk the Premier's Kool-Aid, such was the exaggerated commentary on the budget, but I note they are in retreat. They are taking a step back and starting to swallow some of their words because, like the voters of Victoria, they have realised that if you look closely at the look-at-moi budget, you see a budget full of smoke-and-mirror figures, promises on the never-never, projects to be confirmed — there is a long list of those in the budget papers — and those game changers the Premier talks about. How many times did he say the word 'game-changer'? He is going for the Guinness record. He is always chanting that word. The game-changers do not even have a business case; they do not add up and possibly may never see the light of day, and where that \$8-billion dud tunnel is concerned, let us hope that is its fate.

In fact the Premier really had little to crow about with this budget. It is has all but disappeared. It has disappeared beyond recognition because those pesky feds have taken \$80 billion out of education and health, and that has to impact on the bottom line of those opposite's budget.

Amid the cries of criticism and abuse and the alarm that the community is directing fairly and squarely at the smirking and winking Prime Minister, the soul mate of the Premier, they — Tony and Denis, the Prime Minister and the Premier — have launched an unprecedented attack on the standard of living of Victorians and Australians. That is what people are talking about.

I must say, Clive Palmer does not often get it correct where I am concerned — although I have some sympathy for him because he barracks for the Western Bulldogs — but he got it right when he said that Tony Abbott has picked on all the people he does not like. What we see in this state budget is the Premier as a version of the same. This Premier has played favourites. If you live in a state Liberal-held electorate, especially if you live in a safe one with the right

postcode and you are well-heeled, you will get your share. In fact some electorates are getting more than their fair share. However, if you are a hardworking family living in the outer suburbs, trying to make ends meet and wanting the best for your kids, this government has sent a message in this budget that you are on your own. You are definitely on your own.

The government is not there to give you a helping hand when you have to pay your next bill or you want to send your kid off to school in a new pair of school shoes. It is not there for the people of Narre Warren South and the people of the outer suburbs.

Let us look at what this budget means for Narre Warren South residents. There are no new beds at Casey Hospital. As the Australian Medical Association's president said in a media release headed 'Doctors say health budget is underwhelming':

Surgery waiting lists continue to grow, ambulances are ramped, hospitals are on bypass, there are not enough hospital beds and today's budget fails to adequately consider the increasing growth in demand.

The press release continues:

Since the coalition was elected in 2010, elective surgery waiting lists have increased by 10 000, or approximately 20 per cent. The budget allocation of \$190 million for elective surgery is not nearly enough.

'Don't get sick' is what I say to the residents of Narre Warren South, because you are not going to be able to get to hospital on time, and even if you do, you will not be able to get a bed, because this government has failed to deliver on its promises of expanding the hospital system and funding extra beds.

This budget is also a great letdown for schools in the new electorate of Narre Warren South. I am still waiting for a response from the minister on what he intends to do about the asbestos in Hampton Park Primary School. I am slowly coming to the conclusion that this minister could not care less about what is happening down at Hampton Park Primary School and the condition that school is in. It made me quite ill to see the member for Brighton coming in here this afternoon, bragging about all the money that is being spent in the Brighton electorate, especially in Brighton schools. It makes me think that bias is a really unbecoming trait and being unjust is really callous. When I see kids in Hampton Park Primary School having to sit in classrooms which probably pose a health and safety risk, it concerns me that the minister has not taken the time to respond to the school's concerns.

It is not just schools and the health system that have missed out. There is not a dollar for new roads in Casey. Even the Casey City Council, where three of the councillors are Liberal candidates at the next state election, is not happy. The council wanted a further extension of the Hallam Road upgrade; that did not happen. There is no talk of the Thompsons Road duplication. The councillors were walking around here with smirks on their faces, saying that they had had a good hearing from the Minister for Public Transport about buses in the city of Casey. Well, there are no new bus services for people in the new estates in the city of Casey. We all know that — as do the residents of Berwick especially, because people were down there this morning handing out flyers about this crazy new plan the minister has concocted for his Premier, this nasty revision of the Melbourne Metro that we see — because the Premier had to have his own version of the Melbourne Metro; that is the sort of bloke he is. The residents are all saying this morning, 'How am I supposed to get to work?'.

The minister was in the house at question time and revealed that commuters did not need to come into town; they could get off at South Yarra, and maybe they could go shopping for some haute couture on their way to work. Or maybe they could get off at Richmond, pick up a pho, have a quick soup, before trudging across the city to get the next connection. That is the sort of thing that commuters in the Narre Warren South electorate are upset about, and so they should be.

**Mr Battin** interjected.

**Ms GRALEY** — Let us not go there, because the member for Gembrook promised them they could get to the airport quicker. I tell you what: with this budget they are not going to have much money to have a holiday. As we all know, there have been further gigantic cuts to TAFE — \$1.2 billion has been cut out of the TAFE budget since this government came to power. TAFE is a very good option in my electorate for those students who do not want to go to university but who do want some skills training. A lot of kids want apprenticeships, and often some of them —

**Mr Battin** interjected.

**Ms GRALEY** — We expanded Chisholm; that was our money and they were our ideas, so thank you very much for that. If you go to a TAFE, you will hear students — especially those who have been there for a while — talking about TAFE being less accessible, less affordable and of lesser quality. This means that if you are not getting the best education to which you are entitled, you are less likely to get the job you need.

The toilet that was promised as part of the upgrade of Hallam station has just been flushed off the Liberal Party's spreadsheet. What about the crossing near the Hampton Park Senior Citizens Club? The government just does not care enough to make sure senior citizens get across the road safely. The roundabout at Pound Road and Shrives Road does not get a mention. I can guarantee there will be more accidents and casualties at that intersection because of Liberal Party inaction.

Sadly, though, it is the children in my electorate who are the biggest losers. Their futures are being compromised, underfunded and put at risk. Nothing galls me more than to see the minister turn up with his motley crew of MPs and some of these would-be, could-be councillor candidates and stand in front of a sign announcing a school that not one of them has ever mentioned before, written to the paper about or raised in the Parliament. Still they go and stand in front of the sign. But this is not lost on people — they know the government cannot be trusted.

We saw these announcements made in a big wraparound in the *Berwick News*, with exaggerated photographs and big print talking about all the good things the government is doing. Then I noticed the message from the principal of Alkira Secondary College — which for the benefit of the member for Caulfield is a public-private partnership. It says:

Thursday was Public Education day, and rather than being a celebration of all things great about our public schools in Australia and Victoria, it was a day of bewilderment and fear for many schools.

...

The state government has then cut more than \$600 million from public education since its election in 2010. The budget plans show a further \$80 billion cuts in health and education over the next 10 years. Currently Victorian public schools receive \$1881 less per student than the national average and yet our local paper —

that is, the advertisement put in by the Liberal Party —

carried headlines, 'Budget boost for Casey schools' ...

The principal's message goes on to say:

More and more students are becoming disadvantaged as more and more schools struggle to meet the needs of their communities.

How can funding cuts be sold as budget boosts? Show me the money!

I can tell members now that what this and every school in my electorate want is less boasting and more boosting.

The conceit and deceit in this budget are breathtaking. However, people are not fooled. When you are doing nothing and then cheering yourself on or when you promise something and you fail to deliver on it, people see through you, and that is exactly what has happened at this school. People see through the boasting. They especially see through it when the government says one thing and does the opposite.

I noticed the buzzword today in question time was 'transformational'. How many times did we hear that? We are all supposed to be having some sort of evangelical experience because of this game-changing boosting budget. This Premier is like the emperor with no clothes. I will give him a bit of advice: what he should be doing is spending less time talking to the member for Frankston and a lot more time trying to heavy and lean on his mate the Prime Minister. As Kim Craig would say — and only Kim can say this — he is just 'incommunicado'.

Victorians deserve better. They deserve a government that is not going to make their bills skyrocket, cut their concessions or make their car rego go up. Since the Liberal Party came to office it has taken \$797 million in car registration. The average registration costs \$712 per year. This is a huge hit on the family budget, especially for those people in my electorate. People are contacting my office and complaining about it loudly.

Victorians deserve better; they deserve a government that cares about hardworking families from all backgrounds, irrespective of where they live or come from, what their postcode is or what school they go to. Everybody should be treated fairly, especially the hardworking families of the Narre Warren South electorate, who deserve to be able to send their kids to a good school, go to a hospital and be treated quickly and not be stuck on the road in congestion all day. They need a government that will not leave them on their own — one that puts people first and the ego of the Premier last.

**Mr WATT** (Burwood) — I take great delight in rising to speak on the Appropriation (2014–2015) Bill 2014. It is not often in a person's life that they can sit back and for a brief moment know they are actually making a difference. Last week in Parliament I listened to a number of things that were said, particularly about the budget, and I was quite proud of the fact that I was part of a government that was going to build a lasting legacy for the people of Victoria. Some of those things are contained in the budget, some are not. Nonetheless it still gives me quiet delight to stand in my place to acknowledge some of the things that are going to leave a lasting legacy for the people of Victoria.

I am thinking about some of the great transformational infrastructure projects in which the government is investing. As a parent I think about the difference that some of these things are going to make in the lives of my children, who are only 10 and 12. They will never really understand that a lot of the things we are creating did not exist before, including the Melbourne rail link. We are going to transform the public transport system and make a difference for all those people in my electorate.

I want to talk about some of our other projects, including the east–west link. Over the term of this Parliament I have listened to members of the opposition talk about the east–west link. First they were for it; now they are against it. It depends on whether they are going east or west or on which side they get out of bed. I heard one member of Parliament talk about the Burwood electorate. I think he thought he was being quite funny or facetious when he was talking about how great the east–west link is going to be for the Burwood electorate.

If anybody in this place bothered to look at a map, they would see the Burwood electorate and understand that for people travelling from more than half of my electorate north to the airport or through to another state like New South Wales — not that I understand why you would ever want to go there — the best way once the east–west link is built will be to travel to the Eastern Freeway and head up through the east–west link, rather than heading south and trying to get onto the Monash Freeway at Warrigal Road, Toorak Road or High Street. The east–west link will be a great boon for the people of Burwood, not only for people wanting to get home earlier or to travel but also for businesses in the area. It will be a major boon, particularly if you think about the people of Box Hill South or Burwood — they would head north. The people of Camberwell, Canterbury or Surrey Hills would almost certainly head north to the Eastern Freeway to go up to the east–west link.

The other benefit the east–west link will have for the people of Burwood, particularly for residents of Ashburton, Ashwood, Glen Iris or Chadstone, is that when they are heading south to the Monash Freeway they will find there is less traffic and less congestion because of the number of residents who have taken an alternative route. That is why the east–west link is going to be such a great project for the people of the Burwood electorate. It will benefit people in all of the suburbs I mentioned — Ashburton, Ashwood, Box Hill South, Burwood, Camberwell, Canterbury, Chadstone, Glen Iris and Surrey Hills. That is why I am so proud of

this budget and that particular piece of infrastructure, the east–west link.

I will also talk a little about the removal of the Burke Road, Glen Iris, level crossing and how beneficial that will be. Although it is not in the Burwood electorate, it is going to be beneficial to a number of residents of the Burwood electorate given the bank-up of traffic along the Monash Freeway, up into High Street, Glen Iris, and back into Ashburton. The removal of that level crossing, which 26 000 vehicles, 158 trains and 186 trams use daily, is going to free up the movement of traffic. Not just the traffic in and around that area but, as I said, the traffic that flows through to other parts of the network will benefit greatly from the removal.

I will also talk about some of the education money that we have spent in my electorate. I pay credit to a number of people within the Burwood electorate, particularly those at Ashwood College. I thank Kerrie Croft, who is the principal at Ashwood College, and also Anna Kukuruzovic, who is currently the acting principal, as well as Debra Gibson and Jo Henriksen, among others, for their advocacy and for the conversation they have been able to have with me over the last four years, talking about investing in the school to bring it up to a modern standard.

I am greatly pleased that the Treasurer was able to find money in this year's budget and that the pleas of the people of Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone, whose children go to Ashwood College, as well as the pleas of residents of Burwood and Camberwell and of people outside the Burwood electorate, were heard. Their pleas to get a decent school and decent investment from this government in that school and in the education of their students were heard, and I thank the Minister for Education for hearing those pleas. The minister was probably a little annoyed by the fact that Ashwood College was mentioned to him every time I saw him, and I want to make sure that he along with those members of the school community who advocated for such a long time for a decent school get the credit they deserve for the efforts they put in. I am proud of the fact that this Liberal-Nationals coalition government has been able to provide for the students at Ashwood College. We are providing a decent school so they will be able to go about their learning experience.

To go with that, I also put on the record my thanks to the Treasurer and the Minister for Education for the further investment this government is putting into Solway Primary School, another school in my electorate. I pay tribute to Julie Wilkinson, the principal at Solway Primary School, for her great efforts in

educating the students, leading that community through its path into education and educating young people.

I have said a number of times in this place that I believe one of the pathways for getting disadvantaged students out of their circumstances is education. When I was growing up, one of the reasons I was able to progress and go to university was the great work done by my primary school teachers, who led me on a path, as well as some of the advantages I got through sport. Those two paths will certainly help students, particularly in my electorate, progress in life and make a go of it for themselves.

The infrastructure we are putting in is fantastic — \$27 billion worth of infrastructure throughout the state — not only for my electorate but also for other parts of Victoria. We have been able to invest \$27 billion in infrastructure through the great management of budgets past and this budget. We are building on some of the budgets brought down by the former Treasurer, currently the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and the member for Hawthorn, who was the Premier for two years. I pay tribute to those two members, who did a great job in setting us up to be able, firstly, to invest \$27 billion in infrastructure and, secondly, to continue through the forward estimates to be the only territory or state in the country with forecast surpluses over those four years.

We are talking about a \$935 million surplus this year — I know the member for Tarneit cannot really add up, but it is \$935 million this year — which will grow, as the member for Tarneit pointed out, as a result of the federal government giving us an unexpected \$1 billion extra, so it will be larger than that. Our surpluses will grow to \$3.3 billion in 2017–18, and that is a great tribute not only to the current Treasurer and the current Premier but also to the former Treasurer and the former Premier. I wanted to put that on the record.

It is unfortunate that over such a long period of time — over 11 years before we got into government — we had a government that squandered opportunities. I would have to put that squandering of opportunities down to a number of projects. I could list those projects for my entire 15 minutes, but I quickly want to put on the record the debacle that was myki, which my community has not forgotten; the debacle that was the pokies licence auction; and the debacle that was HealthSMART. That is not even accounting for things such as the regional rail link, which we inherited, and which was a complete mess. Imagine how we would be able to deliver for the people of not only Burwood but the whole state if we had not had a government that squandered 11 years in office.

There was a lot of talk about Box Hill Hospital through those 11 years. I pay tribute to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ageing, Mr Davis, a member for Southern Metropolitan Region in the other place, for his great work on the \$448 million redevelopment of Box Hill Hospital, which is just outside my electorate but will service the people of my electorate, as I have said: those in Ashburton, Ashwood, Box Hill South, Burwood, Camberwell, Canterbury, Chadstone, Glen Iris and Surrey Hills. All of those residents will be serviced by Box Hill Hospital, and it is fantastic that we were able not only to build the Box Hill Hospital but improve it and make it a larger hospital that will provide more beds and, through good management over the last three and a half years, will be able to put an extra floor onto the hospital to bring some of the services from the old building into the new building and improve efficiencies. It is fantastic that we have been able to do that under the good stewardship of Minister Davis.

To go with that, one of the biggest shams the former government perpetrated on the people of Victoria was to talk about the second children's hospital at the Monash Medical Centre site. It was a sham perpetrated on the people of Victoria for eight years or so. In 2002 the former government talked about building the Monash Children's hospital. Former government members talked about it a number of times through those years, but it has taken a Liberal-Nationals coalition government to actually put the money on the table to get that project off the ground. The \$250 million Monash Children's hospital on the Monash Medical Centre site will go with the level crossing that we are going to remove through the \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion investment in the Dandenong-Pakenham-Cranbourne rail line to allow the ambulances to get through and free up the traffic in and around that area. It is fantastic that it is a 230-bed state-of-the-art facility, and that it is a Liberal-Nationals coalition government that will get that off the ground and a Liberal-Nationals coalition government that will deliver for the people of the south-eastern suburbs.

There is much that one could say about this budget, but I also want to talk a little bit more about public transport given that over the last number of years we have been able to invest \$12 million in the Glen Waverley line and \$3.2 million in the Alamein line to remove some tired, rotten old wooden sleepers. Hopefully, the people of Victoria will remove some tired rotten sleepers from the other side. I note that as part of that investment we are also investing in providing lower fares and free public transport on trams in the city.

One of the things to note about my electorate is that Warrigal Road is the differentiation point between zone 1 and zone 2, so, while I assume no-one in my electorate is a fare evader, a number of people travelling to or out of the Burwood electorate may not always have touched on and off at the right places. This may have happened because Deakin University is such a short distance from the border of zone 1 and zone 2. This will mean that people travelling to Deakin University can do so with comfort and ease knowing they will not be charged an awful lot more — an exorbitant increase in their fare — simply for travelling a few hundred metres on the other side of Warrigal Road. As I drive down it is about three or four tram stops to get there from the edge of zone 2.

That will not only benefit those on trams but will mean people travelling from outside to inside the Burwood electorate to get on some of the great trains in which we have been able to invest on the Alamein train line will no longer have to drive to Burwood train station but can get on at their own local train station, thereby freeing up parking at Burwood, Ashburton and Alamein train stations. I commend the budget.

**Mr SCOTT** (Preston) — After two and a bit weeks of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, I can make many comments about matters unrelated to the appropriation coming out, but I will restrict my comments to the bill rather than give free character assessments of the various persons who appeared.

On a serious note, I lament the effect of the budget in my own electorate. Again it was a disappointing budget for the people who live in Preston and Reservoir. There was no new funding in the budget for local schools in my electorate, and key local infrastructure projects like Reservoir and Bell Street railway crossings have again been neglected. I note that the glossy map the government has produced to try to create the impression that 40 railway crossings will be dealt with seems not to include one in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. I will repeat that: not one of those railway crossings that the government is either saying it has done or is planning to do is located anywhere near my electorate.

Many people live in the northern suburbs where there are some of the worst intersections in Melbourne as rated by the RACV in terms of railway crossings. I know the member for Melton in a previous life represented those areas and knows some of those areas well, and it shows the priorities of this government that, of the railway crossings the government is claiming it will upgrade, none are in that area. This shows the

priorities that have been shown towards my electorate since the election.

I will not read through the article in its entirety, but typical of the media coverage the budget received in my community was an article under the heading ‘Budget ire as wish list overlooked’ which appeared in the *Preston Leader* on 13 May, in which a number of stakeholders complained about the paucity of funding for key services that are required in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. If you look at the way in which funding is allocated, you see these are some of the areas of greatest need. There are areas of very significant social disadvantage that I am lucky enough to represent, such as the good people who live in East Preston and East Reservoir. There are very high levels of public housing and high levels of people with very low incomes facing great challenges in their lives, and it is a great community.

Great services are provided there — great schools, a fantastic community health centre based in East Reservoir and wonderful people in the community — but it is a community that does not receive the sort of assistance it has in the past. It is a community that this government has neglected. It saddens me. There are often many cheap political points scored, but it genuinely saddens me to see that being done in communities that need assistance. As a society we choose to intervene in the operations of the market in many ways in order to expend funds that are ultimately collected coercively from citizens of the state, and frankly some of those in greatest need whom I represent have been ignored again in this budget.

I will move on to some of the more global issues in the budget, and I think the budget should be put in context. I note the complaints of the current government about the terrible and shocking cuts that have been inflicted on us in the most recent federal budget. Not every minister, I have noted from the appearances that I have seen, has quite got the memo about defending Victoria from the attacks by their federal colleagues, but some have. Some have not, and some are a bit confused and seek to defend their federal colleagues. That is not a very wise proposition, and if I am given some latitude, I will recommend a great YouTube video that portrays someone trying to defend the budget publicly and the response they get. The response is ‘Best budget ever!’, for anyone who wants to look it up on YouTube. They will be most amused.

Quite seriously, members of the government do not comprehend their own cuts. If you look at information provided by the government itself, you will see that the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee has now

published questionnaires that give an outline in the context of the appropriation of what the effect of the 2014–15 budget will be on this financial year, and the effect of what the government euphemistically describes as efficiencies and savings but which we obviously know to be the cuts they are. These cuts occur over an extended period — there have been cuts from the original election commitments, cuts to measures to offset the global financial crisis reduction which were introduced in the first budget, and critically cuts to the series of measures introduced in the 2011–12 budget update, including the sustainable public service initiative and the capping of expenditure growth within departments.

That budget update in particular was a critically tough round of cuts inflicted on the public sector, and there has been a series of other measures in subsequent budgets. These have had serious impacts on departments. All but one department — and I will get to the department which chooses to obfuscate and disgracefully hide the information from the community — provide honest information to the community about the impact of these previous cuts, and it is worth going through the departments.

The Department of Human Services told the committee that these cuts in the coming financial year will have an impact to the tune of \$226.91 million. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development stated that the impact would be \$292.8 million. Cuts to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries amount to \$238.6 million. Cuts to the Department of Justice are \$191 million. That is just the department, and if you go to police it is a separate, additional amount of \$113.2 million, and for the courts services within justice it is \$14.2 million. You then also have the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and strangely enough, though it is not a spending department, it is a much smaller amount for anyone who knows how government works, and it is \$10.416 million. The Department of State Development, Business and Innovation — —

**Mr Hodgett** interjected.

**Mr SCOTT** — I hear the minister — and the minister, I would have hoped, would have been more successful at warding off the cuts because there is \$104.8 million in that particular department. I will not respond to the interjections. The cut to the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure is \$365.1 million — quite neatly \$1 million per day, essentially, in that particular department. The Department of Treasury and Finance figure is of course

a much smaller number — again if anyone understands who really runs government — it is \$44.97 million.

There is a very small figure for the Department of Health because the department refuses to give a proper breakdown. The Department of Health refuses to give information relating to the cuts. However, I will get to how you can calculate them, because they are not that clever down at Health, particularly because Treasury provides information across government, or has previously, and it is therefore quite easy to calculate what the effect is once every other department does it. Excluding the amounts health has sought to obfuscate and hide, you have over \$1.6 billion of cuts. However, one of the key areas where health has not provided information relates to the measures related to the budget update 2011–12, and their impact on the current budget.

However, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Treasurer himself, in a letter in response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, have provided the amount of savings for this financial year that will be found relating to those cuts. Therefore, as the Department of Health is the only department which has not provided information, it is child's play to calculate it. There is in fact another \$241.65 million of cuts to health related to that measure, which brings the total for health — and this is excluding some small measures which are probably around \$30 million, but it is a little bit more complex to calculate efficiency measures relating to the 2013–14 budget — but even excluding that around \$30 million there are \$269.95 million of cuts. That leaves nearly \$1.9 billion of cuts this government has inflicted on us that will take effect this year. The cuts from the current budget have not been calculated by departments themselves, so there is another figure coming on top of that.

Be that as it may, it is a little galling to hear members of the current government running around bleating as if suddenly this external force has created all these problems in health and education, that some other party from outside itself, which of course happens to be its own political party, has come in and inflicted these terrible things when the government is up to its neck in cutting services. To see the sort of commitment that has been made to services like health and education, you only have to look to the Minister for Education's performance on the budget. In the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — I happen to be lucky enough to serve on the committee, and it almost feels as if you are indentured during the estimates process — there was a discussion around Gonski funding. Quite seriously, the questioning on that particular matter produced from the minister what could, frankly, only be described as sophistry.

When asked specific questions about what money the state was going to commit in order to fulfil its obligations under the agreement that it had entered into — and I note the current government is complaining about the federal government's actions around education cuts, and they are shocking education cuts — the minister said, 'In Victoria there is no such thing as Gonski money'. That was clearly evident from a series of responses that were confused, irrational, lacking in clear logic and incoherent that the minister gave to quite simple questions when he was asked to explain what state contributions were being made. The questions were asked a number of times in different ways, and not once could he give a coherent answer about what the state's contribution was and how it was fulfilling its obligations. I only hope the children who are sitting exams and undertaking work at various educational institutions respond with clearer and more honest thinking. If the government has no commitment to Gonski, and there was no indication from the minister that it does, at least it should be honest about it.

I will go on to other areas of government expenditure. As I mentioned, in health there was the farce of the Minister for Health being unwilling to identify the various cuts and pretending they did not exist, not realising that every other department is providing that information, and when you are the only department that does not, and the Treasury is providing information on the global figure, it is not exactly hard to work out what you are doing. But the minister still goes through that farce. I note the mocking of the member opposite, but I will not bite on that because I know the high regard he is held in by a number of his colleagues, particularly from about half of the Liberal Party.

It was not just in health and education where lack of clear thinking was shown. We had a clear indication from the unwillingness of the Premier, for example, to outline expenditure on government advertising. You would only have to have turned on your television in the last few months to see the farce that has unfolded. It has not escaped the notice of members on this side of the house that there is a commitment to reporting of expenditure. Strangely enough, last year the reporting expenditure for the previous financial year took place in December 2013. The commitment given by the Premier was to report on the expenditure on government advertising in the normal way, and the normal way would be for reporting on the expenditure that took place in the 2013–14 year to be given after the state election. This shows the willingness of the Premier to disregard all the sweet words — and were they not sweet — before the last election — on a commitment to change the way that government advertising is done. You only have to turn on the television or open a

newspaper at times to see the huge amount of government propaganda.

In terms of the cuts, I note that the Minister for Finance was not even willing to countenance changing the performance measures in response to the cuts. The federal government cuts that are coming are about \$200 million, as I understand from the media today, and yet the government is willing to hide from the community of Victoria the impact that these cuts will have on services. Undoubtedly there will be a reduced provision of services to the community. These are the federal government's cuts; I know that, like Pavlov's dogs, the members opposite wish to defend the Liberal-Nationals government.

There are a number of other examples, but I will finish by saying that I was disappointed to hear that resources in consumer affairs will be dedicated to protecting consumers from private car parks when legislation could be enacted to prevent such abuses. I will leave it at that by saying it has been a disappointing budget and particularly disappointing for the people of Preston and Reservoir.

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the house now adjourns.

**Mr Carbines** — I raise a point of order, Deputy Speaker, in relation to an adjournment matter I raised on 13 March, addressed to the Minister for Public Transport, about the immediate provision of four extra peak services on the Hurstbridge line that were promised by the government after the Eltham station railway stabling project was completed in 2013. I have not had a response to that matter. I raised the matter as a point of order in April, and I raise it again now in May. I seek for the second time by way of point of order for the matter to be responded to under standing orders. I ask you, Deputy Speaker, to request of the minister a response to my adjournment matter, and I hope, given it is the second time I have raised a point of order, that perhaps I might get a response for my constituents.

## Kindergarten funding

**Mr NOONAN** (Williamstown) — I wish tonight to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development. The action I seek from the minister is that she make time to meet with me, representatives of the Hobsons Bay City Council and kindergarten operators to discuss the

uncertain future of universal access to 15 hours of kindergarten. The request follows concerns raised by my local council about the impact of commonwealth government changes that jeopardise an additional 5 hours of early years education for four-year-old kindergarten programs beyond December.

Back in November 2008 under Labor, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the national partnership agreement on early childhood education, which pledged to fund one full year of kindergarten for Australian children. The Victorian government was party to this decision and, as a result, all Victorian children were entitled to 15 hours of fully funded kindergarten. The model was praised across the community. For parents, it meant their children would have a minimum of 15 hours access to trained early years teachers and an established pathway leading to primary school. For kinders the new funding model provided greater certainty and recognised the considerable value that early years learning has on improving outcomes for children.

That policy progress is now in doubt, with sweeping cuts to Victorian education delivered in the most recent federal budget, and a state government that has not committed to maintaining universal access to kindergarten in Victoria.

The benefits of 15 hours of early childhood education are absolutely beyond question. Experts have consistently drawn clear links between children who have universal access to kindergarten and a smooth transition into primary education. As the Hobsons Bay City Council recently stated in a letter to me:

... the original impetus for the COAG reforms was based upon resounding international and national evidence which linked quality kindergarten programs to improved outcomes for children in learning, health and behaviour. It has been further evidenced that such outcomes extend into their adult life.

Families from across my local community have embraced our kindergartens, particularly in those areas of significant disadvantage with wide-ranging culturally and linguistically diverse populations. In Hobsons Bay not-for-profit organisations and parent volunteer committees operate 19 kindergarten services. The reduction in funding could see some of these services go to the wall, leaving local families with fewer preschool options. Sadly, participation rates are also likely to suffer, resulting in kids from poorer areas starting their education behind the eight ball.

The Napthine government must do everything it can to protect universal access to 15 hours of kinder. I call on the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Services

to visit my community, which I know she is familiar with, to explain why a Liberal government is jeopardising this very important 2008 Labor reform. It is important for these reforms to be protected. Our children deserve nothing less.

### **Edithvale Aspendale Sporting Club**

**Ms WREFORD (Mordialloc)** — I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Sport and Recreation. The action I seek is for the minister to visit the Mordialloc electorate to look at its future needs and in particular to discuss the netballing needs of the Edithvale Aspendale Sporting Club. This is my first opportunity to welcome the new minister. I congratulate him on attaining his new position, and I look forward to him visiting Mordialloc as often as his terrific predecessor did.

Many parts of the Mordialloc electorate are going through renewal with older people moving on from their large suburban properties and younger people taking their place. There are also more townhouse developments, so the population is growing. With the influx of young people comes more demand on sporting facilities. Netball is particularly popular amongst the demographic moving into the electorate and many local clubs are struggling to keep up with the demand. Adding to that demand, the Edithvale Aspendale Sporting Club, known locally as Edi Asp, is very good at what it does. It is a club with a fantastic reputation and a terrific social fabric. People want to be a part of the club and it recruits actively, but this means that its facilities are stretched. I have had a few discussions with club members about their needs, most recently at their annual luncheon, and they have put together a very solid proposal.

In a nutshell, the club seeks two new netball courts at Regents Park in Aspendale. Amongst the many benefits of the proposal is that it will keep participation up by keeping the teams local, and it has co-location benefits when the club has netball and football games taking place at the same reserve; that would be very helpful for families. Since commencing in 2010 — a very good year — Edi Asp netball teams have been playing home games in Frankston and Chelsea. Frankston is a long way from Aspendale and the club has been advised that those courts are now at capacity and are likely to be required by growing clubs in those areas. There are at least two viable locations for netball courts on the Regents Park reserve.

As I suggested, this is the primary focus for my requesting the minister visit, but there are a couple of other sports facilities I would like to brief the new minister on. It is much better for the minister to see

them firsthand and for him to hear from the clubs involved than for me to paint an elaborate picture. Again, these issues are largely facing these clubs because they are in a growth phase. I hope the minister can visit the Mordialloc electorate, in particular the Edi Asp sporting club netballers. I look forward to a positive response.

### **Fishermans Bend urban renewal project**

**Mr FOLEY** (Albert Park) — The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek is for the minister to halt the imminent delivery of his botched Fishermans Bend inner urban renewal plan, which is on the verge of missing a golden opportunity to deliver a world-class, well-designed and multiple-use renewal precinct. Instead he should be directed to consult and involve the community and industry in a meaningful and enforceable structure plan for the area that will deliver a real community from the ground up.

I raise this adjournment matter because the Minister for Planning is about to deliver a plan that will see him approve the high-rise, high-density tower applications currently piled up on his desk; transfer his responsible planning authority's powers under his self-appointed capital city planning powers to the Metropolitan Planning Authority; and place on the Fishermans Bend precinct the burden of unenforceable height limits aligned more with the megatowers he is about to approve than the lower density, lower rise expectations of the community. In short, the minister is about to repeat the mistakes of Docklands and roll out the same soulless podiums and tower brutalisms close to the street and closer to the heart of Port Melbourne and South Melbourne. Such a botched effort will see no early investment in social and transport infrastructure in the areas that count.

The minister is set to make the same terrible blunders that will lock in well into the future development patterns and a panicked system of planning and transport that he knows will never be delivered in a way that serves the interests of the community, instead serving the interests of his developer mates. The Minister for Planning needs to admit that he was wrong in rezoning the area as a capital city zone without any appropriate planning tools or instruments. His calling for development proposals has been a failure. Instead we face an unregulated developer free-for-all zone with no ability to apply overlays, no priority areas of appropriate zones for community use and no real transport plans for the area in relationship to the surrounding communities in Southbank, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne.

The local community is concerned that we are about to miss a number of key principles that the minister should include. Firstly, the governance principles to deliver the vision, the expertise and the processes need to be based on a review of the function of the Metropolitan Planning Authority to ensure that it is independent of government, transparent in its operations and representative of the community, at arm's length from the industry and the government. It needs to deliver Infrastructure Australia-approved processes. Secondly, the funding model and funding mechanisms need to be able to direct government and private funding to secure the early provision of environmental, transport and community infrastructure. Thirdly, there needs to be a commitment to recognised best practice design principles for producing a genuinely livable, sustainable, diverse and vibrant city. Finally, there needs to be an implementation plan that closes the widening gap between the government's stated visions and the minister's botched development — —

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

### **Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club**

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) — I rise in this evening's adjournment debate with a matter for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The action I seek is for the minister to join me on a visit to the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club. The club is seeking to rebuild its clubhouse, which was originally built in the mid-1960s. The Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club has grown substantially and now has in excess of 800 members. Around 300 juniors are enrolled in the Nippers program and 96 per cent of the nippers live locally in Jan Juc, Torquay or Geelong. These children will be the lifesavers of tomorrow. It is important that we train the nippers, who will become the lifesavers of the future, to help keep safe one of the most dangerous beaches in Victoria, as has been acknowledged by Life Saving Victoria.

I have met with the club's president, Wes McDonald, and with members of the club on many occasions, including last Friday, 23 May. I acknowledge that the current facilities will struggle to accommodate the anticipated growth in numbers, particularly with the Armstrong Creek residential development on Torquay's doorstep, which it is estimated will provide housing for around 55 000 people over the next 20 to 25 years. Torquay and Jan Juc have also grown substantially in the last 10 years and the old clubhouse building is not up to standard given the number of members the club has and the anticipated growth.

A new club building is now required for the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club to continue to provide a high standard of surf lifesaving service and an excellent community facility for this growing community in the Surf Coast region. The club is well advanced in its plans to replace the existing clubhouse facility. The proposed facility will ensure that the club can continue to effectively deliver a key community service. The key objectives of the design and development of the new facility include continued provision of high-quality lifesaving services for the Jan Juc surf beach and surrounds; expansion of the club's renowned lifesaving training and development programs; increased capacity to accommodate a broad range of local community groups and facility users; the ability to support a rapidly growing member base and growing local and tourist populations; and improved capacity to support club lifesaving, competition and junior participation and development programs.

The club is working with key stakeholders such as Life Saving Victoria, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and the Surf Coast Shire Council to seek support for the redevelopment. I would very much like the minister to accompany me on a tour of the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club, and I look forward to a positive response from the minister.

### **Motor vehicle registration fees**

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Roads. It concerns motor vehicle registration. The action I seek is that the minister commit to establishing a payment plan option for paying VicRoads vehicle registration. Over recent weekends I have held street stalls right across my electorate and have spoken with many residents who have raised the same issue — having to pay their vehicle registration in one lump sum.

Vehicle registration revenue went up to \$591.2 million from \$488.9 million last year. The Napthine government's latest budget will reap \$1.4 billion from vehicle registration fees, which is \$797 million more than when it came to office. The average registration fee is currently \$712.10 per year. This is set to rise to somewhere nearer to \$750 per year. This is a huge hit on the family budget, and it especially impacts on my constituents, many of whom are finding it hard to make ends meet.

In the Narre Warren South electorate the average number of motor vehicles per dwelling is a 2 to 1 ratio, over 77 per cent of people travel to work by car and

21.6 per cent of households have mortgage payments that are 30 per cent or greater of household income, 11.5 per cent higher than the Victorian average. I say to the minister that these figures paint a picture. The picture shows that in my electorate more families rely on two or more cars. Often streets have many, many cars in them. More people in my electorate drive to work because of the lack of public transport. The picture shows that the family budget is already under considerable stress.

The Casey North Community Information and Support Service offers no-interest loans to people these days so they can pay for their car registration. Local families have told me that one lump sum is a huge burden on their family budgets. Local mum Patricia Whalebone said to me, 'We pay everything else by instalments. We pay utilities by instalments, why can't VicRoads offer us the same opportunity?'. Another local, Anne Andrews, said, 'I don't accept that this isn't possible in today's Victoria. I speak on behalf of every Victorian car owner; it needs to be fixed'.

I wrote to the minister on 23 January this year. In response he said that VicRoads is developing a new computer system and, once completed, it will allow scope for a broader range of vehicle registration payments. This gives us all hope that some change is under way. I ask that the minister take the necessary steps to establish a payment plan option for vehicle registration. The people in Narre Warren South would really benefit by this action.

### **Casterton kelpie interpretive centre**

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Lowan) — Tonight I raise a matter with the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Regional and Rural Development. The action I seek is for the minister to consider support under the coalition government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund for a feasibility study into the establishment of a kelpie interpretive centre in Casterton. As members would be aware, Casterton is recognised as the birthplace of the kelpie, and it celebrates this each and every year with the annual kelpie muster festival, which is coming up in the long weekend in June this year.

As the birthplace of the kelpie, Casterton celebrates its role each June long weekend through the Casterton working dog auction and kelpie festival. The festival and auction take place on what is a great weekend, with loads of entertainment. The events include the RMA Working Dog Futurity, the Kelpie Triathlon, the Kelpie High Jump, the Kelpie Dash and the Stockman's Challenge. I congratulate the Casterton Kelpie Association on its fantastic work. Last year the

auction's highest priced dog was Ben, which was sold by Matthew Johnson for \$10 500. It is a very important festival.

The Glenelg Shire Council and the Casterton community are keen to capitalise on the increased popularity of the festival and to bring more people to the town each and every year. A feasibility study would identify both the benefits and the drawbacks of a development like this, allowing the council and the community to make an informed decision about the best way to develop a centre and about what other community assets might be able to be incorporated. For example, the study would determine whether the interpretive centre could also house the Glenelg visitors centre, which is currently located on the outskirts of Casterton. It would also consider how the centre could be used as a community hub with the provision of meeting spaces and other community facilities.

The coalition government's Regional Growth Fund is a flexible program, as the minister is well aware. One of the great things about it is that it can provide funding for feasibility studies to help get long-term projects off the ground. I believe this study would be an ideal project for funding under the Regional Growth Fund Putting Locals First program, given that it is a community initiative and that it has real potential to drive economic growth and jobs in the important regional community of Casterton.

I invite the minister to come to Casterton in the very near future to see the great work the community is doing and to consider how a study into this future development would be a worthwhile exercise. I understand from speaking to some of the councillors that the Glenelg Shire Council has put forward an application under the Putting Locals First program for funding support for this feasibility study. I call on the minister to give this project strong support under the Regional Growth Fund. I would love to see him have the time to come and visit Casterton in the very near future.

### **Kalianna School Bendigo**

**Ms EDWARDS** (Bendigo West) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education. It concerns the portable school building recently delivered to Kalianna School Bendigo, which is a special school. The action I seek on behalf of the Kalianna school council is that the school be allocated immediately the funding it needs to bring this very old portable building up to a standard that complies with the education department's disability standards. Also, the portable was placed in the wrong location on the

school grounds, and as a result has destroyed access to some of the school's horticultural area and sensory garden, eliminating paths to and from the area. The school therefore seeks additional funding to restore the horticultural area to an acceptable state with reinstated pathways.

As the minister would be aware, Kalianna special school is growing rapidly, and the portable was delivered to the school during term 1 holidays as a means of catering for the increase in student numbers. The portable building was delivered in very poor shape and is in need of major repairs. It was also placed in a position that was not agreed upon with the contractor, and as such is now impeding the horticultural garden and access to it. For the first three days of term 2 the building did not have a safety fence around it to prevent students from gaining access to the building.

As the minister would be aware, since its establishment in Nolan Street in 1976, Kalianna has evolved and provides a diverse range of programs for its students. It has developed a commercial kitchen, and it is providing horticulture, small engines and Success for Boys and Victorian Youth Development programs, plus the introduction of Victorian certificate of applied learning and vocational education and training programs. The ground improvements, such as the Aboriginal and sensory gardens, have made a huge difference to the school. Kalianna currently has an enrolment of around 190 students.

Since this government cut 100 jobs from the regional education office in Bendigo, followed by a realignment of the Loddon Mallee region and the location of the regional office in Coburg, it is becoming increasingly common for schools across the Bendigo West electorate to tell me about the lack of funding, lack of communication with principals and very poor coordination around important matters such as the delivery and location of this portable at Kalianna. Many schools are disillusioned because they were not included in funding announced during the Premier's recent visit to the electorate, and particularly Kalianna special school. With the dumping of this outdated and run-down portable in the wrong place the school council feels and is again left with the impression that students with disabilities who attend Kalianna are not being treated equally within the education system, and I have to agree with them.

### **Phillip Island Jazz Festival**

**Mr K. SMITH** (Bass) — I direct my adjournment request to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. I request that she visit Phillip Island in November to

listen to and maybe enjoy the Phillip Island Jazz Festival, which is in its 10th year, and to consider whether she is able to bring down some sort of small financial incentive for the marketing of the jazz festival.

The minister would be aware, of course, of the great assets of the island. In terms of the beaches, we have great bay beaches at Cowes and there are surf beaches around the island. I think five of those have been classified as world surfing beaches; they are good classes of beach. There is always somewhere on the island you will find a good wave if you are going down there to surf, though at this stage I am not asking the minister to come down and go surfing. I could be asking if she would like to go down to fish off the island, because there are always good fish to be caught there.

Phillip Island is the event capital of Victoria. It has the world-renowned penguin parade and the Nobbies Centre; the World Wide Fund for Nature has given some recognition to that great facility and is in fact preparing to invest a fair amount of money into it. We also have the famous Phillip Island racetrack, where the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix, the FIM Superbikes World Championship and V8 supercars events are held.

The island appears to be a place where large numbers of people come down to each week, and the Phillip Island Jazz Festival is just one of those great drawcards that attracts people to the island. Great jazz is played by great musicians, and there is nothing nicer than to sit in a comfortable chair with a nice red in your hand, listening to the great jazz. I can only say I have always enjoyed jazz. The island has lots of accommodation available, with quality units and apartments, rental accommodation and caravan parks, catering for all sorts of people who like to go there to enjoy listening to the jazz musicians. In fact a number of the musicians will just play music together, setting up a bit of a gig; it is always really good stuff.

I am asking the minister to come down. The jazz festival will be held at the Ramada Resort Phillip Island in the Bass room. It will be from 21 to 23 November. I am hoping the minister will be able to come down, have a look and a listen and bring a little bit of extra funding to help the organisers promote the whole program.

### **Geelong region police resources**

**Mr EREN (Lara)** — I wish to raise an urgent matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The action I seek from the minister is to address the concerns of the people of

Geelong in relation to police numbers and resourcing. I was recently given the opportunity to attend and speak at a police rally in Geelong. The number of police officers on the front line — or sadly the lack thereof — and the rise in crime rates were on the agenda. Most Victorians would be shocked to learn that the Napthine government has reduced the number of police on the beat in their local area, and this was evident at the rally, where hundreds of people gathered in disgust.

Just in case government members are having issues in keeping up with their own cutting spree, I will remind members that the Napthine government has slashed funding for Victoria Police by \$100 million and it has cut 500 staff. Geelong has been a victim of these cuts. There are fewer front-line police officers in Geelong today than there were in 2010. The erosion of the police force started after this government was elected. The number of staff has plummeted by more than 40 per cent, and in a single year the crime rate has risen by more than 15 per cent. Under this government, as I said, rates of offences have risen by 15 per cent. Correct me if I am wrong, but the government did promise that it would decrease the crimes rates, and it has failed abysmally. Victoria deserves better. This is having a flow-on effect. The rate of offences has absolutely and unequivocally skyrocketed.

The literature is there. The research is there. When you increase police presence, the rates of offending go down. It is logical. In so many cases there is a direct correlation between lower police numbers and an increase in crime rates. What does not make sense is this government's approach to safety in Geelong. The local police are a pillar of every community. The members on this side of the chamber endeavour to continually support our local officers. It is shameful that the government cannot do the same. Our police can only do so much with the resources provided by the government, and because of this neglect by the Napthine government our community in Geelong is suffering.

I can assure members that the safety of Geelong is paramount to me and to my party. The Labor Party has pledged to introduce a royal commission in partnership with Victoria Police to address family violence. This is particularly pertinent to the Geelong area, as both Geelong and the Surf Coast are in the top 20 local government areas where family violence is an issue. The royal commission proposal comes as a result of increases in rates of assaults and family violence. Geelong has seen a 22 per cent increase and the Surf Coast an incredible 30 per cent increase. The Labor Party sees the importance of having this royal commission, and it is a real shame the same cannot be

said for the people who have the greatest duty of care to Victoria. Government members can only see the dollar signs.

Labor in the past has funded state-of-the-art police stations on the Surf Coast, on the Bellarine Peninsula and right across the Geelong area, including Lara. That infrastructure is now under threat from this government. Operation hours are likely to be reduced, and there is speculation that some stations may completely close. I urge the government to resource police better than it is resourcing them at the moment and to — —

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

### Healesville Aboriginal community

**Ms McLEISH** (Seymour) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The action I seek is for the minister to come to Healesville to meet with key figures in the Aboriginal community and also to visit a number of localities in the area to learn more about the Aboriginal community and its culture, to gain an understanding of the goals and challenges facing that community and to see its strength as it strives to make sure that the spirit of William Barak remains strong after all this time.

Aboriginal history and culture in Healesville is strong and well documented. We know Healesville is the home of the Wurundjeri, although there are many different mobs that now reside there. We have the extremely significant settlement of Coranderrk. Coranderrk is significant because quite some time ago — a number of years ago — Aborigines from all over the state were herded towards Coranderrk. For example, the members of the Taungerong Aboriginal settlement in Acheron were moved down into that area. Whilst some good times were had at Coranderrk, some absolutely deplorable events also took place there that the communities have had to face.

I would like the minister to come to look at the current area of Coranderrk. We know it was originally a very large reserve. The Healesville Sanctuary is actually now on a part of the reserve, and other properties have been sold off since, but there is still a large area that is Coranderrk itself. It is where the Corranderrk Festival, which I attended, occurred only a month ago.

In particular I would like the minister to meet with the board and staff of the Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association (HICSA). The minister may be familiar already with a number of the

key figures in the association: Doseena Fergie is the new president; Robynne White, the past president, remains on the committee; and we also have Aunty Dot, who is a life member of the organisation and was one of the first people put on the Victorian Honour Roll, an initiative our government introduced a couple of years ago. Aunty Dot also fought for the recognition of Aboriginal soldiers and is a really important elder in that community.

I would really like the minister to talk with the members of the Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association, to have a look at Coranderrk and, if there is time, to visit the property known as Galina Beek, because I know it is of quite some interest to HICSA, the broader community and me as well. I would really like the minister to see the grounds and the building and to understand what is significant about this building and how it could possibly be used. Also of interest is Worawa Aboriginal College, which is a boarding school for Aboriginal girls from across the country. I know the minister may not have time to squeeze all of this into one visit, but it is important that we put this on the agenda for some point in the future.

### Responses

**Mr RYAN** (Minister for Regional and Rural Development) — The member for Lowan raised with me a very important local issue. This is classically reflective of one of those lovely parts of regional Victoria, and I am pleased to be able to respond. The member raised with me the prospect of a feasibility study being undertaken for a proposed kelpie interpretive centre in Casterton.

As the member outlined, Casterton is famous as the birthplace of the kelpie. The annual kelpie muster festival, which is held in Casterton, draws many visitors to the region. It is a great example of the ways in which local communities are able to capitalise on their existing strengths and on their particular niche opportunities. That is very much the case with the Glenelg Shire Council, which is considering how this kelpie interpretive centre could assist in bringing even more visitors to the region.

As members are well aware, tourism is a vital component of regional communities. It is a very important economic driver of local opportunities, and anything that can be done to increase these capacities to bring people and have them contribute to the economy of our regional areas is always worth considering. I understand the council would use the study to determine whether such a centre could also house the local visitor information centre and perhaps serve as a

community hub, providing meeting spaces for local community groups.

The prospect of being able to do this arises from our \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund, and many organisations across the state have already been the beneficiaries of this successful enterprise. This study strikes me as something that is deserving of appropriate and serious consideration. I will have this proposal properly examined through my department, and I look forward to being able to respond positively to the member in due course. As is always the case, the appropriate process will need to be followed, but I look forward to being able to make a constructive response to the member in the not-too-distant future.

**Ms ASHER** (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — The member for Bass spoke about Phillip Island and a small local event, the 10th annual Phillip Island Jazz Festival, to be held from 21 to 23 November 2014. The member suggested that I may be interested in surfing, fishing and shiraz. None of those interest me, but I am very interested in the economic benefit of local events for regional Victoria. As I said, this is a small local event, and the member sought some funding for it. The festival organisers will be given \$2000 to assist with the promotion of this event.

Twice a year the coalition government provides funding for a range of smaller regional events to help them gain a higher profile and increase visitation and economic yield to the region. The government has designated \$75 000 to fund 19 events across Victoria — again, I emphasise they are small country events — as part of our April 2014 round of the country Victoria events program. I remind all members that the next round closes on 1 October 2014. As part of this round of funding, in addition to the Phillip Island Jazz Festival of interest to the member for Bass, the government has also funded, after representations from the member for Polwarth, the Lorne Adventure Fest, the Lorne Festival of Performing Arts, the Surf Coast Century and the fourth race in the Salomon trail running series.

In Mildura we have funded a number of smaller events, including the Merbein Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph and the Mildura Jazz, Food and Wine Festival. The members for Murray Valley, Rodney and Swan Hill have advocated strongly for the Murray Marathon. Deputy Speaker, you have advocated on many occasions for this in the house. The members for Seymour and Evelyn have advocated for funding for the Yarra Valley Smaller Wineries Shortest Lunch. The member for Benalla advocated for funding for La

Dolce Vita, and the member for Benambra advocated for Opera in the Alps.

I think I have made my point that there are a range of small country events. It is important to support these small events because they are very important in the regions. I am delighted to advise the member for Bass that whilst his event has been funded I suspect the dates of 21 to 23 November 2014 may see me doing a couple of other things.

**Mr WELLS** (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I think the member for Lara needs to check his figures. He is talking about extra police in the Geelong region, and I can point out to him that in the Geelong division, covering Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast, as of December 2010 there were 343 total police resources. As of April 2014, there were 404. That is a net increase of 61. On top of a record budget of \$2.4 billion, there are now 1525 of 1700 extra police, and we have put protective services officers at the Geelong station. Members should never forget that the opposition called the protective services officers the chocolate police.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — Plastic, chocolate police.

**Mr Eren** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — What sort of stupid comment is that?

**Mr Eren** — You said ‘chocolate’.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Lara will desist from interjecting and the minister will not respond to interjections.

**Mr WELLS** — What I do not understand from the opposition is that its members do not believe that family violence is a front-line policing issue.

**Mr Nardella** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — That is what you said.

**Mr Eren** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — And that is what you said.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr WELLS** — That is exactly right: family violence is a front-line issue, and the chief commissioner has had the courage to make a task force — —

**Mr Eren** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I take offence at the comments made by the minister and I ask him to withdraw those comments he has made. He knows they are wrong.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the minister to withdraw.

**Mr WELLS** — Withdraw which part?

**Mr Eren** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — No. You are, you idiot.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Lara has asked for a withdrawal. It is the standard practice of this house that when there is a request for a withdrawal there is an unconditional withdrawal.

**Mr Eren** — Just do it, grub.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Lara is warned. I ask the minister to withdraw.

**Mr WELLS** — I withdraw, and I ask the member for Lara to withdraw.

**Mr Eren** — I withdraw.

**Mr WELLS** — As I was pointing out, it is a bit rich for the opposition to accuse the chief commissioner of not putting enough police on the front line when part of the front-line service is delivering a task force to deal with family violence. Family violence is a front-line issue that needs to be dealt with by Victoria Police, so we support the chief commissioner setting up a task force to deal with family violence. It is a front-line issue. I would have thought that the manufacturing and distribution of drugs is also a front-line issue and so there should be a task force set up to do that.

In regard to the member for Lara, I plead with him to just for once get his numbers right. They are that in December 2010 there were 343 police in the area and now, as of April, there are 404. That is a net increase of 61.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr WELLS** — There are 61 extra police. The reason that the chief commissioner can set up these task forces is because he has an extra 1525 police, and I reckon that is outstanding.

**Mr Eren** — Where?

**Mr WELLS** — The member for Lara says, 'Where?'. There are 61 extra in his own area.

**Mr Eren** interjected.

**Mr WELLS** — I am telling him. There are 61 extra in Lara.

The second matter was raised by the member for South Barwon.

**An honourable member** — Good member.

**Mr WELLS** — A great member in South Barwon. He asked that I go to visit South Barwon to discuss and inspect the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club. The member for South Barwon has long been an advocate of the surf lifesaving clubs in his electorate, especially the one at Jan Juc, which needs an upgrade. I would be very pleased to go down and visit Jan Juc with the member for South Barwon.

**Mr MULDER** (Minister for Roads) — The member for Narre Warren South raised an issue with me in relation to some corner gatherings she had been having with her constituents about payment plan options for Victorian vehicle registrations. I can understand that a number of people are concerned about their ability to pay motor car registration fees by instalments. I pay rates by instalments and find it very handy in terms of budgeting.

I will give the member a bit of history on this issue. Work to design VicRoads new registration and licensing system, known as RandL but better known these days as myki's little brother, began in 2008 with a contract to build the system awarded in July 2010 by the member for Tarneit, the billion-dollar man and current shadow Treasurer. This system was supposed to improve the security and accuracy of information to prevent fraudsters obtaining false licences and registrations, allow the government to consider different registration payment or terms options and enable VicRoads to provide customers with greater access to more online services over time. That is what this system was supposed to be able to do.

In March 2011 the government suspended the project for a review of the scope and the need for the new system. Development of the new system had proved far more complex than the former government had anticipated and challenged VicRoads incredibly in terms of its ability to deliver it. After analysis, VicRoads informed the government that the project, which was to replace more than 40 existing systems, was at risk of going well and truly over budget. The government has now directed VicRoads to pause the development of the system for 12 months to review customer needs, future system capabilities and the budget. This will allow VicRoads to look at other

changing landscapes for customer transactions, including the shift to online transactions through various platforms, including mobile devices.

What I can say to the member for Narre Warren South is, yes, we believe it would be great to be able to provide an option for customers to pay VicRoads via instalments, but this is quite obviously another failed Labor government IT project signed off by the former Minister for Roads that has gone off the tracks.

There was no way known that we could continue to push this project forward, because there were so many issues left out of the original scoping that it was impossible to control the budget going forward. So, yes, we paused that system. It is not that we did not want to have in place a system that gave us the option to provide the ability for people to pay by instalments, but quite clearly the fumbling, the bumbling, the poor handling and the poor scoping once again of an IT project signed off by the former Labor government have resulted in that project having to be stalled at this point in time.

**Mr BULL** (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) — The member for Seymour invited me to visit the Healesville area to learn more about the local Aboriginal community and culture and gain an understanding of its goals and challenges. The member invited me to visit the Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association, otherwise known as HICSA, and meet with the board and staff. She also mentioned Coranderrk and perhaps a visit to the property known as Galina Beek. I have corresponded with HICSA over recent weeks in relation to Galina Beek, so that is an opportunity I certainly look forward to having.

The member also mentioned the Worawa Aboriginal College, which is a boarding school for Aboriginal girls. As the member mentioned, it will be a long day, but we will endeavour to fit all of those visits into the one day. I look forward to catching up with the member for Seymour and liaising on a date that we can undertake that visit to the region.

**Mr R. SMITH** (Minister for Environment and Climate Change) — The member for Williamstown raised a matter for the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development.

The member for Mordialloc raised a matter for the Minister for Sport and Recreation.

The member for Albert Park raised a matter for the Minister for Planning.

The member for Bendigo West raised a matter for the Minister for Education.

I will ensure that the issues raised by the respective members are passed on to the relevant ministers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The house is now adjourned.

**House adjourned 10.47 p.m.**

