

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Thursday, 25 June 2015

(Extract from book 9)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

Mr Angus, Mr Blackwood, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Carbines, Mr Crisp, Mr Dixon, Ms Edwards, Ms Halfpenny,
Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas,
Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

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The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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The Hon. M. J. GUY

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The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
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Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
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Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
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Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
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Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
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Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Resigned 2 February 2015

² Elected 14 March 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; Greens — The Greens;
Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals.

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Allan, Ms D’Ambrosio, Mr Morris, Mr Mulder, Ms Neville, Ms Ryan, Ms Sandell, Mr Scott and Mr Wells.

Standing Orders Committee— The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Brooks, Mr Clark, Mr Hibbins, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Mr Nardella, Ms Ryan and Ms Sheed.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.
(*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge.

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe and Ms Ryall.
(*Council*): Mr Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.
(*Council*): Mr Dalidakis and Ms Patten.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed. (*Council*): Mr Finn.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson, and Mr Wells. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley. (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto. (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva.

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Thursday, 25 June 2015

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

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

The SPEAKER — Order! In December 2014 the United Nations General Assembly marked 21 June as International Yoga Day, after the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, called for its adoption during an address to the United Nations. I take this opportunity to inform the house that I attended an inaugural celebration to signify International Yoga Day with the Consul General of India, Ms Manika Jain, at Springers Leisure Centre in Keysborough.

I am informed that thousands of people across the country took part in events to mark the day. I encourage everyone from both sides of the house to learn more about the practice of yoga and its health benefits, or even participate in yoga classes. The President of the Legislative Council and I were honoured to welcome Swami Baba Ramdev.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! I welcome a good friend of this Parliament and of Victoria, the Consul General of the United States, Ms Frankie Reed. I take this opportunity to welcome her in our common language of Spanish: bienvenida al Parlamento de Victoria.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Raw milk

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of Victoria's residents, including concerned consumers and producers of raw dairy products, draws to the attention of the house the need to legalise and regulate the production and sale of raw cow's milk for human consumption in Victoria.

Australia is currently one of only two countries globally that prohibit the sale of raw cow's milk for human consumption. All other countries allow raw milk to be supplied for human consumption, usually in conjunction with appropriate regulatory regimes that ensure the raw milk does not pose risks to the safety of those who choose to consume it. Such regulatory regimes have been introduced across Europe, many US states, and even in New Zealand, and have demonstrated that legislation governing the way cows are managed, and how raw milk is produced, packed, tested and transported can ensure a safe and raw product for consumers.

We believe that Victorians should have the choice to consume safe, unadulterated raw milk. We can access many raw foods, including raw meats, seafood, eggs, and soon, raw cheeses. Even raw goat's milk is available from licensed producers. Yet raw cow's milk continues to be subject to prohibition, including through the recent introduction of regulations that it be tainted with a gagging agent to prevent human consumption.

Further, regulating the sale of safe raw milk will provide an effective avenue for small-scale farmers to access markets and sell their products directly to consumers.

We therefore ask the house to respect the evidence that raw milk can be a safe and nutritious product for consumers, and to develop regulations that allow for its production, packaging, transport and sale to consumers in Victoria.

By Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (2020 signatures).

Gippsland rail services

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Victoria and Gippsland draws the attention of the house to the failure by the Victorian Labor government to either commit to or implement upgrades to improve V/Line services and capacity on the Gippsland rail line.

In addition to substantial investment on the Gippsland rail line whilst in government, the Liberal-Nationals coalition prior to the 2014 election committed to delivering a number of projects that would provide greater reliability for commuters who utilise V/Line services in Gippsland. Some of these initiatives include:

additional V/Line rolling stock to reduce overcrowding;

duplication of tracks to improve reliability;

more weekly services including peak services to increase flexibility; and

removal of level crossings and signalling upgrades to improve punctuality.

The Labor government ignored Gippsland when it initiated its regional rail link project and it still has not committed to any major investment that would improve the Gippsland V/Line rail service, its reliability or capacity.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria direct the Labor government to adopt the Liberal-Nationals coalition's plan to invest in major rail infrastructure projects and service improvements to deliver a better public transport link for the Gippsland region.

By Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (248 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Eildon be considered next day on motion of Ms McLEISH (Eildon).

DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL**Documents and advice in relation to council**

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government), by leave, presented documents.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

CHILDREN'S COURT OF VICTORIA**Report 2013–14**

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) presented report by command of the Governor.

Tabled.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 — Report 2014 on the operation of the Act — Ordered to be published

Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 — Victorian Government Report in Multicultural Affairs 2013–14

Ombudsman — Reporting and investigation of allegations of abuse in the disability sector: Phase 1 — the effectiveness of statutory oversight — Ordered to be published

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 — Government response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's Report on the 2012–13 Financial Performance Outcomes

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Audit Act 1994 — SR 63

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 — SR 59

Estate Agents Act 1980 — SR 54

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 — SR 55

Legal Profession Act 2004 — SR 51

Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 — SR 52, 53

Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 — SR 56, 57, 58

Road Management Act 2004 — SR 61

Road Safety Act 1986 — SR 62

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — SR 60

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63

Surveillance Devices Act 1999 — Report 2013–14 under s 30L.

STATE TAXATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2015*Clerk's amendments*

The SPEAKER — Order! Under joint standing order 6(1), I have received a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments that he has made corrections in the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2015, listed as follows:

Clause 15 of the bill inserts new sections 3A to 3F into the Duties Act 2000. I have deleted the quotation mark and second full stop at the end of new section 3E. They are not required as the inserted text finishes at the end of new section 3F.

Clause 26 of the bill inserts new sections 3A to 3C into the Land Tax Act 2005. I have deleted the quotation mark and second full stop at the end of new section 3B. They are not required as the inserted text finishes at the end of new section 3C.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Adjournment**

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) —

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 4 August 2015.

Motion agreed to.

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to sessional order 12 headed 'Answers to questions on notice'. It is now 30 days since I submitted a question on notice to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It has not been addressed. I request that the minister respond to that question on notice.

The SPEAKER — Order! I thank the member for Ringwood. I will write to the minister and request an immediate response.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS**Ramadan**

Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance) — On behalf of all members of goodwill, I rise to offer my best wishes to the Islamic community in the holy month of Ramadan, which is a time of deep significance on the Muslim calendar. It is a time to practise selflessness, to reflect, to show compassion and to reach out to others. These values speak to all of us. Victoria's Muslim community contributes enormously to our diverse and

cohesive society, where we are fortunate to be able to observe and share in the traditions of our many faiths.

On Monday I had the opportunity to attend the parliamentary iftar dinner, which was hosted by the Australian Intercultural Society, to celebrate the breaking of the fast. During Ramadan, Muslims fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset, and at the end of the day family and friends gather together to break the fast with a meal called iftar. Over 30 MPs from across the Parliament, including government, coalition and Greens members and the Independent member for Shepparton, came together with representatives of religious groups, civic groups, academia and community members to share a meal and to stand with the Muslim community. By celebrating Ramadan together, we not only celebrate the Islamic faith but also celebrate the strength of Victoria's multicultural community. I wish the Muslim community all the best at this special time of year.

Adrian Stubbs

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) — The Irish poet William Butler Yeats implored that one should think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people. This epitomised Adrian Stubbs, a past mayor and serving councillor of the City of Stonnington, who sadly passed away last Sunday.

Adrian Stubbs was elected to Stonnington council in November 2012 to represent east ward. A long-time Rotarian and former president of the Chadstone-East Malvern Rotary Club, Adrian personified the Rotarian ethos of service above self. Adrian brought his career experience in IT and financial planning to the council chamber. The respect with which he was held by his fellow councillors saw him elected as the mayor of Stonnington for the 2013–14 year, while serving only his first term on council.

According to council records, Cr Stubbs attended 453 functions in his term as mayor and sent over 3000 emails. He had a work ethic that was second to none, and this reflected his love of his community and his dedication to its service. In this work he was wonderfully supported by his wife, Carole, and I record my condolences to her and to their sons, Anthony and Luke, at this most difficult time.

As mayor, Adrian was not afraid to ruffle feathers in standing up for Stonnington. Even the Leader of the Opposition, in his former role as Minister for Planning, crossed swords with Adrian on a couple of occasions, although I think the then planning minister soon realised that Adrian was not one for backing down. He

may have even seen him as a kindred spirit in that regard.

Adrian passed away suddenly last Sunday at the age of 62. This was far too soon for a man with so much energy and so much to give. I place on the record my admiration for the service of Adrian Stubbs to the people of Stonnington and my sorrow on his passing.

Scott Neeson

Mr LIM (Clarinda) — I rise to pay special tribute to Scott Neeson, a former Hollywood executive turned saviour to thousands of destitute Cambodian children. In the last sitting week he honoured this Parliament with his presence and briefed many of us on his unique charity work in Cambodia.

During a sabbatical between jobs in 2003 Scott was in Phnom Penh and saw hundreds of children and their families living and working in the Steung Meanchey garbage dump, which is one of the most toxic environments imaginable. It was a moment that changed his life. Scott had had a 26-year career in the film business, including a period as president of 20th Century Fox International where he oversaw the release and marketing of several of the top films of all time, including *Braveheart*, *Titanic*, *Star Wars* and *X-Men*. Scott thought he had it all: a powerful role in the film industry, celebrity friends, a big house, a fancy car and a boat.

Soon after his visit to Cambodia Scott decided to resign from his job, sell all of his possessions and focus his energy and passion on the Cambodia's Children Fund. Twelve years later Scott's journey still captivates, inspires and bewilders people from all over the world. Recently he was the focus of an episode of the ABC television program *Australian Story*. He said:

It's enormously satisfying how it has all come together now. Community leaders are feeding children, the grandmothers are helping teach values to young children, world housing is setting up model communities, people are getting on, there is a real satisfaction ...

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

Port charges

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — Like many of my colleagues, I have been consulting with users of the Melbourne container port. A very important part of the port is the containerised grain trade, particularly for high-value crops like lentils, chickpeas and fava beans, as well as for the export of cereals in containers. In countries that cannot receive bulk supplies containers

being off-loaded is a very important part of that trade. However, the trade is price sensitive and increased charges will put it at risk.

As part of our consultation, many of my colleagues have talked to people in the container shipping industry. One of the major container shippers is the Wimmera Container Line. The company is very concerned about price increases at the port, and the member for Lowan has had particular discussions with the company. Regarding the increased port charges a representative of the company wrote:

That considered will inevitably lead to job losses in the Wimmera and surrounding regions but the flow-on effect will also be job losses in the greater supply chain.

I put on the record the concerns of the container grain trade in Victoria that the sale of the port of Melbourne and fee increases will put that trade at risk and cost jobs in the country into the future. I commend the member for Lowan for the work she is doing with the industry to bring this to the floor of the Parliament.

Thelma Barnes

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — I rise to pay tribute to the stunning Mrs Thelma Barnes, who turned 104 on Tuesday. She moved to Prentice Street, Brunswick, at the age of five and has lived there ever since. I paid tribute to her in this house in 2013 and praised her positivity, which is something she still holds to firmly. Her son, Bernie Barnes, is a former mayor of Brunswick. She has two children, six grandchildren and is the great-grandmother of nine. During the Great Depression her family would make soup so the schoolchildren next door could be fed using yesterday's bread.

Thelma is a proud Labor voter and stated, 'I know what's the best'. Thelma remembers how important the Labor values were to her at a young age, especially during tough times. 'You joined a union and you voted Labor', she said. Thelma fondly remembers her late husband and the music they used as a platform for their activism of 'working people sticking together to be treated decently'. To this day Thelma is still a great dancer with an extraordinary twinkle in her eye. Her son, Bernie, still remembers fondly his parents activism in the local area, which they did at the grassroots level. I pay tribute to Thelma and her family. She is going to enjoy a family lunch on Sunday in celebration of an extraordinary milestone — 104 years!

4th Knox scouts

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — I pay tribute to the 4th Knox scout group for 60 wonderful years of service in the Ferntree Gully community. I had the pleasure of celebrating this important milestone with many of its current members and many former members. Again I pay tribute to the work of all involved in this important group.

Knox Hockey Club

Mr WAKELING — I pay tribute to Knox Hockey Club for its work on the recent beyondblue charity day. The Knox Hockey Club is the only hockey club in our community, and provides a wonderful service in enabling young and old alike to play hockey. The club plays at The Knox School, which is a combined facility shared with Knox City Council. I congratulate everyone involved.

Education funding

Mr WAKELING — I recently had the opportunity to tour regional Victoria to look at the state of education throughout the regions and to see the lack of investment by this government. When we travelled through areas around centres such as Shepparton, Kerang, Kyabram and Echuca, we were reminded that the closest school to receive any funding under this government was in Wallan. It just demonstrates the lack of investment by this government in upgrades to regional schools, which are so important.

Ferntree Gully Village building height limit

Mr WAKELING — Finally I would like to raise the issue of the height limit that is in place at the Ferntree Gully Village. The previous government put in place a two-storey height limit. That is now under threat by this government. This government is now looking at installing height limits upwards of four storeys in our community. That is completely unacceptable. I call on this government to rule out any action to remove the two-storey height limit.

St Bernard's College

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — Last Friday, 19 June, I attended the St Bernard's College 75th anniversary gala dinner held at The Atrium at Flemington Racecourse. I was fortunate to attend this wonderful institution from 1988 to 1993. I commenced at The Strand junior school in Moonee Ponds and from there moved on to the education corridors at the main campus in Rosehill Road, Essendon. When I commenced at St Bernard's College, Brother Brian Bond was the college principal

and Brother Bernard Adams was the junior school principal. Both were at the function to lend their support, together with more than 500 locals who have all been part of this wonderful college.

It was a wonderful celebration of the life of the college since its formation 75 years ago and an opportunity to hear from past students who had achieved at high levels and made significant contributions to Australian society across diverse walks of life. For me personally it was wonderful to see the college community come together and to catch up and reminisce with former classmates and teachers. During the night past student Professor Mark Rose was inducted into the St Bernard's Hall of Fame, recognising his achievements in education and with Indigenous communities. Other alumni to speak at the function included Andrew Morello, winner of the first Australian apprentice program; His Honour Justice Geoffrey Eames, AM, who has been recognised for services to the judiciary, international law and Indigenous Australians; Simon and Justin Madden, who have been recognised for their contribution to AFL and politics; and Stefan Romaniw, OAM, who has been recognised for his services to the community in multicultural affairs and education.

We were also treated to a wonderful performance by past student and now distinguished artist and actor Luigi Lucente. Past student Francis Leach did a great job as the master of ceremonies. I put on the record my thanks and appreciation to Tony Paatsch, the college principal, and to Bernie Cronin, Geraldine Camilleri, Maureen Kavanagh, Cameron Evans, Pauline Zammit, Jason Blakey, Jack Stewart, Katrina Jansen, Jenette Nicholl, Serena Maletta and Shane O'Neill.

Western Port Highway–Robinsons Road, Pearcedale

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — I rise this morning to communicate an invitation to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The invitation is from the residents of my community to the minister asking him to visit Pearcedale and inspect the intersection of Robinsons Road and Western Port Highway as soon as possible. The minister is the member for Narre Warren North and as such the location of the intersection in question in Pearcedale should not be far for him to go. I have been authorised by the residents of Pearcedale to offer to meet the minister at any time of the day, from very early in the morning until very late at night. The residents of my community are only asking that the minister attend the site of the intersection so he can see with his own eyes the circumstances which confront them, their families and all other drivers and passengers every time they need to negotiate this intersection. As a

minister of state, the minister works for these people, as I do, and their request is not at all unreasonable.

Following the death of 19-year-old Olivia Steadman-Meconi at the intersection on 29 May, I am asking the minister to come down to my electorate and inspect this dangerous intersection. Olivia's family, friends and community have every right to hope that Olivia's death, along with the other deaths and serious injuries sustained at this intersection, will not have been in vain and that at the very least this deadly intersection which has caused so much trouble will be made safer for others. On 12 June I established online and hard copy petitions calling on the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to install a roundabout at the intersection now before more innocent lives are lost. Currently the online petition has been signed by more than 6300 people and many more people have signed the hard copy which has been tabled in this house. The minister has yet to respond to any of my communications to him on this matter. I am asking that he does not treat the residents of my community with such disrespect.

Juleen Maxfield

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — I wish to acknowledge the achievements of Pascoe Vale constituent and Glenroy resident Ms Juleen Maxfield. Ms Maxfield was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours for her outstanding contribution to the sport of netball. In a career that spans over 50 years, Ms Maxfield has made a wide-ranging contribution to the game she loves: umpiring international test matches; serving on the board of Netball Victoria; and mentoring countless netball players, umpires and coaches over the years.

Although her career in the sport has been awash with personal awards, accolades and recognition, she still lists helping others out along their netball journey as providing her with the greatest degree of satisfaction. Her enthusiasm for the game has never dissipated, and in recent times her own journey has taken her back to the place where it all began, the North Melbourne Netball Club. Ms Maxfield now coaches juniors at the club she helped found in 1962, and she has watched with a great deal of pride as the club continues to develop. Today it boasts an impressive 7 senior teams and 16 junior teams.

Having gone back to the North Melbourne Netball Club and with the absence of netball courts in the inner north, Ms Maxfield has grown accustomed to having to travel far and wide to access suitable facilities. This is why the Labor government's commitment to build

64 competition-ready courts in Melbourne's inner suburbs is a major boost for netball players and their families across the northern and inner suburbs and the district of Pascoe Vale.

Tenancy rights

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — Today I raise several important issues regarding housing affordability and tenants' rights. As younger Australians confront the lack of housing affordability in Melbourne, long-term renting will become more and more the norm. Housing is a human right, and everyone should be able to access safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. Governments need to urgently address housing affordability through measures such as abolishing negative gearing and investing significantly in public housing. However, as renting for longer periods becomes the norm, state governments have a role and a responsibility to strengthen the protections afforded to tenants under Victorian law.

I welcome the government's review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and urge it to ensure that it includes in its review expanding the options for long-term leases, as is the case in many parts of Europe, to give both tenants and landlords more security and certainty. This must also include better options and safeguards for tenants. We must also introduce minimum standards for rental properties, to ensure that nobody is forced to live in dangerous or dysfunctional circumstances or in the high-rise slum conditions reported in the *Age* this week. We should help renters control their energy bills with minimum energy efficiency standards and incentives to connect to renewable energy.

We must also protect the rights of tenants. I was surprised and concerned to see the recent changes recommended by the Victorian Law Reform Commission regarding photographing of tenants' possessions for advertising purposes. Everyone has a right to privacy in their home, and the harms that may arise from these proposed changes, especially to women and children escaping family violence, are real and serious and could easily be prevented by making small changes to the law, such as making photographing tenants' possessions for advertising an offence, as it is in Queensland.

Darebin City Council

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government) — This morning I rise to make a statement about Darebin City Council. I have tabled a report of the municipal monitor, Mr Peter Lewinsky,

along with copies of correspondence between myself and the mayor of the City of Darebin. Appointed by the former government, Mr Lewinsky's terms of reference required him to monitor a range of matters to do with council governance. To seek resolution to matters raised with me, I sent a letter to the council on 30 April, seeking a response to a number of issues raised by Mr Lewinsky. I have tabled this report in order to inform the council and the community of the major issues he has identified. I have also included a copy of the correspondence between me and the mayor.

Mr Lewinsky notes there have been significant improvements in council governance policies during his time as monitor. However, it is disappointing that some issues remain. Firstly, there is a lack of respect shown by and a breakdown in the working relationship between councillors, and I am concerned at the number of in camera sessions and special meetings that are occurring. The second issue identified by Mr Lewinsky is the failure to have administrative processes in place to ensure effective compliance with council policies.

As a result, I have written to the Special Minister of State to ask him to appoint two special inspectors of municipal administration to work with the council to rectify some of these concerns. The first inspector will have skills in mediation and conciliation and will work with councillors so that they can better work together. The second person will be tasked with reviewing and assisting council to implement sound strategies.

Protective services officers

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I wish to draw the attention of the house to the success of the previous government's protective services officer (PSO) policy, particularly as it relates to the Sandringham railway line. I also note, as I have previously done in this house, that the Auditor-General is doing an audit of PSOs. We are advised that the audit is going to concentrate on crime prevention and value for money. I would like the government to consider the fact that part of the success of the PSO policy is that people feel safe walking on a train station at night. It is very difficult to quantify that, but it is a very important element to consider, particularly in the case of women travelling alone on trains at night.

People may think that the Hampton, Brighton Beach, Middle Brighton, North Brighton and Gardenvale stations are not a hotbed of crime, but nevertheless there are problems at these stations. It is not just about graffiti; there are other problems. I think one of the overwhelmingly positive attributes of the PSO policy is that people can feel safe getting off trains and onto

stations at night. I urge the government to consider that PSOs have increased this feeling of safety at night for commuters, and I again emphasise that female commuters in particular may feel more vulnerable. I urge the government to take these matters into consideration when it reviews the Auditor-General's report.

Red Nose Day

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — Tomorrow, 26 June, is Red Nose Day, and I ask that anyone who can donate to support the great work that is done as a result of this funding. Sadly, eight babies die each day in Australia due to health complications at birth, stillbirth and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Red Nose Day helps to raise awareness about SIDS and to provide support to the 3500 Australian families each year who suffer the death of a baby.

On 14 October 2014 I was with my sister-in-law, Helen, when she gave birth to her son Xavier. We knew that he was to be born an angel and this was an extremely traumatic day for Helen and her family and friends. Red Nose Day is often thought of in regard to the tragic loss of life to newborn infants, but I want to also raise the lesser known work that happens where much-loved children do not get to take their first breath. In these instances, as we found out, the volunteers put together packs with wraps and clothes for all sizes so that regardless of the age of the infant lost the family is supported.

I cannot thank SIDS and Kids enough for making sure that little touches that we had not thought of were taken care of. These are a remarkable bunch of people. I will certainly be supporting them and I hope that others can too. Like many groups, you really do not know how valuable their practical assistance is until you need it. Whilst I hope that no-one needs that assistance, I know they might. I will not let a year pass when I do not say thank you by way of support for the Red Nose Day appeal.

Christie Centre

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — The Christie Centre has provided services to the disabled in Mildura for over 50 years, and I was privileged to attend its annual awards night and dinner recently. The centre is a district leader in raising the expectations and achievements of those they serve. Through its social enterprise, the Mildura Chocolate Shop, the Christie Centre used the evening to launch a new gourmet product of chocolate and acclaimed Murray River pink salt.

St Andrew's Uniting Church, Mildura

Mr CRISP — St Andrew's Uniting Church celebrated 100 years of service and faith to the Mildura community. The dedication of our forefathers in establishing a church so early in Mildura's development which has provided sustained pastoral care to the Mildura community for over a century is recognition in itself.

Vernon Knight

Mr CRISP — Vernon Knight, the founder and CEO of Mallee Family Care, has announced his retirement at the end of this month, over 36 years after establishing and being at the helm of a major community service organisation. Mallee Family Care has over 300 employees dedicated to serving the families of the Mallee and assisting those families in times of need and hardship. The organisation has extended to developing a sister organisation, Chances for Children, which has created opportunities for higher education for a large number of young people in the Mallee. On behalf of the people of the Mallee, I thank Vernon Knight for his contribution to making the Mallee a better place.

Mallee Accommodation and Support Program

Mr CRISP — The Mallee Accommodation and Support Program (MASP) is a community service organisation long established in Mildura providing services to youth, homeless or family members in crisis. Its services have expanded over the years to multiple locations. The board of MASP has made a decision to co-locate its offices and non-residential services at a single location — —

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

Melbourne Girls College

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I rise today to congratulate Melbourne Girls College, the first Australian school to win the Zayed Future Energy Prize. Earlier this year Melbourne Girls College was recognised on the international stage as a global leader in sustainability by being awarded the \$US100 000 Zayed Future Energy Prize. This furthers Melbourne Girls College's reputation as a nationally recognised sustainable school and a leader in community engagement.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize was established by the United Arab Emirates government in 2008 and recognises individuals, organisations and schools across the world that have made significant contributions to

the future of renewable energy and sustainability. Melbourne Girls College will use this prize to build a curriculum-integrated renewable energy education centre. This fantastic initiative will offer the opportunity for students to generate and measure energy; produce up to 45 per cent of the school's energy needs through solar photovoltaics, a wind turbine and micro-hydro generators; take a significant step towards achieving the school's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2020; as well as showcase renewable energy to students, the community and other schools.

I congratulate the student environment captain, Ruby Wynn Williams, who attended the United Nations Sustainable Energy for All event at the climate summit in New York in May. She was a magnificent representative of the school. Congratulations to the principal, Karen Money, on providing a first-class public education for young women in this state.

Hayley Wilson

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — Thirteen-year-old Hayley Wilson of Mansfield is making her mark on girls' and women's skateboarding. I first met Hayley almost two years ago at the opening of the Wallan skate park. It was clear then that Hayley was a dynamo on a skateboard, and she has only got better!

I was so excited to hear that this accomplished young skateboarder had great success at the Australian women's street skateboarding competition recently. As the youngest competitor in the open age group, Hayley took out first place, defeating Bondi world champion bowl rider Poppy Starr Olsen. This is a sensational result.

I know Hayley's parents, Catriona and James, are so very proud of her achievements, and the town of Mansfield is watching Hayley closely. Hayley is heading to the United States for an intensive training and coaching camp next month. With a huge smile, engaging personality, heaps of skill and plenty of determination, Hayley is aiming to compete in the Ultimate X — eXtreme Games in street skateboarding one day. I wish Hayley all the best for her future.

Bonnie Doon recreation hall

Ms McLEISH — I was delighted to attend the opening of the extension to the recreation reserve hall in Bonnie Doon on the weekend. The extension was the result of a wonderful and admirable community effort. Congratulations to Dave Darby and his committee, which did a great job delivering the project and

recognising the extraordinary role of a number of locals.

The new stand, known as the Friday Dale stand, was opened by stalwart Terry Dale and Norma Friday, whose late husband, Roy, did so much for the reserve. Dawn Kipping's long-time involvement saw the unveiling of the canteen, Dawn's Diner, and Alan Fox and his family were recognised through naming the bar Fox's Tavern. Mansfield's Bendigo Bank contributed \$100 000 to the project because it knew it would deliver value to the community. Congratulations to all in Bonnie Doon!

Deafblind Awareness Week

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — I rise to bring to the attention of the house that this week is Deafblind Awareness Week. Deafblindness, also known as dual sensory loss, is a severe and isolating condition that as the name suggests affects people who have combined vision and hearing impairments. There are already nearly 300 000 Australians with deafblindness. Projections reveal that by 2050 there will be a million deafblind people across Australia.

Raising awareness about this condition is crucial, as there are a growing number of Australians who face the daily challenges of being deafblind. This week has been celebrated internationally since 1984, when the last week of June was declared as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week to coincide with Helen Keller's birthday on 27 June. Deafblind Awareness Week is a fantastic way to raise community awareness of the challenges people with deafblindness face on a daily basis. It also gives us an opportunity to acknowledge the resilience and spirit of those who are affected by combined vision and hearing impairment.

I was fortunate enough to meet recently with deafblind Victorians, and Heather Lawson and Michelle Stevens spoke to me at length and with great passion about the challenges of being vision and hearing impaired, including the shortage of Tactile Auslan interpreters in Australia. They presented me with a T-shirt to mark the occasion of Deafblind Awareness Week, and I promised I would wear it in Parliament. So here I stand, and members can look at the back of my T-shirt.

Thank you to Michelle and to the interpreters who assisted on the day for taking the time to educate me about such an important issue. It is so important that we work to enhance the inclusion of all people in our community, better accommodate their needs and overcome limitations so they can live the full lives each of us strives to live.

Chinese delegation

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — I rise to put on the record my concern about comments made in this chamber yesterday by the member for Melton, who is the Deputy Speaker. Yesterday in this chamber the member for Melton stated:

What the Liberals want is communism. The Liberals want commercial rates to be regulated. That is what they have said. They want to be communists. They wanted to sing *Kumbaya* with the Chinese delegation that was here the other day.

These sorts of comments pertaining to any international delegation visiting Victoria as guests of our state are silly and inappropriate — even more so when they pertain to a delegation from such an important neighbour as China's Jiangxi Province. So this morning I take the opportunity to thank the Chinese delegation from Jiangxi Province for taking the time to visit Melbourne to explore trade and industry links with Victoria. In doing so, I acknowledge the work of the Parliament in hosting this delegation, including that of the President of the Legislative Council, the Honourable Bruce Atkinson, and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Telmo Languiller.

This morning in the Parliament I reconfirm to the residents of Mount Waverley district and other Victorians my strong belief and the very strong belief of the Liberal-Nationals coalition in the importance of the relationship between the People's Republic of China and Victoria. I will continue to work in my parliamentary duties to build this relationship and make it stronger.

Horne Street–Gap Road, Sunbury

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — On Thursday, 4 June, I had the privilege of welcoming the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who is at the table, to my electorate to address a pressing matter that I had raised in the house. The minister announced that the Andrews Labor government has committed much-needed funding to find a solution to a growing traffic congestion problem at the roundabout at Horne Street and Gap Road in Sunbury. I was delighted to see the minister respond so quickly to address the concerns of my community. The intersection sits in the heart of Sunbury and, due to the nearby railway crossing, constantly experiences traffic congestion, especially in peak times.

Approximately 27 000 vehicles travel along Horne Street each day, while Gap Road west of Horne Street carries approximately 18 000 vehicles each day. With such a high volume of traffic, coupled with constant

disruption from the nearby level crossing, the area is constantly gridlocked. This has become one of Sunbury's top traffic problems. With Sunbury's population projected to grow significantly over coming years, this matter needs to be addressed. I note the former government failed to act on this pressing matter in the last four years, doing nothing to address it. I commend the minister on his commitment to finding the best solution to this growing problem, and I welcome the outcome.

Public transport infrastructure

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — This statement condemns the Andrews Labor government for its lack of progress in delivering public transport infrastructure. The Premier promised to get on with the job. Six months into this government, Victorians are asking, 'Where are the shovel-ready projects we were promised? Where are the jobs?'. Why were Victorian business leaders meeting the New South Wales Premier, Mike Baird, in Melbourne last week to discuss investment in New South Wales? Labor needs to lift its game and fast.

We have recently seen some great examples of how the Australian Workers Union keeps costs down for companies on construction jobs, but the Premier needs to know that there are better ways to manage a project. He should take a good look at the regional rail project, which Infrastructure Australia judged to be the best in the country for project implementation in 2014. In 2011 the then new coalition government faced a massive cost blowout on regional rail. The budget had risen from \$4.3 billion to more than \$5.5 billion. Why? The original project was not properly costed, trains were not ordered, signalling was not funded and extra money was needed for land acquisition and construction contingencies.

However, by January 2013 the project had been turned around. The project budget was reduced to \$4.8 billion. This was due to improved scope certainty and construction efficiencies. By the 2014–15 state budget the regional rail project was reduced to \$4.1 billion — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Angus) — Order! The time for making members statements has now concluded.

**ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION
REFORM AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC
TRANSACTIONS) BILL 2015**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 10 June; motion of
Ms GARRETT (Minister for Consumer Affairs,
Gaming and Liquor Regulation).**

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — It gives me pleasure this morning to rise to speak in the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. This bill facilitates the making of applications and other transactions under the principal act, the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, through the use of electronic — digital and online — media. It also replaces the requirement for a tier 1 association to lodge a copy of its financial statements each year with a requirement to submit an annual statement. In summary, by its nature it is a simple bill and the coalition has no issues with the intent of the bill. However, I wish to raise some concerns with respect to some elements of the legislation.

We have around 38 000 incorporated associations in Victoria, and it is imperative that we continue to develop tools, options and initiatives to simplify administration matters for those incorporated associations, because a lot of incorporated associations are heavily reliant upon volunteers across our communities. They do a remarkable job in many circumstances in delivering services for local communities. It is therefore a responsibility of government to make sure we do what we can to make life easier for members of those incorporated associations and do the right thing by them. As I said, the intention of the bill certainly seems worthwhile. It does some good things. It will make life easier for incorporated associations, and we support that.

I want to run quickly through the broad range of incorporated associations that exist across Victoria, and I will indulge myself a little by talking about the Morwell electorate and outlining some of its incorporated associations, what they are and what they do. Barrier Breakers is one such organisation. It is a mental health advocacy group that operates out of Traralgon. It has not been so long in existence, but it does some great work supporting people with a mental illness across the Gippsland region. The Gippsland Immigration Park has done some amazing work in recent times, particularly giving recognition to migrants who have come to Gippsland over a period of time. It has established a wall of recognition, recognising the

histories of many of those migrant families who have come to Gippsland and made such wonderful contributions.

There are organisations such as the Italian Australian Sporting & Social Club of Gippsland, a wonderful organisation that does great things and not just socially, because it also has bocce and performs a number of different functions. There are bowls clubs, for example, such as the Traralgon Bowling Club. There are rail trail committees, such as the Grand Ridge and Gippsland Plains rail trail committees, which do great things. There is Headway Gippsland, which primarily supports people with acquired brain injury. We have service clubs, such as our Lions clubs, across the state, and we all know all too well the great work that our service clubs do.

There is the Flynn Tennis Club, the Morwell Cricket Club and the Traralgon Badminton Club. There are running groups such as the Traralgon Harriers. These are just some of the organisations. There is a tenpin bowling group and the Latrobe Valley Yacht Club. The yacht club has a program called Sailability Gippsland which enables young people who have some form of disability to undertake yachting activities. There is the Country Women's Association and the Gippsland Car Club, which I did a fundraising event with just recently to support some members within our local community who were doing it tough.

There is a whole range of incorporated associations right across the state. There are, as I said, about 38 000 organisations which do wonderful things. I might repeat the point that in many cases their members are volunteers — people who have volunteered their time to provide a community service. These associations are just so important, so it is imperative that government continue to support them and to make life easier for them and their members.

As I say, the overall intent of the bill is to provide online services for incorporated associations, something we are very supportive of. Indeed the coalition commenced a number of reforms for incorporated associations in 2011–12. At that time we saw what was effectively a rewrite of the act, which had been stagnant since 1982–83. A number of important reforms were made, and I might say they were very much supported by the majority of incorporated associations.

There are two or three key areas in particular I want to talk about in my contribution. We revised some of the annual reporting framework. We initiated a new three-tiered reporting structure, and we made some changes to the register of members. In the context of

this bill it is important to understand that the three-tiered reporting structure, which I will talk about in a minute, was implemented by the coalition. Under this bill tier 1 associations will not be required to lodge a financial statement in company with their annual statement, but incorporated associations will have to ensure that they keep records for seven years.

It is important to understand the three-tier system and the levels and requirements relevant to the type of incorporated association and the revenue it derives each year. The previous arrangement was a two-tier structure. Tier 1 incorporated associations were those with annual revenue of less than \$200 000, and they only needed to provide an annual statement. Tier 2 associations were defined as having revenue of more than \$200 000 each year and at that time had to provide an annual statement and audit, which had to be signed off by a registered auditor — an auditing firm, a member of CPA Australia or the then Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, which you should know something about, Acting Speaker.

This was not CPI tested over many years. When the former government made reforms and introduced a three-tier structure, it brought about a much more practical and reflective outcome for incorporated associations. What we have now under that three-tier structure is that a tier 1 incorporated association, deriving less than \$250 000 in revenue, needs to provide an annual statement. Tier 2 applies to incorporated associations with a range of revenue between \$250 000 and \$1 million. For that to be authorised, it would have to be reviewed by a member of CPA Australia, according to Australian accounting standards, which again I am sure you would know something about, Acting Speaker. Tier 3 applies to those incorporated associations that have revenue in excess of \$1 million, and they would be compelled to have a full audit.

I will raise a practical example. In around 2010 or 2011, I was approached by the Traralgon Lions Club. At the time we had the two-tier structure. The Traralgon Lions Club, along with many service clubs, business groups and community organisations, had supported my community through the Black Saturday bushfires. That was an awful event for many communities across Victoria, and many communities within the Morwell electorate in particular. Because the Traralgon Lions Club was doing so much work on the ground, it had exceeded the tier 1 threshold of \$200 000. It was therefore required to go through a very extensive audit process that was not only time-consuming but also costly. It approached me pleading for the system to be changed. I remember that an exemption could be

granted, and that is what occurred at the time, but nonetheless the club had to go through that process. Because it had experienced a peak over that period through doing the right thing for the community, it had effectively been penalised.

I know that when a former Minister for Consumer Affairs, the member for Malvern, introduced the three-tier structure, the Traralgon Lions Club was absolutely overjoyed that it would not be caught up in red tape and imposed costs just because it experienced a peak at a particular time. It also meant a considerable cost saving for many incorporated associations. The saving was estimated to be around \$3 million for incorporated associations across Victoria.

For the purposes of this bill, the reduction in reporting requirements for tier 1 incorporated associations is absolutely worthwhile. However, they will still need to prepare their annual financial statements and provide them to members at their annual general meeting, and they will need to retain copies of the financial statements for seven years as well.

I take this opportunity to thank the departmental and ministerial staff for their briefing on the bill. One of the questions I asked at the briefing was of a practical nature, because in recent times an issue that constituents have raised through my office is, 'How do I access a financial statement from an incorporated association?'. My understanding from the briefing is that if one feels compelled to write to Consumers Affairs Victoria (CAV) with respect to accessing a financial statement, that request will be given due consideration.

I turn to the main provision of the bill in relation to online transactions. Consumer Affairs Victoria has developed an online system known as myCAV. The opposition supports the notion of an online system in providing flexibility for many incorporated associations. They will be able to do a number of things, such as lodging annual statements, paying annual fees, having access to registered rules of an association, and having access to a certificate of incorporation, change of rules and notifications. One key point is that we know some incorporated associations, or secretaries thereof, may not wish to do some of this transaction work online — for example, they may wish to write a cheque or pay in person, and we are advised that payments can be made through Australia Post. We understand that hard copies of applications, forms and so forth will be provided upon request. The fact is that in a modern world we are transitioning to online transactions in many different forums, and giving incorporated associations this flexibility is a good thing.

In terms of who has been involved with developing the system, a question we asked departmental staff was whether a broad range of different incorporated associations and groups have been involved, because it is important they join with Consumer Affairs Victoria in developing a system that is going to operate well for them. We understand that peak bodies such as Club Victoria, Vicsport, the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and the Probus Association of Victoria are some of the organisations that helped Consumer Affairs Victoria develop myCAV. Hopefully they have fleshed out any teething problems that may have been experienced.

There have been some issues with the implementation of myCAV, and I will go into them shortly. However, it is important to understand what myCAV does in this online system, and I outlined some of those things earlier. If you look at the myCAV website, under 'Key benefits of myCAV', the listed benefits include:

immediate acknowledgement of registration for new associations;

instant emails with attached documents, such as your certificate of incorporation;

free downloads of additional copies of the certificate of incorporation and copies of your association's rules;

greater self-sufficiency for associations to update and change details;

simple processes designed to help associations meet their obligations;

one place to keep track of records and transactions.

The opposition applauds these benefits. On the flip side it is important to understand that there are some activities that cannot be undertaken or completed on myCAV, such as the amalgamation of incorporated associations, submitting a request for an extension of time to hold an annual general meeting, lodging annual statements, and winding up or cancelling an association. Obviously they are serious matters that cannot be completed on myCAV at this point in time.

In terms of the system itself, we have previously raised some concerns with respect to its implementation. Again, notwithstanding the intent of myCAV and what it does, we support the notion of making life easier for incorporated associations. I will outline some of our concerns, and with any online system I appreciate the fact that there may be bugs. This morning I did an online search for some incorporated associations within my electorate that I could highlight to the Parliament, but a message came up on the website saying:

The search for an incorporated association and online extract request functions are temporarily unavailable. We apologise for the inconvenience.

I understand that section of the Consumer Affairs Victoria website has been like that for a period of time. On the one hand we appreciate having online capacity but on the other hand we must make sure that there is access. There is no point having the great, noble intent of these things all working practically when they do not.

Recently in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings a member of that committee raised concerns with the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and departmental staff about the introduction of myCAV. I will read out part of the transcript. A question was asked by the member for Gippsland South:

On a different issue, Minister, I am aware that there have been a number of problems experienced by incorporated associations with the myCAV system. My question is: can you confirm that there is compliance with all relevant legislation and acts?

I digress slightly from the transcript, but I had been approached by a couple of local incorporated associations who had had some issues and problems with respect to the introduction of myCAV. The concern raised by them was that because they were unable to undertake some activities online they felt they may have been in breach of relevant legislation, so the question asked by the member was very important. The minister said:

Could you repeat the question?

The member for Gippsland South asked:

There have been problems for incorporated associations with registering et cetera with myCAV. I am just seeking assurance that there is compliance with all relevant legislation and acts.

The minister said the new system went live in April and went on to say:

We allow the secretary to appoint up to three delegates who will have access online to lodge documents on people's behalf with the register.

The member for Gippsland South, on a supplementary question, then said:

We have had, for example, a number of associations saying, 'We're in a position to lodge our annual returns but haven't been able to do so'. So I just am seeking an assurance that no-one will be penalised for any problems that have come about.

Ms Garrett referred that question to the acting deputy secretary, regulation, with the Department of Justice and Regulation, Mr Phil D'Adamo, who said:

There will not be any penalisation as a result of not being able to lodge an annual return. The system is live, as the minister indicated. We are also providing support and education right across Victoria in relation to how to use the system. As the minister indicated, it can be delegated down to delegates if there is complexity with the system. We are just working through some minor teething problems, but certainly we will not be penalising. We are taking a fairly careful and considered approach, making sure that people are on board. We recognise that most people are volunteers — they do this on top of other jobs and so forth — so we are certainly not taking a position whereby we are saying, 'That's the system; you have no other choices'. We are quite prepared to be patient and to take people with us.

I think that is a fair response. The acting deputy secretary and the minister were able to satisfactorily answer that question in part by saying that if there was non-compliance, there would not be any penalties applicable to incorporated associations, because there had been some IT issues with myCAV at that time.

Further to that, a member of an incorporated association in my electorate who had read that transcript and had some concerns on behalf of his incorporated association and others wrote to me after the PAEC hearings expressing his frustration and concern with the system. He went on to say, in response to the PAEC proceedings, and I will not name the incorporated associations concerned:

Ms Garrett failed to answer the question and give an assurance that there is compliance with all relevant legislation and acts ... have not been advised in writing about the new myCAV and as such cannot fill out the annual return required by statute to be completed and returned. We are also aware that ... have not submitted an annual return since 2012 and the standard answer from CAV is that with 38 000 incorporated associations we can't keep up with the enforcement side of things.

The letter goes on to say:

A check today (16 June 2015) has the CAV website showing the following information — existing incorporated associations:

Secretaries please note:

You will soon receive a letter or email with instructions about setting up your myCAV account. Please wait until you receive your letter or email before creating your myCAV account.

Again I repeat that the intent is fine, but there have obviously been — and the government and Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) have admitted this — problems with the system. The reality is that even as we stand here now talking about this there are still some issues

with CAV and some frustration among incorporated associations with the myCAV system.

The writer of the letter went on to say:

In dealings with CAV on this matter advice was given that notification to 38 000 committees would be a staged process and this suggests that CAV is not ready for the online process because they don't have the capacity to notify every organisation at the same time and up until today nobody has made it clear that 'A secretary can always ring the CAV helpline and ask for a paper form, and that is really important, we think'.

Clearly, it is CAV who are out of step in this 21st century when compared to organisations such as Centrelink, ATO and Telstra to name just a few who deal with huge numbers on a regular weekly basis.

...

It is very obvious to some who have had dealings with the CAV that they have not issued any penalties or taken any action against organisations who have not yet submitted returns as far back as 2012 and for an enforcement agency that is very poor and they themselves are guilty of gross non-performance of their duties.

...

Both Mr D'Adamo and Minister Garrett have only told the estimates committee hearing what they think they need to know and the reality of it all is that the system has not been fully rolled out to everyone and is in total state of chaos.

An interesting question would be:

how many annual returns are outstanding from the period prior to 2014 and how many of those associations have been contacted about outstanding returns and what action if any has been taken to ensure full compliance before introducing a new myCAV system?

There is further commentary to that, but the point I am raising is that they are not my words, they are the words of someone from an incorporated association that right now is having some difficulties with the system. I repeat: the intent of the legislation we support, but the practical implementation of the system, if it is not functioning properly and is causing some concerns for incorporated associations, is an issue. If incorporated associations are still having those frustrations and concerns, we need to be able to rectify that.

I concede that every new system, every new piece of technology, can have some teething problems, and it is not easy when you are dealing with approximately 38 000 incorporated associations. However, we need to get this right because there are some genuine concerns, and the last thing we want to see is volunteers, good people, from our communities walking away from incorporated associations because of difficulties in this space. As I said before, these incorporated associations

are primarily made up of volunteers — people who serve our communities in many capacities and provide important community services — so it is important on that level.

Also, during the PAEC hearings, as well as in the budget papers, there was some concern about the contact targets through Consumer Affairs Victoria being reduced because of the online system. I assume that is a little bit of a conundrum at the moment due to the fact that there are probably a lot of incorporated associations that are contacting Consumer Affairs Victoria with respect to this myCAV initiative, but on the other hand we are reducing the contact targets for Consumer Affairs Victoria and how we are dealing with incorporated associations.

On that basis, I reiterate that the legislation is well intended. There is no doubt about that. We support any reduction in red tape. It makes good sense to make provision that incorporated associations do not have to provide an accompanying financial statement when they provide an annual statement. It makes life that little bit easier for incorporated associations and their secretaries, who do a wonderful job.

The online system is well intended, and I am sure there will be many secretaries of incorporated associations taking up the option of doing a lot of their administrative work online, and they will appreciate being able to do that after hours. When we had the briefing on that, I think we heard that the very first client — I am happy to be corrected — completed a transaction around midnight. That is the way of life for many incorporated associations: their volunteers do that work after hours. Giving them the flexibility to do that is vitally important, and it is something we applaud. It is good to provide options for people. I envisage that in 5 or 10 years from now there might only be 1 per cent of people — or maybe less — who use paper forms or make payments through Australia Post branches or otherwise. It is important that incorporated associations, their secretaries and their members have the flexibility to do things online. However, if they still want to do things in the traditional way, then we should at least make that available to them. That is also really important.

As I said, there are some great incorporated associations doing wonderful work across our communities. The provisions in the bill certainly build on the work the coalition did previously with a rewrite of the act, which had been virtually stagnant since the early 1980s, when the previous rewrite occurred. The three-tiered system and structure we put in place for reporting was really well received on a number of

fronts, including by incorporated associations. I go back to my opening remarks: it is important that governments and their initiatives, and government departments and agencies evolve with our community. In this case we are ensuring that incorporated associations have the tools available to them to undertake their work on behalf of their members in a contemporary world and in a way that suits them.

A provision that I have not raised during the course of debate is clause 15.

Mr Donnellan interjected.

Mr NORTHE — You do? What is it, then?

Mr Donnellan interjected.

Mr NORTHE — He cannot tell me.

Clause 15 of the bill amends particular sections of the principal act and relates to the publication of notices by the registrar of incorporated associations. It amends the act by replacing the phrase ‘in a newspaper circulating generally in the State’ with the phrase ‘on an Internet website maintained by the Registrar’. That is simply saving on a little red tape. The registrar will no longer have to publish those notifications in a statewide newspaper but will be able to publish them online. In summary, the bill is well intended. We certainly do not oppose it.

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — I rise to speak in the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. From the outset, I indicate that I am delighted that the Andrews Labor government is getting on with cutting red tape and simplifying regulations for incorporated associations that do important work in so many communities, including many in my electorate of Yuroke.

The bill introduces online smart forms and replaces the majority of paper-based forms and processes. These reforms will benefit over 38 000 registered incorporated associations across Victoria, and major upgrades have taken place at Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) to expand IT capacity in preparation for this move. The changes outlined in the bill will also ensure that incorporated associations with less than \$250 000 in annual revenue will no longer be required to submit a copy of their annual financial statements to the registrar when submitting their annual statement. Ninety per cent of Victorian incorporated associations are in this category, which is referred to as tier 1. Many of the smaller organisations that we as members of Parliament

work with in our communities will see a significant benefit from these changes.

The new online myCAV account will allow secretaries of incorporated associations to nominate a delegate to lodge documents on their behalf, which will assist associations who have members who may not be adept at utilising the new suite of online functionality. While I am confident that the majority of associations will derive enormous benefit from this system, I am pleased that the government has taken into account the needs of all associations. I know that there are many organisations in my community that will be pleased with these changes. In the Yuroke electorate, Hume City Council provides a range of funding to local organisations, including through an annual community grants program. Last year 137 community groups shared in over \$342 000 in funding from this particular program. The work of those groups provides vital social support to a huge range of residents. Those groups and programs should in turn be supported at every opportunity.

In 2011, Hume City Council changed the eligibility requirements for community grants, whereby incorporation became a requirement for subsequent grant applications. As a result, a large number of previously unincorporated associations have incorporated, and Hume City Council staff have been very helpful in assisting community groups to make this change. There are many associations in Yuroke that will benefit from these changes, and no doubt the number will continue to grow.

I am pleased to note that broad support has been received for these reforms from peak bodies such as Vicsport, the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and Clubs Victoria as a result of extensive consultation. I am also pleased to note that Consumer Affairs Victoria is planning to inform all incorporated associations via direct mail or email, and it will provide a wide range of educational resources, including information sessions and regional presentations. This comprehensive communication process, which will continue through to the end of 2015, will ensure that the transition to the new myCAV system is as smooth as possible. I congratulate the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation on her role in these changes. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. The purpose of the bill is to facilitate the making of applications and other transactions under the act through the use of

electronic — that is, digital and online — media and to replace the requirement for a tier 1 association to lodge a copy of its financial statements for each financial year with a requirement to submit an annual statement.

As background, the previous government introduced the three-tier system for incorporated associations, and the current government is simplifying the arrangements and reducing costs for our 38 000 incorporated associations. The bill facilitates the new myCAV online system, which gives associations the ability to lodge their statements, pay annual renewal fees and change rules and make notifications online. Access to the current registered rules of association and certificate of incorporation will be available online, and associations will be required to prepare annual financial statements to provide to members. The bill also removes the requirement to attach a paper copy to the financial statement of the returns of tier 1 organisations.

These organisations are the backbone of our communities. They deliver services, and they allow communities to be active on issues. On Tuesday members of the Northern Mallee Leaders program, a leadership program led by Rod Robinson, attended the Parliament. Many of the people in that leadership group will join and lead incorporated associations. They will bring those incorporated associations into being to pursue a community issue. The incorporated association is a valuable instrument for our community, and simplifying associations' reporting allows these committee members and volunteers to spend more time on their causes and less time on administrivia. With those brief comments I commend the bill to the house.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to join the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. As has been outlined previously, this is an important initiative as it will reduce the regulatory burden for approximately 38 000 incorporated associations. It is a sensible reallocation of resources as enabling most of this work to be done online will free up the capacity of Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). This is particularly important for older Victorians.

I am reminded of the book *Outliers*, written by Malcolm Gladwell, in which the author looked at the Canadian ice hockey professional league and noted that an overwhelming majority of professional players in Canada are born between January and March, as opposed to being born between September and December. In examining why this was the case he found that in Canada children start to play ice hockey at the age of five. The league is constituted by those children born between 1 January and 31 December.

Children born in the January to March period are nearly a full year older than the other children and as a consequence are bigger and stronger. They get more practice and game time and become far more competent than the other children, resulting in a skewing towards those children who start playing in the first three months of the year.

Gladwell's thesis is that 10 000 hours is the magic number. A person who spends 10 000 hours doing something will become far more proficient than those who do not. It is important in relation to Generation X, Generation Y and digital natives. We have all probably spent about 10 000 hours online. If you spend 40 hours a week on a computer for 52 weeks of the year, that equals 2080 hours. Within 4 years and 10 months you will have acquired that 10 000 hours of proficiency and you are quite used to being online.

Mr Gladwell also talks about a band called Johnny and the Moondogs. This band played in a lot of clubs in Germany. Its members played in Hamburg and in Bremen, and over a contracted period of time they gained 10 000 hours of experience. By the time they came back to England everyone was blown away by their sound. Who were they?

Mr Donnellan — The Beatles.

Mr PEARSON — The Beatles. I thank the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Why were they so good? They had 10 000 hours of experience under their belt. They were far better than anyone else.

What does that mean? It basically means that baby boomers like my parents, who left school when they were 15, have had no experience with computers or IT. Dad was a butcher, and Mum worked in a factory. They have not come anywhere near 10 000 hours of proficiency with computers. It is fundamentally important that what this bill does is enshrine the right that if you are an incorporated association, you can still write a cheque, go down to the Australia Post outlet and lodge it. You can still do that.

This is a sensible reform and a sensible allocation of resources. It just goes to show that this is what we can do as a state if we are smart about the way in which we go about things. It ensures that incorporated associations in regional areas can continue to comply with the law. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — I rise to speak on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. The Greens will be supporting this bill, which will make life a lot easier for incorporated community associations and the

volunteers who give up so many hours to keep them running.

This amending bill will allow the majority of transactions and notifications under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 to be done electronically and will simplify the annual reporting obligations for smaller incorporated associations. It makes legislative changes that are essential as part of Consumer Affairs Victoria's new myCAV website. We are told this website will allow incorporated associations to register their association online; renew their registration; upload and view their current registered rules of association, certificate of incorporation and other paperwork; change and update their rules of association; and provide other notifications. We are pleased to see that Consumer Affairs Victoria has what looks to be a comprehensive plan to help incorporated associations get themselves online. The plan includes educational resources and presentations tailored to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The Greens will be supporting this bill.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — It is my great pleasure to rise to contribute to the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. As we have heard the bill amends the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 to enable the majority of transactions and notifications under the act to be conducted electronically. The majority of paper-based forms and processes under the act will be replaced by electronic smart forms. This bill will reduce the compliance burden on small incorporated associations by removing the existing requirement for them to attach a paper copy of their annual financial statement when they lodge their annual statement with the registrar of incorporated associations. We have heard contributions from both sides of the house about the importance of the practicality of this bill and the reduction of the burden for incorporated associations. We know that there are over 38 000 registered incorporated associations in our state, and 90 per cent of those fall into tier 1. It is also worth noting that Victoria is the first state or territory to reduce the compliance burden on not-for-profit organisations by introducing the comprehensive streamlined online transaction system.

When we think about what this actually does and what it means from a local perspective, I know that hundreds of local incorporated associations that do some terrific work within our communities, including in my electorate of Sunbury — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr J. BULL — It is a terrific electorate; and I appreciate that comment from the member for Essendon. We know that we have a number of these organisations, and that they do terrific work in the community. Often they are small organisations and small associations. We know that many of these organisations now communicate via email, smart phones and social media. This bill reduces the burden and the paperwork required for those organisations to operate. It is probably fair to say that gone are the days of solid paperwork and gone are the days of cheques — and it is terrific to see that this bill is being debated today. We know that the existing system is based around paper and that it is outdated. The world has moved on, and things move a lot quicker now.

As I have mentioned in the house before, SunFest is a local community organisation in Sunbury that is responsible for the festival. I spoke to the president of SunFest about what this amendment would do for the organisation. He basically said that the organisation operates mainly online. For example, for the event there are costs for suppliers of sound and stage equipment, toilet hire, radio hire, security guards, traffic management, first aid, entertainers and much more. All of these are paid for using an online banking system. These days the only cheques SunFest sends are to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). Everyone else has moved with the times and gone online. Essentially the only reason SunFest still uses a cheque book is because of the requirements of CAV.

The president of SunFest also said that myCAV is something that SunFest has been looking forward to for quite some time. He said that having all reporting requirements in one place so that they can be easily accessed online and submitted instantly, the use of smart forms and easy access to things like model rules and the fact that other associations and organisations are allowed to register details means that SunFest and the other 38 000 incorporated associations that we have in Victoria can finally have a one-stop shop for dealing with Consumer Affairs Victoria. They will not have to go into detailed and ongoing correspondence and incur expenses merely to obtain a copy of the organisation rules or to submit a form. We know that the vast majority of tier 1 organisations, such as SunFest, have been crying out for an online system for a very long time.

This amendment reduces the regulatory burden. We know that organisations such as SunFest often operate on a very low budget and are made up of good, local community people who spend their time working for the community and doing things that matter in their community. We want to ensure that those people in

those communities can do the work that they need to do without worrying about paperwork and such things, thereby cutting red tape and allowing them to get on with it. Like this government, they are rolling up their sleeves and getting on with their work.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Sunbury can resume his contribution when the bill is next before the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

VICTORIA SEPARATION ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER — Order! Today I wish to recognise one of the landmark events in our state's history. Next Wednesday, 1 July, we will celebrate the 164th anniversary of Victoria's separation and independence from New South Wales. Today I welcome to the public gallery members of the Victoria Day Council, who have worked tirelessly over the last 20 years to help maintain Victoria's rich heritage.

Last Friday, the President of the Legislative Council and I were pleased to join representatives of the Victoria Day Council, Royal Botanic Gardens and National Trust of Australia to plant in the Parliament House gardens a sapling from the historic Separation Tree. It was at that tree in November 1850 that Melburnians gathered to celebrate the news that Victoria would separate from New South Wales. That separation, on 1 July 1851, came at a crucial time. It was the start of the gold rush. It was the start of a period of growth that would see Victoria's population quadruple in less than 10 years. May the Separation Tree sapling that now grows in the Parliament House gardens be a living tribute to our heritage and grow big and strong along with our state.

Mr Watt — My point of order, Speaker, is in reference to rulings from the Chair previously with regard to members coming to order when the Chair is standing. By way of reference, every morning certain members walk into this place while you are on your feet, Speaker. I would surmise that this is not within the standing orders and is certainly not within the remit of previous rulings from the Chair. I ask for your guidance with regard to whether walking into the chamber is actually coming to order while the Speaker is on his feet.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood makes a good point of order. Members would be aware that standing order 116 makes it clear to members that when the Chair is on his or her feet all members shall sit down and be silent. Therefore I

uphold the point of order raised by the member for Burwood and advise all members of this house that when the Chair is on his feet members shall sit down and be silent — they shall not walk into the chamber whilst the Chair is on his feet.

Honourable members interjecting.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the capability review he has appointed Peter Allen to conduct into Minister Somyurek and his office, and I ask: what are the criteria and terms of reference by which Mr Allen will assess the minister and his office, and will they be made public?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As is evident from the member's question, Mr Allen is conducting that review consistent with Australian public sector standards, and it is my expectation that that review will be conducted properly and promptly. In trying to deal with a set of serious issues at arm's length from a political process — that is, our process here — I think that is the best way to go forward. That is very obviously what has been established, and I think that answers the question fully.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — By way of supplementary question, I wonder if the Premier is now putting in place processes to measure every other ministerial office against the same criteria and terms of reference that he is now using to judge Adem Somyurek and his staff.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I again thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. All ministers in all governments should uphold the highest standards. That is the position of our government.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am pleased to rise to update the house and inform members that today expressions of interest will close for our government's plan to upgrade the Dandenong rail corridor by removing every single level crossing between the city and Dandenong. We are not talking about it, not standing in the way of it but actually delivering it. True

to our word, true to our bond with those communities, we are delivering this important infrastructure. Why would you not get on and get rid of these level crossings? Some of these boom gates are down for more than 80 minutes in the 2-hour morning peak.

I am so pleased to be able to inform honourable members that more than 271 participants attended the market and industry briefings as part of the expression-of-interest process. There is very strong interest in delivering on the government's commitment to remove all those level crossings, to create hundreds of jobs in the process, to save lives, to improve local traffic and to allow us to run more trains more often. That is not to mention that there is of course very strong interest in that local community. All those local communities along that rail corridor, my own included, are very keen to see these deathtraps, these relics of the past, removed.

There is sadly one group whose members are not interested in delivering that sort of outcome: more jobs, a safer road network, a better public transport system. There are some — —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is now departing from the requirements of sessional order 7 and is commencing to debate the issue. I ask you to bring him back to compliance with the sessional order.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier is absolutely consistent with sessional order 7 because as he is talking about the expression-of-interest process that is closing today and it is right that the community should know what threats and risks there are around this issue. If those opposite do not like it, maybe they should get on board with the program.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order at this point. The Premier is entitled to set up a framework and set the scene. However, I remind the Premier to stay fundamentally on course.

Mr ANDREWS — Stay on track indeed, Speaker. Sadly, there are some who did nothing about this corridor while in government and now would stand in the way of this government delivering on its commitment. The political boom gate over there will not stop us delivering on our promises.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is again to the Premier. With Minister Somyurek stood down over bullying

allegations, can the Premier now inform the house exactly what it was about Minister Somyurek's performance that also led him to establish a capability review of Minister Somyurek and his staff?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — It does take some front to be asking questions about capability — and culpability, I might say — from those rejected by the people of Victoria for four wasted years. A proper process has been set up, and it will be adhered to.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, I would have thought an issue around the minister being stood down and his staff being investigated required a sensible and reasoned approach from the Premier, rather than a question that is focusing on issues relating to relevance.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the Premier to come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — A proper process has been established, and it will be followed and dealt with appropriately. I find it interesting that today those opposite are apparently critical of the process when just a few days ago they thought the process had gone too far. This is not 1960. Complaints ought to be dealt with properly. The complaint has been dealt with properly and fulsomely at a distance from the government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Opposition members will allow the Premier to answer. The Premier is entitled to be heard in silence.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, in relation to relevance, what the Premier is stating now in relation to a complaint from his chief of staff does not address what the question was about. My question was in relation to a capability review into Minister Somyurek and his staff. They are two totally different investigations.

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

Mr ANDREWS — A process has been established because I believe, and I think the vast majority of Victorians would agree, that unless we have proper processes for complaints that are made in the workplace, we cannot possibly pretend to keep Victorian workers safe and give Victorians confidence that their government and all employers take these issues very seriously. A proper process has been established, and it will be adhered to by all in coming

weeks. It is the appropriate process to put in place. Criticisms of it are simply wrong.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — I wonder if the Premier could advise the house as to what is now the trigger for a capability review into a minister and his or her staff. Is it simply disagreeing with the Premier, or is it defecting to a rival faction?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will respond, but he will stay away from matters that are not government matters.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The answer is no.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — It is very good to be able to update the house — —

Mr R. Smith — He's a liar.

Mr ANDREWS — Speaker, I think the member for Warrandyte ought to be invited to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte will withdraw.

Mr R. Smith — I withdraw, but it doesn't make it untrue.

Mr ANDREWS — On a point of order, Speaker, out of respect for your office the honourable member for Warrandyte ought to withdraw unreservedly and without any editorial comment. If he is not prepared to do so, then he ought to be sanctioned.

The SPEAKER — Order! It is the view of the chair that apologies and withdrawal of remarks should not be qualified. That applies to every member, and that is my advice to the Deputy Speaker and Acting Speakers, should those matters occur at any time during proceedings in the Parliament. Therefore I will apply the same principle. I will give the member for Warrandyte the opportunity to apologise without any qualification.

Mr R. Smith — I withdraw.

Mr ANDREWS — I am very pleased to be able to update the house on the fact that the government is making very strong progress on removing four level crossings located at Centre Road in Bentleigh; North Road in Ormond, McKinnon Road in McKinnon and Burke Road in Glen Iris — four death traps, four

congested level crossings that simply need to go; they must go. They are relics of another time. They are holding us back, and this government is determined to push forward and remove those level crossings.

Consultations with affected communities are well underway. We are actually listening to those local communities and making sure that everyone is heard and everyone is part of this significant, historic infrastructure program. That is what we will achieve. That is what is going on right now. I want to inform the house that I have asked the member for Bentleigh, and he has agreed, to lead those consultations. There is no greater champion for the removal of these level crossings and our commitment to remove the 50 worst in our state than the member for Bentleigh. He has got lots of friends though: many people, indeed every member of our government, is passionately committed to getting rid of these relics of the past. And why wouldn't you?

Some of these boom gates are down for 50 to 60 minutes in the 2-hour morning peak. They simply have to go. There is \$524 million provided in this year's budget to get rid of those four level crossings. That will create 350 jobs. Why on earth would anyone stand in the way of removing those level crossings? It beggars belief, it defies logic and it stands at odds with the view of the Victorian community,

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — My question is to the Premier. In relation to Mr Strong's inquiry into the complaint made against Adem Somyurek, can the Premier advise the house if it is a fact that all parties contributing to this inquiry have been asked to sign confidentiality agreements, and if so, by whom?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Hawthorn for his question, and in asking the question he has in effect answered it. The process is being run by Mr Strong. It is not being run by any member of the government. It is a self-evident fact that Mr Strong, at arm's length from the government and commissioned by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, is running a proper process. I could not possibly speak for the way in which he is doing that.

For someone who prided himself on being chief counsel, the Oliver Babbage of the former government, you would think he would know that. His Honour, the member for Hawthorn, would seem to be confused. Mr Strong is running the process, and I have confidence

that he will do so in full accord with the highest standards.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to sessional order 11(2), which requires that answers be responsive to the question. The Premier was asked a simple question as to the existence or otherwise of confidentiality requirements. His answer did not address that. To say the inquiry is being conducted by Mr Strong does not respond to the question. I ask you to direct him to provide a response to that question.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Speaker, there is no point of order. The question was answered fulsomely and completely. There is absolutely no point of order, and you should rule it out of order.

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

Supplementary question

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — Can the Premier guarantee that neither he nor any member of his staff has interfered in any way with the independent conduct of Mr Strong's investigation, such as communicating with witnesses to this inquiry, since Mr Strong's appointment?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — This is a serious matter that has been taken seriously by our government. The Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet has commissioned Mr Strong to conduct this review. It will be conducted against the highest standards, and it is my expectation — —

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, the issue is not the appointment of Mr Strong. The issue on relevance is whether the Premier can guarantee that neither he nor any member of his staff has spoken to any other witness. That is the issue.

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

Mr ANDREWS — For the benefit of the member for Hawthorn, I am asked whether there has been any inappropriate behaviour on my part or the part of any of my staff, and the answer is no.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Police) — I rise to make a ministers statement today in relation to the Andrews Labor government's key initiative to remove 50 level crossings and outline for the house the very

positive impacts that these projects will have for our police. Our frontline police see firsthand the devastating impact associated with dangerous level crossings. Along with other emergency service workers, police are often first on the scene of a serious incident at a level crossing. These serious incidents often involve vehicles and pedestrians. These serious incidents often involve fatalities. Sadly it is left to our police to inform families of these tragic outcomes. These experiences for our police can leave them emotionally scarred for life.

Police have no choice but to respond to these incidents. In my own electorate of Williamstown two local school children were tragically killed at the Ferguson Street crossing more than 20 years ago. In more recent times a cyclist was left fighting for his life after he was hit by a train at the same crossing. Fortunately that man survived, but the crossing at Ferguson Street in North Williamstown is one of the 50 level crossings that will be removed by the Andrews Labor government. We need to be thinking about our police who are forced to deal with the aftermath of these crossing incidents. Removing 50 of our most dangerous and congested level crossings will reduce the traumatic and avoidable impact on our first responders.

Just like our paramedics, firefighters and other emergency services workers, police also want to be able to get to incidents faster. Being stuck at boom gates hinders our police, whose task is to respond to these serious incidents. There is no question that removing boom gates and removing level crossings will help our police. It is for these reasons that I urge the opposition and Greens to get behind Labor's level crossing removal program and support our hardworking police.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — My question is to the Premier. Under the process the Premier has put in place with both Mr Strong's and Mr Allen's reports, will he or his chief of staff receive a draft report before the final reports are concluded?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — There are a number of errors in the question. Firstly, the process has been established by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. That is the first thing. To say that the government has established the process is materially wrong. If there is an allegation of impropriety to be made against Mr Strong, then the member for Hawthorn ought to do that. If he has an allegation to make against Mr Allen, then he ought to do that.

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the issue is very clear. Will the Premier or his chief of staff receive a draft report before a final report is submitted, yes or no? I understand the Premier has established — —

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

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not require government members to interject at this point. The member for Hawthorn knows that taking a point of order is not an opportunity to repeat or debate the question.

Mr ANDREWS — Again the member for Hawthorn seems confused. The process is being run by Mr Strong and Mr Allen, as commissioned by the independent Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It is my expectation that when reports are completed a final report will be provided, and then the government will act on the findings of that report.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I again draw your attention to sessional order 11(2). Clearly these sessional orders were put in place by this house on a motion of the government in order to bring about change to question time and to empower you to require answers to be given when answers are not responsive. That is a different question to whether the minister is speaking on the question; it is a question of whether the answer is responsive. Here the question was very specific about receiving a draft report. The Premier's answer was not at all responsive to that. If these sessional orders are to have any credibility, the Premier should be required to provide a written response to that direct question.

Mr Merlino — On this point of order, Speaker, it should be ruled out. The answer to the question was absolutely responsive, including pointing out the errors in the question itself. The point of order should be ruled out of order.

Mr Pesutto — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier commissions the minister. He ought to know what is going to happen to his minister. He can give one of three answers — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member will resume his seat. Government members will come to order and opposition members will come to order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Supplementary question

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — Given the importance of natural justice, will Minister Somyurek be given a copy of both Mr Strong's and Mr Allen's reports so that he and his legal counsel can respond to these reports before any decision is made on the minister's future?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I again refer the member for Hawthorn to the fact that Mr Strong and Mr Allen are not operating under direction from the government. They are operating independent of that. I am confident, and I think all of Victorians can be confident, that former Justice Michael Strong knows a bit more about natural justice and procedural fairness than old Rumpole from Hawthorn.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to update the house on the release of recent small area labour markets data for the March quarter that shows how important the removal of our 50 most dangerous and congested level crossings is in terms of creating jobs where we need them most. In our first six months in government we have created 55 000 jobs in Victoria. That is right, Speaker; I know you are amazed that we have created 55 000 jobs. That compares to the 12 500 jobs created in the same period in the first term of the previous government. That government lulled Victoria into economic hibernation, and that is unbearable.

But we have more work to do. In the suburbs of Cranbourne and Dandenong unemployment has been in double digits since 2012. In Dandenong it has hit 20 per cent; in Cranbourne it is sitting on 10 per cent. This is too high, and that is why we are creating jobs and investing in infrastructure to support local areas. We are removing 50 of our most dangerous level crossings in two terms, creating about 4500 jobs. Seventeen have been announced, including the nine on the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines.

Unlike those opposite, this government is about keeping its promises. We are also about creating jobs and investment in infrastructure. Those opposite are nothing but potholes in the way of progress. They are trying to infect Victoria with a Tony Abbott disease, and we will not stand for it.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will be heard in silence. In his remaining 7 seconds, the minister will come back to making a ministers statement.

Mr PALLAS — We are getting on with the job, we are delivering the things we promised Victorians and we will not see these policy boom gates inflicted upon Victoria.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that the process for determining the guilt or innocence of Minister Somyurek in the Strong inquiry will be Mr Strong making a series of recommendations — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Macedon. I advise other government members that the Chair must be able to hear the Leader of the Opposition. The Chair is unable to adjudicate on matters unless the Chair can hear the question and the answer; therefore government members will allow the Leader of the Opposition to start his question again.

Mr GUY — I wonder if the Premier could confirm that the process for determining the guilt or innocence of Minister Somyurek in the Strong inquiry will be Mr Strong making a series of recommendations to Mr Eccles and then the Premier acting as the final judge and jury.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and for finally today acknowledging that the inquiry is being conducted by Mr Strong and that the reporting will be back to Mr Eccles. It is my expectation that these very serious matters will be dealt with appropriately. We will wait and see what comes of the process, the report. I do not think any fair-minded Victorian could expect anything different.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — If Minister Somyurek and his supporters in the Premier's own party believe the Premier, his deputy and the Premier's office have set him up, how on earth can the Premier be the person who finally determines whether he is guilty or not?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — That is one way to end the session, I suppose. That is one way to end the session, with a question littered with errors, with assertions and with the sort of nonsense that sees those opposite on that side of the house. A proper process will be followed, as every employee in every workplace across this state is entitled to. A proper process will be

followed. The concept of a proper process is perhaps one that is difficult for the Leader of the Opposition to understand. He of Ventnor kitchen table fame may find it hard to understand how a proper process works, but one has been established, and it will be followed.

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition can shout and get as angry as he wants, but none of his shouting will change the fact that this matter will be dealt with properly and appropriately.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I am very pleased to provide new information to the house on the — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hawthorn will resume his seat, and every other member will resume their seats. The minister will be heard in silence, and if members are to leave the chamber, they shall do so respectfully.

Ms ALLAN — It is no surprise those opposite are scuttling out of this place with their tails between their legs. Those opposite have been exposed for the frauds they are. They said one thing before the election and another thing after the election. Tiny Tony has just scuttled his way out of this place, because he does not want to hear — —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Leader of the House is clearly failing to comply with sessional order 7, which she introduced, and I ask you to bring her back to conformity with it.

The SPEAKER — Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister for Public Transport will come back to making a ministers statement.

Ms ALLAN — I have been under sustained and heavy lobbying from those opposite on how we should be pushing on with our level crossing removal project. The member for Burwood and a member for Southern Metropolitan Region in another place have written to me imploring the government — —

Mr Watt interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Burwood.

Ms ALLAN — They have implored the government to push on with our level crossing removal program. It

goes further than this; this lobbying goes beyond this. I am now having members opposite write to me imploring us to go beyond the 50 level crossings we have already committed to. The member for Box Hill wants us to go further and add Union Road, Surrey Hills. The shadow Minister for Public Transport, the member for Croydon, just this week in this house indicated that he wants us to add Croydon to the list.

How can these people be believed? They said one thing before the election about particular policy issues and now they come into this place and say the exact opposite. They say one thing to their communities about support for level crossing removals and in this place are going to vote against the initiatives that are going to see the delivery of this program.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to compliance with sessional order 7.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will come back and comply with the sessional orders.

Ms ALLAN — Tiny Tony and his merry band of Liberal wreckers will not stand in the way of this level crossing removal program.

Mr Northe — Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order. I appreciate the fact that I should have stood at the time, but during the course of question time the member for Essendon made a comment that I found very offensive, and I ask him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the member for Essendon to withdraw.

Mr Pearson — I withdraw.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Ferntree Gully electorate

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — (Question 359) I wish to raise a constituency matter for the Minister for Education on behalf of Knox Park Primary School. I raise this issue given the concerns of the school community, including the principal, Andrew Searle, and the assistant principal, Kim Flower. This is a great school at Knoxfield, but it is certainly in need of a significant upgrade, with particular focus on its multipurpose room. It is very clear that a need has been identified. At the last election the coalition committed to help upgrade this important school. To date this government has not acted to provide any funding assistance for Knox Park. It is imperative that this school, like many in my community, receive funding

assistance. I call upon the Minister for Education to act on behalf of my local constituents and upgrade this school.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (Question 360) My constituency question is to the Minister for Industry, who is also the Minister for Energy and Resources. It concerns the future of the Brunswick Business Incubator. This facility was previously owned by the former Department of Health, but I understand that the facility has recently been transferred to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

The incubator offers significant economic benefits to the northern metropolitan region and indeed the Victorian economy as a whole. Data published by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research suggests that the incubator contributes approximately \$27.32 million to Victoria's gross regional product per annum. In addition, the data shows that since its inception in 2002 the incubator has created 948 part-time or full-time employment positions. The incubator holds a lease on that property which is due to expire very soon, and the local business community is growing increasingly concerned about whether it will be able to renew its lease. I ask that the minister detail plans for this property, and I request that whatever plans are made provide for the continued operation of the incubator.

Gippsland East electorate

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — (Question 361) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport, who I am advised is the minister responsible for the development of the new Melbourne fruit, vegetable and flower market. My constituent is seeking an assurance that country retailers buying at the market will be allowed to sleep in their trucks inside the confines of the new market, as they do at the existing market, when transition occurs next month. He is concerned that rural operators buying at the market after 3.00 a.m. who have to return to run their retail shops the same day, will no longer have a designated place to sleep prior to purchasing in the early hours.

These people undertake a 7-hour round trip and then have to run their retail businesses upon their return. They need sleep, and it would be easier and safer for them to sleep on site, as they currently do. There is simply not enough room to cater for them at nearby service stations or truck stops. Some unload at the

market earlier in the night, if also delivering, and may then have to try to find a sleeping bay at an external facility before driving back and lining up again to re-enter the market. I ask the minister to ensure that these country operators will not be disadvantaged at the new market.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — (Question 362) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. I ask that the minister provide me with information regarding the proposed time lines for construction of the new Craigieburn North West Primary School. The Craigieburn community is very excited about the government's commitment to construct this school and is very keen to see works get underway. This school will be located in a rapidly developing and active precinct that includes a new kindergarten, which the Minister for Families and Children opened recently. The community was thrilled to have the Minister for Families and Children visit to open the kindergarten, and I know it will be equally excited to receive an update from the Minister for Education as to when construction of this much-needed new school will be underway.

Polwarth electorate

Mr MULDER (Polwarth) — (Question 363) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It relates to Foxhow Road, near Lake Corangamite. Foxhow Road attracts a high volume of heavy vehicles, yet the road is only 4 metres wide in some sections. Locals welcomed the widening of a 1.2-kilometre section in April 2014, at a cost of \$3 million, but clearly more needs to be done. Thankfully an upgrade of Foxhow Road was costed by VicRoads in 2014, and the former Treasurer, the member for Malvern, allocated an extra \$130 million in the forward estimates for road restoration and maintenance. All that is needed to get the road fixed is the go-ahead from the minister. The Shire of Corangamite fears that the road will be returned to a gravel surface unless urgent action is taken. I therefore ask that the minister give the green light to VicRoads to fix Foxhow Road.

Mordialloc electorate

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — (Question 364) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health. It concerns the federal government's decision to discontinue inborn errors of metabolism (IEM) funding, which supports individuals and families suffering from rare genetic disorders to

access specialised foods. I ask the minister to consider supporting these families and advocating on their behalf. Families are concerned that the removal of the monthly grant of \$256 will place significant financial strain on them. They rely on these additional funds to support them as they deal with these rare diseases. One of my constituents, Cathy Ticknas, has advised that in order to provide the required diet, families must purchase specialised medical foods that cost in excess of 500 per cent more than the standard supermarket equivalents. The IEM grant has been the responsibility of the federal health department since 2001 and is paid to 904 families across Australia. If this decision is not reversed, it could have a huge adverse effect on these families.

Melbourne electorate

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — (Question 365) My question is to the Minister for Employment. One of the most common issues my constituents bring up with me is a lack of employment for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Unemployment among migrant communities is much higher than the state average. Community leaders have recognised employment as their biggest challenge, and with my support and the support of the federal member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt, have created the Melbourne Employment Forum (MEF).

The forum has brought people together under the leadership of MEF president Abeselom Nega, senior vice-president Farah Warsame, vice-president Yasir Mahmoud, joint secretaries Cam Nguyen and Sainab Sheikh, treasurer Ibsa Hassan, and board members Abdi Ali, Ayyanu Ali, Daniel Haile-Michael, Omar Farah and Ruay Amet-Atem. These people are all impressive leaders, The MEF has received some funding from the City of Melbourne but it needs further funds to run targeted migrant employment programs. My question to the Minister for Employment is: will the government support the multicultural community of inner Melbourne by funding the Melbourne Employment Forum's targeted employment programs?

Narre Warren South electorate

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — (Question 366) My question is to the Minister for Sport and concerns the Berwick City Cougars Baseball Club. I recently met with its new vice-president Leo Hemmes to discuss his plans for this great local club. The Cougars are the only summer baseball club within the city of Casey and the club has a senior playing list of 70 players. It also has one of the largest junior playing programs in the state. During the season the club has a

masters game for players aged over 35 each and every Monday night. To ensure that it is prepared for all eventualities the club is keen to secure a defibrillator for its clubrooms.

We know that each year 30 000 Australians are struck down by cardiac arrest, with fewer than 5 per cent surviving because help does not reach them in time. I understand that a grants program will open in the new financial year to which local sports club can apply. This is a fantastic commitment by the government to supply 1000 defibrillators to grassroots clubs across Victoria. I ask the minister to advise how local sports clubs like the Berwick City Cougars Baseball Club can apply for grants through this outstanding program.

Brighton electorate

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — (Question 367) The constituency question I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Police. Prior to the last election the Labor Party did not make any commitments for additional police, and looking at its budget, obviously there are no additional police for metropolitan Melbourne. The background to this question is of course that the previous Labor government closed the Brighton police station. It salivated over the concept of the sale proceeds for this terrific real estate going into government coffers. It shut down the police station and told the Brighton community that services would be run out of the Sandringham police station.

We in the electorate of Brighton are particularly nervous about police services because we have already seen a reduction in police services under a Labor government. My specific question to the minister is: can he assure the Brighton, Hampton and Elwood communities that police numbers and services will, at a minimum, be maintained at their existing levels given that the government has no desire to increase these services?

Yan Yean electorate

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — (Question 368) My question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. Can the minister outline what the Andrews government is doing to improve disability services for clients and families in Victoria after the failure of the coalition government to fund even one respite bed in Whittlesea? In fact the coalition government tried to halt Labor's 2010 investment in a new purpose-built facility, which only became a reality in North Epping due to a concerted community campaign by Respite Alliance Whittlesea and others. Can the minister advise what the Andrews government is doing to improve

respite services in my electorate, particularly given the need for better respite services within the city of Whittlesea?

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION REFORM AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — I am pleased to rise today to make a few brief comments in relation to the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. This bill builds on a lot of the very good work done by the previous government in relation to incorporated associations. The explanatory memorandum of the bill notes that the main purposes of the bill are to:

facilitate the making of applications and other transactions under that act through the use of electronic (digital and online) media; and

replace the requirement for a tier 1 association to lodge a copy of its financial statements each year with a requirement to submit an annual statement.

The coalition introduced a three-tier system for incorporated associations when we were in government, and that consequently simplified the arrangements and reduced a lot of the compliance costs and other costs for approximately 38 000 associations in Victoria.

At the outset, I note the terrific job of volunteers who work within a large number of associations throughout the state of Victoria and the contribution they make to the broader community. Those volunteers give so much of their time and effort to look after the affairs and obviously the functions of those various associations. I can speak from a range of perspectives on this bill because not only have I been a member of a range of associations over the years — I have been an office-bearer at a number of incorporated associations — but in my previous work life I was the auditor for a number of associations. I understand the compliance requirements and the work involved in keeping an incorporated association going.

The legal structure of an incorporated association is used by a range of groups within my community. In the electorate of Forest Hill we have all sorts of organisations — sporting clubs, service clubs, other not for profits and community groups — and they all play a very important part in the ongoing function of and service to the community.

One of the provisions of this legislation is to facilitate a new online system called myCAV. It provides associations with the ability to lodge annual statements, pay annual renewal fees, change rules and make notifications online. Theoretically that is a very good thing. However, I hold grave concerns about the system because the lead speaker for our side, the member for Morwell, went on that system very recently and he found it was offline and not working.

That is the nub of my concern in relation to the bill, because we have a government that has a track record of being unable to deliver IT projects. It is not just my view or the view of members on this side of house; it is the view of the Auditor-General in copious numbers of reports that he has had tabled in this place, as well as the view of others who have looked at this issue from afar. Whether it be HealthSMART, myki or the My School website — whatever it is — we can see the government has a track record of failure in relation to IT projects.

That is my grave concern in relation to myCAV: that the government is completely unable to deliver improvements in the electronic online space, and that has massive consequences, because, as I said, if you go online today, you will find that myCAV is not working — and who knows when it will be working? That has all sorts of consequences. It is all well and good to say this is the new facility, but if it is not up to it — if the back end is not there or not developed — and you are unable to use it, it just becomes an absolute point of frustration rather than a point of facilitation, as it should be for the various people using it.

In relation to that, we know that during the recent Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings it was outlined that there have been some ‘technical issues’ encountered with the myCAV website and the processes behind it. That is a big problem for our community, and the last thing we want to see is another micro version of one of these IT disasters that are so well documented in projects initiated by members from the other side of the chamber.

In relation to the structures, we know it was the coalition government that introduced the three-tiered system. As I said at the outset, simplification and easing the red-tape burden, indeed the burden of office, on some of these incorporated associations is prima facie a good thing, and it is something that we started and will continue to encourage.

Again, the work undertaken in our community by those involved in these various organisations cannot be underestimated. I thank the volunteers who work so

hard through the legal vehicle of incorporated associations. On that note, I do not oppose the bill.

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) — I rise to speak on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. I echo the sentiments of my colleagues in relation to support for this bill. The bill amends the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 to reduce the burden on small incorporated associations and enable the majority of transactions to occur online.

This means streamlining processes for incorporated associations and clubs by removing the existing requirement that associations who take in less than \$250 000 in annual revenue provide a paper copy of their financial statements when they lodge their annual statement form with the registry of incorporated associations. Put simply, my electorate of St Albans has a very high number of valuable community groups and sporting clubs that will benefit from the reduction in red tape that will flow from the enactment of this bill.

This means that not only will sporting clubs, associations and other groups, such as Vietnamese community groups and senior citizens groups that operate from Glengala Community Centre and Errington Hall, have the opportunity to provide an online statement but will also still have the option of requesting a paper form to be submitted. This is important because of the non-English-speaking backgrounds of many members of these groups. I have some very large senior citizens clubs in my electorate, so the option of requesting a paper form is great.

The most important thing with my electorate in particular, where close to 60 per cent of the community is of a non-English-speaking background, is that there will be the option through this bill for clubs and sporting groups to obtain step-by-step guides and instructions in 23 languages on how to use myCAV accounts. That is a really important thing to state in relation to this bill, as is the fact that there will be interpreter services available for those clubs and associations that may not have the skills and abilities to go through an online process.

I commend the bill to the house. It reduces the red-tape burden on small clubs that provide valuable services to our community. I encourage seniors and communities to participate and remain active in their local not-for-profit groups, in particular in the St Albans electorate. They all do a fantastic job. Most of these organisations, if not all the associations and clubs, are volunteer based, and as I said previously, reducing red tape will make it much easier to streamline processes

and deliver what is important, which are services to our residents and the overall community. I commend the bill.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I am pleased to contribute to the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. The development of the law in the area of incorporated associations has been of outstanding benefit to the work of volunteers, community groups and organisations, whether they be sporting clubs, welfare agencies or groups and organisations that gather together for cultural purposes. It is the vehicle that enables them to enter into contracts in their own name and to have limitation of liability. The legal structures enable them to transact their business, to own property in the name of an entity and, if the entity is wound up, to pass on the assets of the entity and organisation consistent with the associations incorporation legislation.

The legal structure is extraordinarily worthwhile, and it enables the fabric of community life in Australia to operate effectively. Successive members of Parliament who have covered the area of sports administration have spoken about the great number of volunteer hours donated by Victorian residents. The lifeblood of the Victorian community is often described as the result of the contribution of community volunteers, and the contribution made by community organisations and volunteers in Australian — reflective perhaps of our standard of living — is amongst the highest in the world.

In parallel with the role of volunteers, there is the extraordinarily accelerated pace of the development of the silicon chip, which has had great effects on the community in our use of IT. However, it is important that those advances are implemented effectively. During the early part of the 21st century there were a number of IT projects that were conceived by the then Labor government that unfortunately, and sadly, were not realised. All of those projects ran excessively over budget. The education department's ultranet project was abandoned. The department of housing had a program to tabulate its stock, maintenance and tenancy arrangements. That was a five-stage process that was abandoned. Last time I checked it was abandoned after stage 1. It was not continued with, which meant that the department was reliant upon another system. There was the HealthSMART system, which was faulty, and there was the myki system that ran massively over budget.

Just having the opportunity to use IT does not mean it is always implemented wisely or well. When we talk about cost overruns, we look at what those funds could

have otherwise been expended upon to provide good community services, whether they be upgrades of our local hospitals, the construction of new classrooms or the provision of support packages for people with a disability. As we move towards the implementation of the national disability insurance scheme, it is important that we deliver effective improvements for stakeholders in the field.

The bill before the house has an objective to facilitate the making of applications and other transactions through the use of digital online media and to replace a requirement for a tier 1 association to lodge a copy of financial statements for each financial year with a requirement that they submit an annual statement. These reforms are constructive and practical. The former government reduced the red-tape burden for hairdressing businesses by changing requirements so that they did not have to register on an annual basis but their registration would last a number of years. This reduced the red-tape and compliance burdens, and operators simply had to pay an annual fee.

As the development of IT continues, transactions can be effected more simply, whether that be in relation to banking, reporting obligations or the fulfilment of our roles as members of Parliament — the internet helps us to better communicate with our constituents. With those comments I conclude my remarks to the house.

Mr LIM (Clarinda) — I rise to participate in this debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015. The member for St Albans picked up on all the points I wanted to make in regard to how this bill affects the migrant community more than any other community. I would like to congratulate the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation for bringing this bill before the house, and hopefully it will pass in no time, because it speaks volumes about the fact that only Labor cares about how to cut red tape and how to make life easier for Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Many of us have been involved with the migrant community, with new and emerging communities and with the refugee community. Some of these people come from backgrounds where there is no such thing as having to organise an association or apply for funding for grants. It may be difficult for them to comply with all the requirements of reporting, no matter how small the amount of money they are required to pay to the department, and if they do not comply with those requirements, their association will be deregistered or not be allowed to participate in the next round of funding. It is so horrendous, so alienating and so

demanding for them. Many of these people come from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

This bill makes things easier by requiring Consumer Affairs Victoria to adopt the electronic medium, which is now very much a part of our daily life. This will make life a lot easier for people, and I cannot commend the minister enough on this measure. We tend to take it for granted that this is just normal. It is not normal. There are something like 38 000 incorporated associations. These 38 000 community-based organisations may be groups like social clubs or non-profit organisations. I mostly deal with the ethnic community, and I have been honoured to be invited to be the so-called honorary adviser to at least 30 — I have lost count — community groups, mainly Chinese community organisations. I have seen these organisations struggling. Many of them realise that if they do not do their financial reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria, they will be automatically deregistered after three years. There are hundreds and hundreds of community groups like that.

There are groups that have been deregistered without their even knowing it, and there have been incidents where groups have got into big strife when they have reapplied for funding or applied for new funding and have then been told that they are no longer incorporated associations. In such cases, those groups then have to frantically catch up and amend their situation. This bill makes things a lot easier for those groups. It will improve their efficiency and time management. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak in the debate on the Associations Incorporation Reform Amendment (Electronic Transactions) Bill 2015, which is an important bill. I indicate that the coalition will not be opposing it. The bill continues the work the coalition did in reforming the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 by allowing for the online lodgement of forms, which is a good reform that will help us keep up with the electronic age. I can see the Acting Speaker looking at his electronic device now! The bill also removes the obligation for small tier 1 associations to lodge paper financial statements, but they still have the obligation to complete those financial statements.

As we know, incorporated associations play a central role in our great state of Victoria. They enrich our local communities through the social, cultural, environmental and economic contributions they make to those communities on a daily basis, and that involves the work of many thousands of volunteers. I express my appreciation for all the volunteers working for the

incorporated associations not only throughout the seat of Bass but also throughout the state of Victoria. I thank them for the countless hours they put in on a voluntary basis to help build and add strength to our communities.

This new reform builds on work undertaken by the member for Malvern, a former Minister for Consumer Affairs. The minister was responsible for significant changes to the Associations Incorporation Act. In fact he has been credited with some of the major and most significant changes made since the act's introduction in 1981, in particular the introduction of a three-year reporting scheme, which has been widely acclaimed throughout the industry. That reform reduced the regulatory burden for a range of incorporated associations. It is very important that we assist smaller incorporated associations, which have the ever-increasing burden of simply being in business.

While the former minister's reforms were very innovative, they did not remove the obligation for there to be financial transparency in each of these incorporated associations, and they did not reduce the burden of governance, which is so important in all of these smaller incorporated associations throughout Victoria. In fact I have been involved in many incorporated associations over my years, particularly around the Pakenham area in the seat of Bass.

These reforms should be encouraged and will be appreciated by those incorporated associations, including sporting clubs, smaller community groups, neighbourhood houses and the adult disability sector more broadly. This is further enhanced by the introduction of the myCAV system, which will allow the online processing of standard compliance forms, annual statements and fee payments. The Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation is to be congratulated for furthering the former coalition government's work in this area by bringing this bill to the house.

It is in stark contrast to the many other stuff-ups of this Andrews government, which include an irresponsible and unfair budget for the electorate of Bass, scrapping the east–west link, the second-rate Metro rail project, cutting V/Line services to Pakenham, under-resourcing our police, the introduction of cage fighting and the introduction of two additional public holidays. This government is a rudderless ship that not even Ben Lexen could fix. I look forward to seeing this legislation passed smoothly through the Parliament of Victoria and implemented to the benefit of our incorporated associations.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms RICHARDSON (Minister for Women).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

BUDGET PAPERS 2015–16

Debate resumed from 23 June; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport):

That this house takes note of the 2015–16 budget papers.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — I will take up where I left off on Tuesday. I was talking about the Andrews Labor government's fully funded commitment of \$7 million for the rebuild of Lyndale Secondary College. The staff and students at Lyndale are no longer being ignored as they were under the previous government, and they can stand tall.

Students in Dandenong are getting the funding they need to ensure they are educated in the school environments they deserve. Our budget also provides \$3 million for Dandenong High School to put towards building its seniors studies centre. It is fantastic to see this government committed to continuing the great work started by the Bracks government. Dandenong High School is a world-class facility, and its schedule of international visitors is testimony to that. The school is a living example of what Labor governments do — build for the future.

It is not just infrastructure that is the recipient of the colossal boost to education funding that this budget brings. Prep to grade 3 students in 250 disadvantaged government schools will get free eye tests, and glasses if they need them. Breakfast clubs at disadvantaged schools will serve up the most important meal of the day to some 25 000 students. The government will also expand an existing free uniforms, shoes and books program run to provide assistance to more than twice as many students. These initiatives are so important in communities like mine. They change lives and provide opportunities. They will directly enhance educational outcomes and relieve the real pressures that families face when trying to build for their children a life that they may not have enjoyed themselves.

Another hallmark of a good budget is proper investment in our health system, which is an area that the Liberals are renowned for deserting when they get into government. Labor always invests in health, but sadly this is not true of the Liberal government, which cut \$1 billion out of the health system, leaving families at risk and on their own. And we have just seen the federal coalition government do that again. This budget puts people first by investing wisely to reduce the

waiting lists and response times that were the legacy of those opposite. Dandenong Hospital is the thankful recipient of the urgently needed \$200 million Hospital Beds Rescue Fund, which will deliver an expansion of the capacity of the Dandenong's coronary care intake. Casey Hospital, also in the south-east, is receiving a \$106.3 million expansion to allow it to treat 12 000 more patients, conduct 8000 more surgeries and support 500 more births. We are getting on with it, and it starts with increasing funding to our hospitals and ambulance service.

This budget will go a long way to fixing the mess the Liberals left behind — and what a mess it was. I remind the house that it was not only mismanagement that stains the record of those opposite. The Victorian people will forever remember the previous government for its desperate act of economic sabotage and the dodgy side deal that showed its willingness to play politics with Victoria's future — indeed its willingness to hold the Victorian people to ransom. The message from the member for Malvern was clear, 'If you don't vote for us, we'll make you pay for it', and he still sits on the opposition front bench. What a disgrace!

Unlike those opposite, this government is committed to transport infrastructure projects that add value and stack up financially. This budget includes the biggest ever investment in Victorian public transport and includes a substantial down payment on the Melbourne Metro rail project, which will futureproof our rail network for generations to come. This is the project that Victorians voted for last November. Our public transport commitments also include the multibillion-dollar upgrade to the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines, which service the Dandenong electorate. The project will boost capacity by up to 42 percent every day, easing congestion and reducing travel times for the 1 million people living in the south-eastern corridor.

Importantly this investment will also create thousands of local jobs. The works include the purchase of 37 high-capacity trains with local content rules applying to ensure that they are at least 50 per cent locally made. This is important to our government because we believe in a Victoria that produces and creates. We believe in Victorian jobs. It is a huge improvement on the plan put forward by those opposite last year. Labor's plan delivers more trains, more level crossing removals, more new stations and the prioritisation of local jobs. We say, 'Do it once and do it properly'.

The announcement of \$7.2 million of funding for microfinance programs in three of Victoria's low socio-economic hubs is news that has been welcomed

by families across the Dandenong electorate. These programs are a proactive way of dealing with the scourge of high-interest payday lenders, while also educating individuals to enhance their financial literacy. I had the opportunity to visit Good Money in Dandenong and I spoke to a number of users of the micro-finance program. They explained to me that the program allowed them to purchase everyday items that they otherwise would not have been able to afford, including things like washing machines and fridges. The program also taught them ways to better manage their money. Even after paying off their loans, they were reaping the rewards of this education. It is a credit to this government that it supports innovative ideas and social programs like these.

Too often we saw the previous government void of ideas and lacking the forethought to invest in creating a better and stronger Victoria which could embrace and leverage the opportunities that our diversity presents. Multiculturalism is at the core of both the Victorian and Dandenong stories, and this budget's significant commitment to establishing an Indian cultural precinct is truly welcome news.

The Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria claims that about 95 000 people of Indian origin live within a 20-kilometre radius of Dandenong. More than that, Indians from all over Melbourne come to Dandenong to shop, making the most of the Dandenong Market and Little India. Many also come to the area to worship at nearby local temples. The Little India shopping strip on Foster Street in Dandenong has a vibrant community of traders ready to fly the flag for the Indian community in the south-east. They are very excited by our commitment to an Indian precinct and the respect we have shown their culture. It is something of huge importance to the enormous Indian and subcontinental community across the south-east.

On that note, after running through just a few of the wonderful measures that we have introduced in this budget, I thank the Premier and the Treasurer for delivering a true Labor budget that can restore the confidence of all Victorians in their elected government. I commend the budget papers to the house with great pride.

Mr DIXON (Nepean) — It is a great opportunity to speak on this take-note motion on the budget papers 2015–16. I want to touch on a few aspects of the impacts of the budget in my electorate in a general sense and also on a couple of matters relating to education, noting that the shadow minister, the member for Ferntree Gully, is at the table. We have a contrast between a coalition budget and a Labor budget, when

we compare the New South Wales budget, which has just been handed down, with the Victorian budget. Already in 12 months the two states have swapped positions in terms of which state is in front, which state is leading the Australian economy. I turn to some of the key indicators and key comparisons between the Victorian budget and the New South Wales budget that has just been handed down. Looking at the infrastructure spend over the forward estimates, in Victoria there is \$21 billion and in New South Wales there is \$68 billion — and New South Wales is not three times the size of Victoria; in fact, the gap has been closing. Looking at surpluses over the forward estimates, we see that the accumulated surpluses for Victoria amount to \$5.8 billion, whereas the New South Wales figure is \$10.6 billion. Looking at the creation of full-time jobs — not part-time jobs — we see that there were 6000 jobs created in Victoria and 36 000 jobs created in New South Wales over the last six months.

What we have is a real comparison, and when people who want to invest money look at where to put their money and their infrastructure spend or where to put their company money, they are going to put it into New South Wales, given the history in Victoria. When they consider the next three or four years in light of the history in Victoria and compare that to New South Wales, they will realise that contracts are worth nothing in Victoria to the extent that a government is prepared to spend \$640 million to get out of a contract that had already been signed — and that does not send a strong signal to the investment community. Investors will go to New South Wales. When we look at the debt-to-gross state product ratio, we see that in Victoria it is double that of New South Wales. We can also look at public sector wages. So much of Victoria's budget is going into massive public sector wage rises, whereas in New South Wales it is well within the realms of growth and not over the odds. There is a real contrast between the real investment that is required in the states of Australia, and unfortunately New South Wales is now showing the way.

It has been interesting to hear some of the contradictions and hypocritical statements that have been part of this budget debate. For example, when the Cranbourne-Pakenham-Dandenong rail project was presented as an unsolicited bid to the previous government, we took that on seriously and were going to work with it. The then manager of opposition business, now the Minister for Public Transport, the member for Bendigo East, said that unsolicited bids were not good government and that we were a lazy government because we were prepared to take on an unsolicited bid. The Labor government has hardly been in power for a few months and has no major projects,

yet what has it done? It has taken an unsolicited bid on the western distributor, which is an absolute backflip on its attitude to unsolicited bids. The government could be consistent and say that it does not believe in unsolicited bids but that is not the case. In opposition it said unsolicited bids do not count, but in government it welcomes unsolicited bids. That is another example of the fact that when people look for places to invest and they see that incredible flip-flop in the approach to infrastructure and the approach to unsolicited bids, they will see that the government is all over the place and keeps changing its mind.

People could look at ports, for example, and say that previously the Victorian Labor government was all in favour of a port at Hastings, and its members are on the record as saying that. Then it was in favour of Bay West, but now it does not want anything — and there is going to be a 70-year monopoly in Victoria. On large major infrastructure projects this government has taken more positions than you would find on an AFL team sheet — and its positions are changing all the time. That does not build confidence among the investment community. I know, for example, with the unsolicited bid for the western distributor that part of the deal is that no taxpayer money will go into it but the tolls that CityLink can collect will go on for decades longer. Instead of the system being handed back to the state in around 2033, under the unsolicited bid that handing back would be extended for another 15 years. People in Victoria do not mind paying tolls. If they use a road, they are prepared to pay a toll, but the people in the east, the south-east and people on the Mornington Peninsula who use the Monash Freeway and CityLink frequently to come into Melbourne, do not want to be paying tolls for another 15 years to pay for a road that they will never ever use.

If people use a road, they are prepared to pay for it, but to have tolls on the Monash Freeway for a further 15 years beyond 2033 to pay for a road in the western suburbs is just not fair at all. My constituents and the people who live in the east, in the south-east, in the southern suburbs and on the Mornington Peninsula do not think that is fair. It is all about getting a project, about saying, 'We need a project, let us get something. An unsolicited bid? Yes, we will grab that'. However, unfairly half of Melbourne is going to miss out on that. In fact half of Melbourne residents who do not use the road will be paying for that road.

I want to mention a couple of things in education that have taken place since the budget was handed down. As we know, there is no commitment to fund — this government has dumped its commitment — years five and six of the Gonski agreement. When the current

federal government dumped years five and six of the Gonski agreement, as the minister I stood up and said that it was not fair because we had signed an agreement with the federal government, not with a political party — not with the Labor Party. We always said we were prepared to pay our share of \$5.4 billion over six years. I remember that the now Minister for Education when in opposition railed against the federal government and asked how dare federal government drop years five and six, but what happened when this government handed down its budget? There was no funding for years five and six funding. The state Labor government has dumped years five and six of the Gonski agreement.

It gets worse. The whole Labor Party has walked away from the Gonski agreement. Bill Shorten has said that years five and six of the Gonski agreement are off the table; the Labor Party will not fund them. I know the Labor Party will not win the next federal election, but if it were to win, it would totally wipe out years five and six of the Gonski agreement. How hypocritical can you get?

Like everyone else in this place, I watched *The Killing Season*. There were Julia Gillard and David Gonski saying, 'Peace in our time. This is the greatest ever funding deal. This is the best thing for education since Federation'. What has happened? Once again Bill Shorten has stabbed Julia Gillard in the back. He has virtually said to her, 'The one thing you did, the thing you signed up to, that Gonski education agreement, it's gone'. He is saying, 'I'm wiping the history books of every trace of Julia Gillard. I've stabbed her in the back, and now I'm going to get rid of her commitment to that funding'. I can believe that members of the state Labor Party would turn their backs on government schools and not fund years five and six of Gonski, but I cannot believe Bill Shorten would do that.

Ms Thomas interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McCurdy) — Order! I ask the member for Macedon to keep her voice down, because I am having trouble hearing the member on his feet.

Mr DIXON — I will yell more loudly! I remember, because I negotiated the agreement with him, that Bill Shorten was talking about the whole of years five and six, and he said he was going to pay for them. He was actually going to cede control of education back to the states; the Australian Education Bill was not going to stand. We came to an agreement that the best thing for long-term certainty in education was to have the full six years of the Gonski agreement. Bill Shorten, who I

thought was an honourable man, has now dumped years five and six. The Labor Party has no credibility at all in education. In fact the only true believers in public education and in consistent, fair and equitable funding for it are the coalition government and coalition parties in Victoria. We are the only ones who were prepared to fund the full six years.

In my electorate there is a major issue at Red Hill Consolidated School, with \$1.3 million worth of maintenance required there. I have spoken to the minister about it, and I know the school has approached him about it. Obviously that money was not in this year's budget, but I can assure the minister that I will continue to pursue funding of \$1.3 million for maintenance that is required at Red Hill Consolidated School.

Another issue I have raised with the Minister for Education is the need for a wellbeing pavilion at Rosebud Secondary College. I have not asked for it to be fully funded but for some funding towards it. At Rosebud Secondary College we have had a number of student suicides and self-harm incidents over a number of years. To combat that scourge, the school has taken on a new meditation and mindfulness program, and people at the school are doing a fantastic job. A wellbeing pavilion sends a very powerful message about the mental health of young people and the community. I look forward to pursuing funding for that with the minister over the coming year.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the 2015–16 budget papers. I am delighted to commence my contribution while standing next to my colleague the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. There are so many aspects of this budget that one could talk about. The leadership role that the Andrews government has played — nationally, in my view — in putting the prevention of family violence at the heart of our government's initiatives and appointing the member for Northcote as the minister with specific responsibility for and to be the guardian of this issue speaks absolutely to the social justice credentials of this government.

In the 2015–16 budget the government committed to an \$81.3 million package. That includes funding for the Royal Commission into Family Violence to continue investigations into our national emergency. As members know, the royal commission will report back to the community in early 2016. The Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty, is a magnificent advocate on these issues. She is a person of extraordinary courage and commitment. This will be one of the emblematic

policies of this government. I know that under the guidance of my colleague the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence the government will commit to funding all the initiatives that will come out of the royal commission's work. This is a huge commitment by our government going forward, but, as the Premier has indicated, family violence is a national emergency — and Victoria is absolutely leading the way in addressing it. The government has also committed \$16 million for family violence support services until the royal commission has completed its work.

The second matter I want to touch on briefly is the east–west tunnel.

An honourable member — Dud tunnel.

Mr WYNNE — This dud tunnel is something that I have fought for seven years, from its very earliest iteration. There has been much embroidering around the place about what the Eddington report said about the east–west tunnel. People have said it was a project supported by the then Brumby government. That is in fact not the case. The project was put forward under Eddington, and in all my submissions to government and the subsequent panel hearings and inquiries under the previous government I said this project made no sense economically and that it would do nothing to resolve congestion issues in my part of the world. As everyone knows, more than 70 per cent of the traffic exiting the Eastern Freeway wants to go into the city or further south or north. It never wanted to cross the city. They are the simple facts of it.

Quite mischievously, members of the previous government were purporting that the project would provide an economic return to the state. Subsequently, when we came to government, it was discovered that the return to the state would be 45 cents in the dollar. The project was flawed from the outset, and we knew its fundamental flaw was that it relied on that shonky side letter that underpinned the project. It spoke volumes about the desperation of the previous government to try to get a project such as that up and away.

As the now Prime Minister indicated, last year's election was a referendum on the east–west tunnel. You bet it was a referendum on the east–west tunnel! Guess what? The people spoke. The federal members or candidates out in the east who think they will get some sort of leverage by trying to crank up the east–west tunnel are fooling themselves.

Unambiguously, members of this government are in the space of public transport. An extraordinary project, the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel, will change the face of this city for the next 50 years. That \$9 billion project will double the capacity of the city loop, and it will carry 20 000 extra passengers in peak times. This is an extraordinary investment by this government. It will also open up extraordinary development opportunities. The Metro will start in South Kensington, come around through North Melbourne and go up to Melbourne University, then continue through Swanston Street and out through the Domain onto the metropolitan network.

If you think about the area in North Melbourne, where there will be a train station at Arden Macaulay, which is near the North Melbourne football ground, you realise it is very downgraded warehousing and so forth. This is an enormous opportunity to plan that precinct well. It will have a train interchange station, and you will see in the next 10 to 15 years a complete resurgence of that part of Melbourne. That is why these sorts of investments are so important. They are city-changing projects.

The commitment of the government towards LGBTI communities is another very welcome initiative. The budget provides \$10 million towards ensuring that LGBTI Victorians have the respect, inclusion, health and happiness to which we are all entitled. The budget invests \$3.2 million to establish and resource Australia's first dedicated equality portfolio within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It includes the creation of a gender and sexuality commissioner, an LGBTI task force and a program of reform to remove discrimination from our laws and services. And who better than the member for Albert Park to be steering that initiative? It is a fantastic thing.

In the couple of minutes I have left to speak I want to point out that it would be fair to say we have a set of challenges in the planning portfolio. The previous government left us with 26 central city planning permits to be resolved and more than 150 planning scheme amendments which are yet to be finalised. That is two years worth of planning scheme amendments that were sitting in the previous minister's office. That is why I am delighted that a further \$1 million was provided in the budget for me to, frankly, restock the public service, because 25 per cent of the planning staff were stripped out by the previous government, and I now have the task —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McCurdy) — Order! I ask the minister to speak through the Chair.

Mr WYNNE — As I said, 25 per cent of the planning staff were stripped out and we have to rebuild the capacity within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

In terms of local initiatives, I am absolutely delighted that the government has fulfilled the commitment to Richmond high school. This is an initiative the community has been calling for for years. It has a long history, with its genesis in the closure by the Kennett government of schools in Richmond, which meant that boys had limited access to high school education in the Richmond electorate. With the booming population we have in the area — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McCurdy) — Order! I ask the minister to speak through the Chair.

Mr WYNNE — I am speaking through the Chair, Sir.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McCurdy) — Order! The minister has his back to me. I am asking him to speak through the Chair.

Mr WYNNE — With a booming population within the Richmond electorate, I know just how welcome this \$10 million commitment by the government to a new Richmond high school is. It is very welcome.

There is also a commitment to partner with Clifton Hill Primary School and the Brotherhood of St Laurence on a contiguous parcel of land next door to the primary school, which is booming. We will have an opportunity in the future to partner with the Brotherhood of St Laurence in the redevelopment of its nursing home there, so there is potential for further construction of school facilities for the primary school as well.

Thirdly, we have reversed the cruel cuts to fundamental programs such as the feeding program at St Mary's House of Welcome in Brunswick Street. This is a major win for our community because this is a frontline service that deals with the most vulnerable people in our community, homeless people — people who, if they did not have St Mary's House of Welcome, would be sleeping on the streets with no support, and eating out of garbage cans. That is why the commitment of this government to redress a very bad decision by the previous government through contracting out was a very welcome initiative.

My colleagues have talked about netball courts — fantastic. There is funding for 64 additional netball courts for the inner suburbs of Melbourne. This is a \$9.6 million initiative. There is also a \$10 million fund to build and upgrade women's changing rooms and

facilities at sports clubs. This is very welcome and a fantastic initiative going forward.

Ms Williams — Hear, hear!

Mr WYNNE — My colleague, the member for Dandenong, spoke about Good Money. Again, this is a great social justice initiative of this government.

This is a really balanced budget. It is one that I am immensely proud of. At its core is not only good economic management but also a consistent stream of fairness and social justice. Only a Labor government will commit to those fundamental principles, and that is why we are on this side of the chamber.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the 2015–16 budget. I was elected to this Parliament as an Independent member. I stood on the slogan 'Stand up Shepparton, it's our turn'. This statement struck a chord with members of a community who had traditionally voted for the coalition for over 45 years. For them to turn around and vote for an Independent required a significant change of feeling within the community. Voters, I think, felt they had shown loyalty to the coalition for a long time but were not getting the infrastructure that they wanted to see in the region.

During the last four years the coalition government committed to building a new courthouse in Shepparton. That is a major development that will service the whole of our region. The roof of the courthouse has been falling in for years. It has had white ants; it has had water coming in through the roof. It has been so overcrowded that the federal circuit courts have had to travel to Cobram just for accommodation. This is something that people had long waited and lobbied for and was finally happening.

There are many other major infrastructure projects that the region needs, and in my campaign there were four that I particularly called for. The first is the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health. We watched in amazement as Bendigo received a \$630 million new hospital. A last-minute pledge of some funding during the election campaign was not enough to convince the people of Shepparton that they should vote for a coalition government in their electorate.

We called for better rail services. For years Shepparton watched as Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and the Latrobe Valley were favoured with major investments in rail to those regions. They enjoy something like 20 trains a day in and out of their regions, while we have 4 trains

to Melbourne each day, with 3 returning on weekdays and even fewer on weekends.

The regional rail link has been developed, which is a major investment again for the Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong regions. They now have access straight into the city on a dedicated regional line; they do not have to compete with metropolitan train timetables, as we in the north do. Coming from Seymour, we have to go through Craigieburn, where we join the metropolitan timetable. That means limited trains coming in, so there are major problems with getting extra trains from Shepparton directly into Melbourne. We can only coordinate with the Seymour line and hope that we can get more services delivered to our region in that way. All of these things require investment, and they require allocations in the budget.

The third issue is the Shepparton bypass, which is particularly important because we desperately need a second river crossing at Shepparton. We only have the Peter Ross-Edwards Causeway. It is the only crossing in case of emergencies anywhere within the vicinity of the town, and it is much needed. It is also a major part of the bigger program of duplicating the Goulburn Valley Highway from Seymour through to the New South Wales border. It is a major piece of infrastructure that will ultimately help with the viability of the port of Melbourne. For instance, grain crops from the Riverina and northern New South Wales are trucked down to the port each day. Many people do not realise that the New South Wales cotton crop is stored in warehouses in Shepparton, fed down to the port as necessary and sent overseas. That sort of infrastructure development is of major importance.

The fourth point I campaigned on was the issue of unemployment, and in particular youth unemployment, in our region. Clearly that is a major issue everywhere, and I hear all the members of this house talking about it, but we have one of the highest rates in the state. One of the things that has become very apparent in recent years is that there are jobs being developed in the region as a result of growth in dairying, horticulture and agriculture, but we are not training young people coming out of schools to go into those jobs, so there is a mismatch between education and the future jobs that will be available. I am pleased that one of the current budget initiatives is the Back to Work Fund, which has recently given some money to our TAFE college specifically to do some training in the dairy area, hopefully to train young people to go into some of those jobs throughout our region.

The Victorian Auditor-General's report of April 2014 entitled *Access to Education for Rural Students* makes a

series of observations about comparative participation and the engagement of young people in the regions. I will quote from that report. A particular comment it makes is that:

... young people who have not completed a secondary education are almost four times more likely to report poor health, have mortality rates up to nine times higher than the general population and are more likely to require welfare support and government-subsidised services.

I quote further:

Students from rural schools generally achieve poorer outcomes than those from metropolitan schools. Academic performance is poorer and students are less engaged with their education. This has led to lower rates of school completion and to fewer students going on to higher level study or training.

This is a terrible indictment of the long-term neglect of both educational opportunities and the need to address unemployment in the region.

The Victorian Labor Party made no promises for the Shepparton district during the last election campaign. It is clear to me that the 2015–16 budget has focused on delivering on election promises. However, the notion that the Shepparton district should not expect much has changed and there is a demand that there be equity in spending, such that the Shepparton district will benefit from significant infrastructure expenditure in the years ahead.

In 2011 the Grattan Institute released a paper entitled *Investing in Regions — Making a Difference*. This report investigated the regions, examining what has been described as a 'patchwork economy' where some parts of the country seem to boom and grow while others lag behind. It notes that cities closer to metropolitan areas, which in the case of Victoria is Melbourne, and coastal areas are growing considerably and doing much better, and that smaller, slightly more remote and further away towns are lagging behind.

The thesis of this report is that from an economic point of view it is wise to invest in these growing areas: they need the infrastructure and they need the support. But the report's other finding is that slower growing areas should not be left out. On the grounds of equity and social justice they should have investments in their schools, hospitals, transport and other community facilities. My electorate has missed out in this regard.

The report notes that such funding should be regarded as a subsidy on equity and social grounds rather than necessarily generating economic growth. So often in government we are asked to justify ourselves on the grounds of economic benefit. That should not be the

only requirement. There are social and equity reasons investment should happen in regional areas. We are needed, and should be serviced in the same way. We should have equal opportunities to education, health and all those other things that people in metropolitan areas enjoy.

One of the report's recommendations is that it is not viable to have universities in regional areas. I was at a lecture in Shepparton several years ago that was sponsored by the Fairley Foundation, and the guest speaker was Alan Myers, QC. On behalf of the Grattan Institute he was speaking about this notion. I was outraged to think that would get up as a proposition when so many people in regional areas have no opportunity of going to Melbourne or to a major centre to study.

So many people required a second income during the drought. Farmers would go into towns to La Trobe University campuses at Bendigo, Ballarat, Wodonga and places like this to do nursing training or teacher training because they were desperate for a second income on their farm. Those people have no opportunity to move to Melbourne or travel to Melbourne to do those courses. They have farms, homes, husbands and children. They are simply not in a situation to do it.

They are a significant part of the population who seek education in a regional setting.

In addition, those of us who have sent our children to Melbourne to study at universities know the cost of that. Putting aside the higher education contribution scheme fees, just think about the living costs. They are at least \$25 000 a year now. If you want to send your child to a college in Melbourne, that is about the rate you will pay to support them. They can live in shared accommodation, they can get part-time work and they can live in poverty, but it is not good enough. The proposition that we just have to pay a bit more to support them in Melbourne simply will not work.

In Melbourne young people get to live at home. For God's sake, a lot of them get to live at home until they are 30, and they are supported by their families. If people in the country want an education, they have to leave home — they have to go away unless they can access those sorts of educational opportunities within their regions. There will always be many who have to go away because you simply cannot do some of the courses that young people want to do in the country anyway. But the presence of a regional university is incredibly important.

Why are some areas succeeding and others not? Areas like Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong have long attracted and continue to attract incredibly generous investments in infrastructure spending. Perhaps it is because of the notion that they are closer to Melbourne and were growing a bit that this was happening.

I have sat here and listened to many speeches given by members from both sides — from government members lauding the outcomes of the budget for their electorates and saying how pleased they have been with what they have received, and from the other side of the house members saying how their electorates have been ignored and how they have not received what they wanted.

As with all budgets, health is one of the major areas that soaks up funding. We know that. There is always a demand for more. In the recent budget Goulburn Valley Health was allocated \$1 million to go through a planning phase. I can only take that as being a really positive sign, because if there is going to be \$1 million spent on planning, that surely means that something else is going to follow. I am pleased the government has appointed me to chair a community advisory group to take into account, as we go through that redevelopment planning stage, what the needs of the community are. That small outlay by the government has at least given us hope that maybe in the next budget we will actually stand to get an allocation to start redeveloping that health facility.

In the Shepparton community we have a higher percentage of people with heart disease, with obesity, with low birth weight babies and with poor diets. The demand for Goulburn Valley Health services continues to rise due to the growing population and the ageing community. To meet the rising demands we need investment in a hospital that has cardiac services; we do not have them. If you have a heart attack, you get flown somewhere. We need cancer treatment. We do not have any radiation bunkers; we need them. We need increased emergency department capacity. We have 11 cubicles; we need 30. We need more specialised services for surgery, but we do not have enough operating theatres to attract people to our region.

The successful work and learning centre has helped social housing tenants into training and work and has been re-funded by this government. Indigenous Victorians will benefit from \$30 million to improve their standard of living, create jobs and help them maintain their identity. I hope the Shepparton Indigenous community will receive a benefit from this funding source.

Food, fibre and transport are job growth areas that are to be targeted by the government in the current budget through the \$200 million Future Industries Fund. Again I hope that the Goulburn Valley, the food bowl of Australia, will benefit from a share of that fund.

The \$160 million for roads and bridges has gone but there is \$1 billion over eight years that Labor has allocated for improvements in this area. We do not yet know how that is going to be divided up, but we certainly hope that we get a share of that.

The Premier has said that he was elected to represent all Victorians. He has said, ‘Families shouldn’t have to leave their home town just to find work, and kids shouldn’t have to move to the city just to study’ and, ‘Supporting businesses, workers and students here in regional Victoria is the key to our prosperity as a state’. I am pleased the Premier has made these strong statements. He has indicated a commitment, and we will hold him to it.

Shepparton is now facing an exciting future with huge potential for growing opportunities, but it needs the infrastructure and the support to make that happen. I urge the Labor government to be brave and innovative in supporting emerging opportunities in the Shepparton district by committing to providing the infrastructure that we need to unlock the wealth of that region. The irrigation modernisation is progressing. The town of Shepparton is the fifth largest regional city. It is time we had a fair go.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — I pay my respects to the previous speaker, the member for Shepparton. She is a very good representative of her community and she is going to be here for a long time.

It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the budget today. I would like to congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on this fantastic budget from a government that governs for all of Victoria, not just the top end of town. In the gallery today are some members of my dedicated team from Frankston. I say thank you to Sheridan, Jamie, Ella, Mark and Roz, who are extremely busy in the Frankston office. We have a lot going on, and it could not function without their passion, skills and willingness to go the extra mile. I thank them all. A young man called Frank Hill is also in the gallery. He is our year 10 work experience student and he has been of invaluable assistance to my office over the last week. Thank you, Frank.

Nothing gives a greater tick of approval to the budget than the community of Frankston communicating to me how happy they are to finally have a member who will

fight for them and deliver. That is what Labor does: we deliver. There is no better feeling than turning up to a primary school and explaining to the principal and the assembly that what we committed to do we are coming through on and it is in the budget ready to go. Labor promises and delivers. I will give members some background on what we have delivered in Frankston with this single budget.

In education, we have come from the previous government which did everything but steal the chalk from the teachers’ hands — it literally stole the kids’ lunch money through the abolition of the education maintenance allowance. This budget represents the biggest education budget in Victoria’s history. Monterey Secondary College and Frankston Primary School have been struggling and the money that has been provided to them in the budget will help enormously. Shamefully, the Liberal candidate for Frankston committed money to Frankston Primary School but he would not answer emails, he would not answer phone calls and he would not put the commitment in writing.

Mr Richardson — Some representative!

Mr EDBROOKE — That is right. Some representative! He showed how little Frankston meant to him when we were interviewed by Jon Faine on ABC radio. As soon as the then incumbent member for Frankston, now the former member, stepped into the ring, a Liberal candidate who had made a deal to receive all of this member’s votes, which was 12.9 per cent of the primary vote, went all sheepish until Jon Faine asked what was wrong. Shaun the Sheep then said, true to form, ‘What do you want me to say, Jon?’. There was no passion, no opinion, just an aspiring politician waiting for his party to feed him a rubbish opinion. I note that he now suffers from relevance deprivation on Facebook. His Facebook page should be called the ‘Paul Edbrooke Facebook page’ as it has more pictures of me on it than mine has.

Mr Richardson — The fan club.

Mr EDBROOKE — The fan club, that is it. However, that is not all. Breakfast clubs, uniform and camp funds, asbestos removal programs, the TAFE Rescue Fund — it is on like Donkey Kong in Frankston. The Gonski reforms will be funded in 2015, 2016 and 2017, with the balance being assessed by a committee that is being chaired by no less a person than Steve Bracks.

Going to health, I think the Victorian Trades Hall Council delivered more hospital beds on election day

than the Liberals did in four years. We are counting the beds and we are finding out the truth. We are providing much-needed resources like the life-saving rapid assessment chest pain service for Peninsula Health and the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies program and ending the shameful war on paramedics.

We had an ambulance performance and policy committee in Frankston and over 40 people came to listen to what the Minister for Health had to say. She answered questions. A 30-year mobile intensive care ambulance veteran stood up in the crowd and said he was massively impressed by the minister's understanding of the situation and her work so far.

Let us skip to transport for a second. In all the debate on port capacity we have had lately the Liberals seem to have forgotten that they were the government that dumped all the public transport promises they were voted in on. Let us see: there is the Rowville line, there is the airport and they chose to progress with a dud east–west link project. Forty-five cents in the dollar! You cannot even get a Macca's soft-serve ice cream for 45 cents. As Josh Gordon wrote in an article that appeared in the *Age* of 19 March:

The former government was apparently so desperate to lock-in before the election, senior sources close to the project are now suggesting it was the consortium, not the government, which drafted the side letter.

... the idea that a group of private companies might be allowed to draft a legal document exposing taxpayers to hefty financial risk for a project that probably wasn't going ahead is a disgrace.

Those opposite are not better economic managers. The public is not buying the rhetoric. The article also says:

If correct, the combination of the side letter and the idea the former government wanted to accelerate the flow of cash, provides pretty clear evidence it was putting its own political interests ahead of the financial interests of Victorian taxpayers.

Let me tell those opposite now: it is not about them; it is about the community. As the article says:

That's not good economic management, that's economic sabotage.

We had side letters in the dying days of a government asleep at the wheel. Dumping commitments is a lie to Victoria, and in stark contrast I am pleased to inform the house that the Frankston transit precinct renewal project is well under way. Frankston council has come on board in a big way, and we will be breaking ground very soon, after we finish the community consultation project. This is the biggest project in Frankston, and it

will address 40 years worth of issues. It is 40 years in the making, and it will take Frankston into the future.

We are bringing 400 extra police out of the cells through the introduction of custody officers. We have the biggest public transport budget in Victoria's history. Metro rail will assist people like me who use public transport frequently, in my case to get to Parliament. Currently we get stuck at Richmond when trying to get on the loop and into the city, and the Metro rail project will double capacity. In stark contrast to what a lot of our Liberal friends across the room have been touting in relation to the sale of the port, 13 Liberal members out of the 28 have in their electorates level crossings that are going to disappear, which is a great thing for their communities. It is an excellent outcome, affecting safety issues and time issues in relation to public transport, car drivers, pedestrians and emergency services. The communities of those members want these removals, yet these members are going to vote against the initiative.

Let us have a look at who some of those members are. There is the member for Sandringham, the member for Box Hill and the member for Malvern — tricky Micky with a pen. There is the shameless member for Gembrook. There is the member for Ringwood, who is loud, though not loud on this one. There are the members for Evelyn, Croydon, Bayswater and Caulfield — —

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member is misleading the house. He said the member for Bayswater had had money allocated to level crossings in her electorate; I have not.

Mr EDBROOKE — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I did not say that. I said that level crossings in those electorates had been nominated for being taken care of and that these members were denying the sale of the port. I did not say anything about money being put into it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! The member for Frankston to continue.

Mr EDBROOKE — I think that is pretty shameful, anyway. I think it is all about attitude, Acting Speaker. The best example of the Liberal attitude I could find is something that came out earlier this year. It was a flyer relating to attendance at a discussion evening on the 'union election ambushes' at the Mornington on Tanti hotel. Let us see it. This really is the magnum opus, Acting Speaker. I would love you to listen to this:

We did not lose the last state election.

That is what it says. It goes on:

The union movement ambushed the election by underhand means, fears and lies. But they won. And that gave power to the Labor Party. They won by concentrating on selected polling booths in selected marginal seats and ambushing vulnerable voters with a fear campaign relating to necessary community services with slogans such as if you want good fire protection services (or ambulances or hospital services or education services) ‘put the Liberals last’. Or as they did in Queensland ‘put the LNP last’.

Here we go again. Even a footy team, when it loses a grand final, will take stock of things. The team members sit back and say, ‘What went wrong?’. Our Liberal friends have not done that. They have just said, ‘The union bogeyman is at it again’. They got some of their losing candidates to get up and — supposedly objectively — say, ‘Let’s have a talk about this, because we did not lose the state election’. It is just unbelievable to think that those opposite are questioning the Victorian community’s ability to vote and asserting that they did not lose.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr EDBROOKE — Yes, the community apparently got it wrong. Those on the other side have even come out and talked about my tertiary qualifications, saying — because I am only a firefighter — that these community members and public servants should not be able to represent their community. I believe I am actually quite qualified. I have a degree in politics, a degree in sociology and a bachelor of education, but perhaps we should worry a little less about the degrees our candidates have and put more thought into electing serious, thoughtful and ethical politicians who stick up for their communities — and being an actual local helps too, I reckon. Being a local helps, whereas Facebook from Carlton is pretty easy. People say the election in Frankston was close. I would like to put paid to that myth. When you spend over \$100 000 on signs, when you have an experienced candidate and when you have 12.9 per cent of the former candidate’s primary vote, you should win, but the voters in Frankston spoke extremely loudly in Labor’s favour.

The budget is great news for Frankston — and it is a damn good budget. Ninety-six per cent of the Andrews government’s commitments are fully or partially funded, compared to — does anyone hazard a guess? — 20 per cent of the former government’s first budget commitments which were funded. Yes, the others were switched off; they were back on the pine.

The former government had four years to develop a jobs plan. As the opposition it is still asking, ‘What is a

jobs plan?’. Under the former government unemployment rose to a 13-year high of 6.8 per cent. In some areas of Frankston we are talking about 17 or 18 per cent youth unemployment. It is a lot to deal with, but we are getting on with it. What were those opposite doing? They had their chance, but they tripled the deficit. We have provided a \$1.2 billion surplus.

I would like to leave members in the safe hands of the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) chief executive, Mark Stone, who stated in May:

The Andrews government’s first state budget ... delivers on its election promises with an economically responsible budget that makes a significant investment in productivity-enhancing, job-creating infrastructure.

This is lovely stuff. It goes on:

Importantly, the budget demonstrates responsible fiscal management with operating surpluses forecast to grow to \$1.8 billion in 2018–19, net debt to fall over the medium term and expenditure be kept in check.

The budget’s strong focus on jobs and infrastructure was well received by VECCI. It is likely to spur business and consumer confidence, translating into further private sector investment and employment.

We commend the Andrews government for delivering these key commitments which recognise the vital role infrastructure plays in generating new jobs, strengthening livability, facilitating trade and keeping Victoria competitive.

Clearly the only people complaining about this budget are the ones who wasted four years by not doing anything.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — I would like to say it gives me pleasure to speak on this motion to take note of the budget papers, but this is very much a budget of missed opportunities, broken promises and spin. In a nutshell, it is exactly the sort of budget Victorians have come to expect from Labor governments, and I am going to outline some of the reasons for that.

On a local level, there is a lot missing from this budget for coalition seats in the eastern suburbs, especially the seat of Bayswater. I will give members some idea of the things we are missing out on. A lot of people have brought up the level crossings — —

Mr T. Bull — You have only got 15 minutes.

Ms VICTORIA — The member next to me is right when he says I have only got 15 minutes. I am already wondering if I can ask for an extension of time. We have missed out on funding for a level crossing removal at Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road. I have heard the Premier say on numerous occasions that the first

crossings to go will be those that are dangerous. We have had fatalities at the Mountain Highway level crossing, yet that does not seem to be enough. When we were in government we put a couple of million dollars into the planning stages, the consultation and also the starting of works, such as moving essential services. It is a shovel-ready project, and it should have been one of the very first to be funded under the new government, yet we still have no time frame.

The people of Bayswater are angry. I remember in the lead-up to the election my opponents standing out there, nearly causing accidents, with placards that read, ‘Only Labor will remove this level crossing’. If it was so important that they would risk causing road accidents, why is it not important enough to fund now? I understand that it is a big project. You cannot do it without doing Scoresby Road at the same time. However, it needs to be done, and it needs to be high on the list of priorities. When I have inquired about it I have been told that the level crossing removal program is to be run over two terms of government — if Labor gets two terms. But eight years from now is far too late. This is something the government stood on as part of its platform in Bayswater. It shook placards and put up signs saying, ‘Only Labor will remove these level crossings’. The government should put its money into my electorate.

That was obviously a cynical grab for votes. But another thing that has not been funded in Bayswater is the local Country Fire Authority (CFA) station. Ours is the only CFA station in Victoria that has a road running through it. It was not done by the coalition, although it was promised, because of a land dispute that the local council could not resolve. That was resolved probably eight or nine months ago. It was only at that stage that we were ready to go, and then the money was promised. That seems to have dropped off the radar. The project will only cost about \$2.5 million, and it is incredibly important for the people of Bayswater.

We have a very big volunteer crew at Bayswater CFA, capably led by Captain Diana Ferguson, who I am very pleased to say was the first female captain of an urban CFA brigade. She has done the job incredibly well, and it is something she is very passionate about. Those CFA members have had all the expert training. On average they do a turnout a day, and they do it incredibly well. That station also has some of the only specialist equipment of its type in the outer east, so it is relied on very heavily. We are not treating the brigade with the respect it deserves by not creating a new station where all the operations, administration, communications, trucks and appliances could be under one roof.

Another thing that surprises me concerns the Maroondah breast cancer centre. That is something that does appear in the budget. Budget paper 3, page 109, seems to say the Maroondah breast cancer centre will receive \$10 million. But if you have a closer look, it actually says:

The government committed to funding for the first stage of the Maroondah breast cancer centre ...

Planning and business case development will inform funding to be allocated in a future budget.

The people of the outer eastern suburbs who were relying on this new cancer centre — this place of hope and health — have not been given anything. It just says ‘in a future budget’. We do not know when that is, but there is certainly nothing over the forward estimates, so it will be at least four years before we start to see anything happen. We have been sold an absolute pup.

We did get some funding for schools in my electorate, and I am pleased to say that a lot of the commitments the coalition made have been matched by the Labor Party. But some of them are only getting partial funding. You cannot half rebuild a school. You cannot half paint a classroom. You cannot half resurface a school oval. You cannot do things by halves. If you promise an amount of money, it must be delivered so the project can go ahead in an orderly fashion. Schools cannot possibly go ahead and plan for these things if they do not know how much funding is coming and when. The people of Bayswater have again been dupped by the government in not getting the full amount they were promised. These election promises were a shameful grab for votes and are not actually being delivered upon.

Speaking of education, the last government built the fantastic Boronia K–12 College, which is thriving. It looks amazing; it has great teachers and staff. Right next door to the college is the old Mount View campus that was closed down because it was surplus to the new school’s requirements. This site is in the current education minister’s former electorate, which now forms part of my electorate after the electoral boundary redistribution. The last students left that school in December of last year. Generally speaking when a school closes down or is no longer needed because a new campus has been built, a cyclone wire fence goes around it and alarms get turned on, which act as a deterrent to thieves and vandals.

In its wisdom the department turned off the electricity and did not put up the fences, and that school is now trashed. It has been all over the news; it is going to be bulldozed. That set of buildings could easily have

become, for example, a nursing home. It was absolutely perfectly suited to that sort of facility. The site had a near-new hall — I think it was a Building the Education Revolution hall — which would have been a fantastic facility, for example, for basketball in the local electorate. That is now all going to be bulldozed, and we have been told that the time frame for that happening is within the next few weeks.

Millions of dollars of solid brick buildings, assets of taxpayers of this state, are to be demolished because the department could not or would not secure the site. The situation was brought to the attention of the department on many occasions. My office was in touch with the education minister's department and his office, and we asked for somebody to go over there, with a removal truck at the very least, to take out things like perfectly good desks, filing cabinets, shelving racks and that type of thing. The department did not heed our warnings or pleas to remove these assets that could have quite easily gone into another school in the area or elsewhere in Victoria.

Those assets have now been trashed: vandals have set fire to the school, there have been explosions and the copper wiring has been stripped out. It is an abomination. The education minister, having known this school very well — and I am sure the school supported him as the former local member for many years — has absolutely turned his back on the community he used to represent. I am shocked and dismayed by all of that. The coalition in government built the fantastic Boronia K–12 College, but the old school is so dilapidated it is going to be demolished, which is an absolute waste of taxpayers money that could have been spent on other projects — for example, my local CFA.

My electorate did get one little win, and that was the promise to install traffic lights and fully signalised pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Armstrong Road and Canterbury Road in Heathmont, and I am delighted about that. The community stood beside me and lobbied for that for quite some time. The previous government promised to do this, and obviously the department saw the situation and recognised it for what it was, and that is an absolute necessity. The works are going to go ahead.

I was talking before about the Maroondah breast cancer centre, and even though there was funding for it in the budget, where it says it is going to go into a future budget, there seems to be an awful lot of that practice going on. There seems to be an awful lot of stuff in contingency; a lot of things are written down just to say, 'We are working on it', but no money is allocated.

If no money is allocated towards a project, how can you possibly say it is being delivered? You cannot say it is being started. You can say you are talking about it, but that is a very different scenario.

I want to talk a little bit about my shadow portfolio responsibilities. Aboriginal affairs is an area that traditionally has had bipartisan support. There are always areas for improvement, and I have expressed interest in working in a bipartisan way with the current minister, and she thinks that is a terrific idea. But there are a couple of things that have been taken away from the Aboriginal community in this budget, and I am still waiting for answers. No clear reason has been given as to why funding was axed for the Aboriginal kinship care program, which assists some 170 young children each year. I am still waiting on answers from the Department of Health and Human Services after the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings.

There has also been no funding to continue the Right People for Country program. An independent evaluation of that program showed there was \$3.80 in benefits for every \$1 spent, yet there is no continuation of funding. Also, there has been absolute silence from the government after the axing of the certificate IV course in Aboriginal cultural heritage management, which was delivered by La Trobe University. That dropped off the radar altogether. La Trobe University was the only institution to offer that course, and it could only be funded if it was funded through the department.

In the arts — and I am glad the arts minister, sorry, the Minister for Creative Industries, which includes the arts, is at the table — one of the things that is confusing me is why only \$30 million has been given to the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, when the recommendation was that it would take a minimum of \$35 million to develop it, which was promised by the former Premier, the member for South-West Coast. Without that extra \$5 million what will the Geelong community miss out on? Will the centre have less accessibility? Funding of the centre is not even a line item in the budget. Again it is on the never-never list. The same thing happened with the State Library of Victoria. It received only 48 per cent of its funding needs, and most of it is not being delivered until 2018–19. What are we going to get? Are we going to get the new Russell Street entrance? Will the library's Queen's Hall or only part thereof be restored? The community is uncertain.

In the portfolio of creative industries there is no long-term certainty for the industry. If you look at other industries, we try to give them certainty with 5-year, 10-year, and 15-year plans. With the creative industries

in Victoria, there is no ongoing funding, no long-term certainty, and it is all under review. That is a real shame. Labor's signature or marquee policy, of course, was the Music Market, and it included a \$10 million promise for a centre of excellence and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. There is a handful of dollars for planning, but there is no allocation for bricks and mortar in the next four years. Again the Labor announcement was a shameless attempt to try to win votes. However, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is not going to be created, certainly not in this term of government, so I want to know where the funding for it is?

I refer to tourism. The Minister for Tourism and Major Events says he is going to meet every one of his election commitments. Really? There are no funds allocated for securing Avalon Airport's future, the Harcourt mountain bike trail, Sovereign Hill by night, the Grampians Peaks Trail, the Bendigo Aspire project, Wine Victoria strategies, the Stawell Gift or the Wandong-Wallan-Heathcote rail trail. These projects have no line items, and they have no start date. They are certainly not going to be completed this term. Again, the claims made were about vote buying, and it is shameful.

In terms of major events, the minister is clearly confused about the difference between a major event and a tourism drawcard, but I do want to commend him for acknowledging once — in all the times I have heard him speak! — that the arts do fit into major events. However, I want to correct on the record that Melbourne Now, which I agree was a fantastic exhibition showcasing contemporary artists in Victoria, was not funded under major events. It was funded by me, when I was Minister for the Arts, and the department. That is a little correction for him.

It comes down to the fact that after seven months of holding the state's purse strings, the Labor economic vandals have destroyed the healthy surplus gained by four years of careful financial management, and they have exposed our children and future generations to spiralling debt and the shrinking of major investment and confidence in our state. We have seen a myriad of smoke and mirror tactics used by the government to battle through — everything we have come to expect from Labor governments, and more.

There is of course one white elephant in the room, and that is the east–west link. It is needed for jobs. It is needed for the security of industry and manufacturing, so much of which happens in the east, and requires the freight and logistics possibilities to go forward over the

coming decades and the coming century. Shame on the government for not funding the east–west link.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — When I picked up the Ballarat *Courier* on the day after the Treasurer presented the budget, I had just one thought. It was, 'What a difference a year makes'. Last year in the days following the state budget the *Courier* was reporting on the concerns held by City of Ballarat councillors and on Liberal Party efforts to control the mayoralty of the city. This year was a different thing altogether.

This terrific first budget of the Andrews government was warmly welcomed in Ballarat. The front page headline in the *Courier* said it all: 'Ballarat's state budget bonanza. Eureka!'. I was not surprised by the warm welcome that the budget received. As the Treasurer said on budget day, it was a budget for families — and it certainly is. Families in Ballarat will see the benefit of projects and initiatives that were funded. What this budget does is keep faith with the voters across Victoria and particularly in Wendouree by funding commitments made by Labor prior to the last election. This is very different to the cuts and broken promises delivered by the former Liberal government.

I have long been concerned with instability in Ballarat's manufacturing sector as a result of piecemeal train rolling stock procurement. We build great trains in Ballarat at the Alstom Ballarat workshops. The workers there do an amazing job, but in the past these workers have had work simply run out because the government has failed to properly plan. New trains and a long-term rolling stock strategy from the Andrews government will make a real difference to Alstom's ability to bid for new work as it comes up in a predictable and orderly way.

Staff at Alstom will not be at risk of being put off between contracts as would have happened if the Andrews government had not stepped in to purchase five new X'trapolis trains for the Melbourne Metro network from Alstom. The Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Public Transport all understood that skilled jobs in Ballarat matter, and this budget provides \$90 million for those five new trains that Alstom will build as well as \$1.3 billion for 37 new, high-capacity metropolitan trains, with a 50 per cent local content, that Alstom in Ballarat can tender for. The building of these 37 trains and the jobs associated with them would have gone overseas if the former Liberal government had its way. Now, under a Labor government and thanks to this budget, Alstom in Ballarat has a chance to compete for this work. Members opposite should take note, because this is what putting an emphasis on local jobs looks like.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recently held hearings in Ballarat. Some incredibly brave men have given evidence to that royal commission about their experiences as children. Many more, who are just as brave, have been looking on, knowing that they had similar terrible experiences. Over the last few years I have spoken to many of these survivors of sexual abuse. A number of them came to me and talked about the need that they had, but more importantly the needs of others whom they knew, for additional support.

The Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault, known as Ballarat CASA, was there to help. That group does an amazing job of providing assistance, but those people need dedicated support. Their concern has always been for survivors who are struggling most. Last year Labor promised, if it was elected to government, to provide additional funding to Ballarat CASA to assist Ballarat's survivors of institutional sexual abuse. This state budget provides \$500 000 to Ballarat CASA over the next four years for dedicated support for these brave men. This is about doing the right thing, as is the government's commitment to implement all recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report.

I move on to Eureka Stadium and other sporting infrastructure. It is no secret in Ballarat that I support bringing AFL games to our great city. This budget will fund the infrastructure that is part of making that happen. By funding the upgrade of the Eureka Stadium, with a new scoreboard, lighting and dramatically improving spectator facilities, this great football venue will be ready to host AFL regular season games. I was disappointed but not surprised to read a letter in the *Courier* recently from Simon Ramsay, a member for Western Victoria Region in the other place, criticising Labor's support for bringing AFL to Ballarat. Mr Ramsay's letter read in part:

Instead, the Andrews government gave \$15 million to the Eureka Stadium for an upgrade on the promise of AFL matches that are yet to be assigned to Ballarat.

In his desperation to be critical, Mr Ramsay has once again embarrassed himself. It is the government's aim to have regular season games played at Eureka Stadium in 2017. I would suggest that the only person in Victoria foolish enough to think that the AFL fixture for the 2017 season should already be completed, with games 'assigned', is Mr Ramsay.

But Eureka Stadium is not the only investment in sporting infrastructure made by this government in the budget. C. E. Brown Reserve will get new change rooms following the City of Ballarat's resurfacing of the oval, which will make the stadium a first-rate

facility. The budget funds upgraded basketball facilities, which takes the pressure off the demand for courts in Ballarat and improves the facilities. These are great initiatives that support grassroots sport, and we all know how important that is.

In terms of education, the Labor government has made some great announcements in education. There are amazing schools in the Wendouree electorate, with teachers who are passionate about their work and great kids who attend them. I want to give a quick shout out to the teachers in Wendouree and across Victoria and thank them for everything they do. Each time I go to a school it is easier to see the teachers' commitment to providing the best education they can for their students. But sometimes the school facilities do not always match up to the commitment of the teachers who work in our schools or the importance of the kids who learn in them.

The Andrews government is getting the Victorian government back into the business of investing in schools. After four years of neglect by the previous Liberal government, it is about time. This budget provides \$6 million to Ballarat Secondary College to improve facilities. At the Wendouree campus this will make a massive difference to the environment in which kids learn, and I am proud the Andrews government is making this investment. Another great school in my electorate that I love to visit is Delacombe Primary School. The school has such a positive atmosphere — I always leave feeling much better than when I arrived — but there are large cracks in some of its walls that let the weather into the classrooms. I am really proud that this government has included \$2 million in the budget to fix this problem. The school absolutely deserves it.

The budget also funds support for low-income families with kids at school — support such as free eye tests and glasses for prep to grade 3 kids in 250 disadvantaged schools. The budget provides funds for breakfast clubs at disadvantaged schools that will serve up the most important meal of the day to 25 000 students. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund will help hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged families afford non-classroom activities that are so important to a student's ability to learn. There is also funding to expand a free uniform, shoes and books program run by State Schools Relief. This will make such a difference in the Wendouree electorate. When the education maintenance allowance (EMA) was cut, families found it increasingly difficult to pay for these school essentials. I have spoken in this house before the fact that I used to get EMA for my kids, and it would always be spent on buying them new school shoes,

because that was the only way that I could afford it, so I know that it was a real loss when that allowance was cut.

However, we cannot undo the past. There were kids who missed out when the former Liberal government cut the education maintenance allowance, which made me very angry. Those cuts were targeted at kids from low-income families and affected those kids' chances to get the most out of school. The Andrews government cannot change the past, but it sure can change the opportunities for kids from low-income families through the programs that I have just mentioned. The difference between the Liberal and Labor parties is very clear when you look at the Liberals' cuts to the EMA and the Andrews government's commitment to all kids, regardless of their family's income. While I am on the subject of education, I cannot pass up an opportunity to mention Labor's commitment to building a technical school in Ballarat, which is very exciting.

In terms of health, Labor promised Ballarat that there would be a new catheterisation laboratory — or cath lab — at the Ballarat hospital, and there will be. This budget provides \$10 million for a new cath lab, which will make a great difference in Ballarat. Unfortunately this infrastructure is needed in my region. The Ballarat region has particularly high levels of cardiovascular disease — in fact it is the second-highest level in the nation — so this new cath lab is important. It will significantly increase the capacity of cardiac services and will benefit patients in critical care and inpatient care. It will also benefit ambulance services. This is really great news for the health care of people in Ballarat.

Additional patients will be treated at the Ballarat base hospital through the Andrews government's Hospital Beds Rescue Fund, a fund that is opening up hospital beds across the state. By opening new short-stay medical beds, an additional 689 patients will be treated every year at the hospital. This is another great initiative that is funded in this budget.

I will briefly mention the railway station precinct. Recently I was at a great venue in Ballarat, the very newly renovated Provincial Hotel that has opened opposite the Ballarat train station. I had the chance to speak with one of the owners, who have taken this dilapidated and run-down former hotel — a hotel that I spent a lot of my younger years in, I might add, and which had been closed for years — and done a cracker job of renovating it. I did some of my better work there. Any members who visit Ballarat should drop in and check it out.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms KNIGHT — It probably contributed to its downfall, really. I spoke with one of the owners about the renovation — revitalisation really — and he was extremely enthusiastic about the government's plans in conjunction with the City of Ballarat to redevelop the precinct around Ballarat's train station. There is \$25 million in the budget for this redevelopment, and that is going to make a massive difference to Ballarat not only in cleaning up that site but also in providing valuable jobs. It is an exciting project that is going to be great for Ballarat.

When giving his budget speech the Treasurer said this was a budget for families, and that is certainly true of families in the Wendouree electorate. There will be better schools and more support from the Victorian government for low-income families with kids at school; new facilities and more beds to treat more patients at the base hospital; infrastructure investment for future growth and to boost economic opportunity in Ballarat; a real focus on the importance of jobs in Ballarat; and additional support for survivors of institutional sexual abuse. These initiatives keep faith with the people of the Wendouree electorate by delivering on the government's pre-election commitments, but more importantly, this budget delivers for the families of Wendouree.

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers. I do so with a heavy heart, because the recently delivered Victorian state budget really mark a dark day for the Waverley district and its residents. Whether it is cuts to services, higher taxes and charges or making life more difficult for those residents who are doing everything they can to get ahead, this budget has it all. I intend to touch on all those aspects: the cuts in the services, the deliberate strategy to make life harder through higher taxes and charges on small and medium-size businesses, importantly on the household budget, on education and on sport and recreation facilities in this district.

The Napthine coalition government had a very ambitious agenda for education in the Mount Waverley electorate. Over the term of the previous government we put record investment into schools. I was extremely pleased to be able to ensure that our \$4.5 million redevelopment of Pinewood Primary School and the \$2 million refurbishment of Mount Waverley North Primary School were achieved, and we built on that for the last election. The previous coalition government made a commitment to substantial further increases in education facilities in this district. The former Victorian

government had made a commitment for the \$6 million-plus rebuilding of Glen Waverley Primary School, a school which was acknowledged by members on both sides of the house as being worthy in the maintenance report and an audit that was done by this government. I also acknowledge that previous Labor governments acknowledged that need. That is why I was so pleased when the previous government committed that \$6 million. Unfortunately that project has now been cut to \$2 million and will only provide refurbishment for a school hall and nothing else, so a worthy school that has been recognised by both sides of politics has missed out.

The coalition government was also committed to undertaking stage 2 of the redevelopment of Mount Waverley Secondary College, a \$10.58 million commitment, as well as to stage 3, to ensure that that school could have the confidence and certainty to plan for its future. Once again that school was identified by an independent maintenance audit and by the previous Labor government as being in need. Money was committed, but in the last state budget the \$10.58 million and the \$8.37 million for stage 3 have gone. The coalition also took to the last election an ambitious package not only to look at those schools that were most in need from a facilities point of view but also to try to support those which were seeking to raise the bar, and Brentwood Secondary College is a great example of a very aspirational school that is seeking to raise the bar. Its enrolments have gone from around 800 to 1700 in the last decade.

The school is now in a situation in which it has to turn kids away because parents have recognised how good a school it is. The former government committed \$8.381 million to undertake stage 1 of that school's rebuild, and to give the school certainty made an additional commitment for stage 2, which was worth \$10.619 million, though no money was allocated at the time. Unfortunately no money was allocated for the rebuild in the current state budget, so Brentwood Secondary College has had its funding cut by \$8.381 million. On top of that we committed to a smaller allocation of funding at the election to create a master plan for Glen Waverley South Primary School, but that is not in the budget.

For me and for the parents and students in my district education is about more than just buildings; education is also about parental choice. Education is about respecting the rights of parents to be able to send their children to government or non-government schools. By looking at quality education structures around the world we know that choice is one of the key characteristics of a well-performing education system. With that in mind

I turn to the funding increase delivered by the coalition government to non-government schools and the private schools funding increase that passed through this house more recently. The truth is that Labor was dragged kicking and screaming to the 25 per cent funding arrangements for non-government schools, let us not kid ourselves — but I welcome the decision nonetheless.

Labor is attacking parents' choice in regard to the schools to which they send their children. If you want evidence of the Labor Party's attack on the right to choose education providers, you need only look at its plan to strip choice from parents who wish to send their children to faith-based schools through the removal of equal opportunity law exemptions. I know that members opposite do not like to hear the facts of the matter, but that is what Labor is going to do. It is going to strip parents of their ability to choose to send their children to faith-based schools by changing the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. That makes it very clear that the Labor Party does not respect freedom of choice as a fundamental characteristic of the education system. We are very proud to have a record of strong investment in government schools, but we are also proud to have a record of respecting parental choice through the funding of non-government and faith-based schools.

It is not only through education that the residents of Mount Waverley district have had this dark budget hoisted upon them. If we talk about sport and recreation, we have to talk about the coalition government's great achievement of having both sides of politics recognise the needs of Waverley Gymnastics Centre, which is a specialised centre based in an outstanding facility. Waverley Gymnastics Centre has around 550 people on its waiting list because it provides a great chance for women and children to engage in gymnastics. The centre was putting together a redevelopment plan worth \$5.57 million. Management sought \$2 million from the state government in the process and had other money lined up from other levels of government and from non-government sources as well.

We worked very hard on that project to have all levels of government support it. The redevelopment of that centre would have provided a specialist gymnastics facility for children with special needs, whether they be physical or cognitive. The coalition committed to that project. The current Minister for Sport visited that facility during the election campaign and recognised the merits of this plan, yet there is nothing in the budget for Waverley Gymnastics Centre to redevelop the facility. The centre was raising so much money to build this facility for special needs kids in particular, but nothing

has been allocated in the state budget, and there is nothing to come as far as I am aware. Waverley Gymnastics Centre is just one example of the way the residents of Mount Waverley district have been let down.

One of the most concerning elements of the budget is in the health portfolio, which detailed the government's funding cuts to Monash Children's hospital. There are cuts of \$177 million to this project for sick kids. I say that because the Labor government has made it very clear that this hospital will have no dedicated emergency department, no mental health service, no sleep laboratory and no extra floor — that is how the government arrived at its \$177 million funding cut. At 5 minutes to midnight the Labor government was shamed into committing \$3.8 million to build a helipad. While I welcome that decision — because as a consequence sick kids are able to be transported to the hospital by helicopter — the helipad should never have been in doubt. It was always planned for by the coalition government. There will be no dedicated emergency department, however, which means that kids will be airlifted to the hospital but will not have a dedicated emergency department to be brought to.

The hospital will not have a specialist mental health service, which was cut as part of that \$177 million, it will not have a dedicated sleep laboratory and it will not have that extra floor. The Premier has confirmed as much — he has confirmed that \$177 million will not be available for that project. That is a great shame, because worthy projects such as this — projects for sick kids in my district — are what is missing from this budget.

In addition to those cuts to education, in addition to the disrespect for parental choice and in addition to the cuts to sport and recreation, the Labor government has made decisions to make life harder for families through higher taxes and charges. The Labor government is also making life harder for employers to employ people throughout the state by increasing its revenue from payroll tax. If you look at the economic indicators, you see that Victoria is not running at full capacity. The budget papers themselves show that gross state product growth is at around 2.5 per cent. There are certainly opportunities for the state to grow more quickly. In addition to that, we know unemployment under this government, according to these budget papers, will sit at an average of about 6 per cent until 2017-18.

You would think that with, on the government's own admission, a budget surplus and a surplus profile there might be just one cent for payroll tax cuts to small and medium size businesses which are doing the right thing and seeking to put on more people and increase their

hours and that the government might have listened to groups like the Australian Industry Group, the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry and others which continued to advocate for payroll tax cuts. But there is not one cent of payroll tax cuts for businesses in my electorate. As a consequence there is no question that this government is making it harder and creating disincentives for businesses to employ more people and create more jobs. No-one in their right mind would advocate, with budget surpluses going into the future and unemployment at 6 per cent plus, taking another 6.2 per cent in payroll tax revenue. But that is what this government is doing.

Looking at motor vehicle taxes, this government is going to rake in another 4.5 per cent. To a householder in my district who might have one or two motor vehicles in the family, that means the cost of running those motor vehicles will increase. That is as a consequence of the Labor government taking 4.5 per cent more in motor vehicle taxes, and the budget papers show that. Households also have expenses like insurance policy premiums, and the budget papers indicate that this government will take in 5.4 per cent more in insurance taxes. That hits families, hits households and hits small and medium size businesses that have insurance policies.

You cannot on the one hand put your public relations people out there — like this government is doing — saying, 'We're about employing people' and then on the other hand not provide 1 cent of payroll tax relief for small and medium size businesses, increase payroll tax revenue by 6.2 per cent, increase insurance taxes by 5.4 per cent, increase motor vehicle taxes by 4.5 per cent and hit families and those who are seeking to get ahead — hit those who are working hard, trying to be self-reliant and are saving and maybe creating and growing their own small businesses. They are being hit time after time.

This is a dark day not only for services in the Mount Waverley district but also for households and small and medium size businesses, which are being hit with higher taxes and charges at a time when there are surpluses going forward. Whilst those surpluses are significantly lower than they would have been under a coalition government, there is a surplus profile — while unemployment is predicted to be around 6 per cent over the forward estimates and the economy is growing only at the speed it is. There is plenty of capacity to provide an economic stimulus in the form of tax cuts and in the form of helping people to employ more people, and there is plenty of opportunity to provide tax cuts, but this government refuses to provide 1 cent of

across-the-board tax cuts in payroll tax and in other areas.

The Treasurer's pet scheme of picking some select categories of employees who, if an employer employs them, may be eligible for a rebate just does not cut it. It is costly and it is time consuming. Small and medium size businesses are just not interested in that paperwork for such a small return. If they were serious about growing the economy, serious about jobs and serious about relieving the cost of living pressures on families and small and medium size businesses, the honourable thing for this Treasurer and this government to have done would have been to put in place a long-term tax reform program of less taxes on households and businesses. They had the surplus profile to do it, they had the capacity in the economy to do it and they had the unemployment numbers to do it, but they did not do it because this is a high-spending, high-taxing government.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pearson) — Order! The member for Eltham.

Ms WARD (Eltham) — Thank you, Acting Speaker. It is a delight to see you in the Chair, second only to the delight I have in listening to your lessons on ancient Roman history. The opposition's absolutely hopeless response to this budget is no surprise. As we would expect, the speeches of opposition members have been full of essentially meaningless, predominantly three-word slogans such as: 'Stop the spending', 'Build the tunnel' and 'Don't remove the level crossings'. This is pointless commentary that does nothing to provide a coherent narrative to the people of Victoria regarding the kind of state they want Victoria to be.

Where is the vision of those opposite? Where are their dreams, their hopes for our magnificent state? Those opposite just do not have them, for if they did, they would still be in government. But guess what? They are not. Instead they were thrown out after only four years, and what a miserable, lazy and uninspiring four years it was. They are in a party in search of ideas, in search of an ideology and in search of leadership, because I tell you what, Tiny Tony over there is not an indicator of good leadership. All he does is mimic Big Tony in Canberra, who only wants to go around slashing and burning and scaring the bejesus out of everyone.

Look at where it gets them. They go to the Institute of Public Affairs and the Centre for Independent Studies, and what comes out of that? 'Oh, let's have a thought bubble about making people pay to go to school. Let's charge them to go to public schools. What a great

idea!'. What do those opposite bring to the Parliament and the people of Victoria? Absolutely nothing. They bring nothing to this debate or to this place other than harping, whining and negativity. They have no ideas, as we have seen throughout this last sitting week of Parliament before we go on the winter break. Where is their focus on jobs, on education, on health, or on any of the things that really matter to the people of this state and that they voted for last year? These are the things they cared about and voted on. What have those opposite done to address those concerns this week? Nothing — zip, zilch. Instead they want to whack down the boom gates of progress in this state, just like they brought nothing to Montmorency Secondary College, a fantastic school in my electorate which over the past four years was neglected by the Liberals.

Four and a half years ago, before the 2010 election, the very hardworking former member for Eltham, Steve Herbert, got together a fantastic plan for that school. He promised \$10 million to rebuild that school, a rebuild which was very much needed. What happened over the next four years after the Liberals got in? Nothing. He got absolutely nothing. He put the electorate in even safer hands, and my electorate is better off for that because now there is \$14 million for the school, which the Leader of the Opposition, who went to that school, did not lobby for over the last four years when the coalition was in government. He did absolutely nothing. This government announced it would commit \$14 million for that school, and suddenly the Liberals appeared and came up with \$14 million. What a miracle! They finally realised the school is in need. It only took them four years to get there.

What does the Leader of the Opposition, a former Monty high school boy — it is now Montmorency Secondary College — do? Does he say, 'That's great, guys, fantastic. Thank you for addressing the needs of that school'? No, he goes around bleating like an angry goat, like the Tiny Tony that he is. What does he do? He is Mr Negativity, just like Mr Canberra is. There is the same kind of negativity and dummy spitting. Because Labor is the party of ideas and wants to get things done, all he can do is whinge from the sidelines. Does he want to contribute to a proper debate and get things done? No, he does not. What is he whinging about? That money is actually starting to flow to Montmorency Secondary College.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms WARD — That is exactly right; money is starting to flow. It did not flow four years ago, it did not flow three years ago and it did not flow two years ago, but it is flowing now. That is a very good thing. The

allocation of \$1.4 million will get this project started, and more money will flow. The Leader of the Opposition sings from the same angry hymn book as the Prime Minister: ‘No, no, no!’. That is all they have got: ‘No, no, no’.

I have to say that Montmorency Secondary College is a warm-hearted, hardworking and inclusive school. I have already spoken in this place of the excellent leadership programs the school offers and its exceptional students who donate their time and money to help girls in Sierra Leone access education. This is a fantastic school that should have been rebuilt four years ago. That community deserved to have this state-of-the-art school rebuilt four years ago instead of having to wait another four years for a Labor government to come back in and deliver them the school they deserve. Unsurprisingly the school is pretty pleased with this announcement. I have visited the school regularly, both last year and this year, and I know the community is keen to get on with rebuilding its school and that it has welcomed this budget announcement with open arms.

Of course the good news for my community does not stop there. St Helena Secondary College and Glen Katherine Primary School will also benefit from \$2.5 million in funding to build a new sporting complex between the two adjoining schools that will see not only the two schools benefit but also the excellent Eltham Netball Club and the successful Eltham Redbacks Football Club, as well as other local sporting groups. I want to thank Julie Jones, Ryan Adams and Ivan Dalla Costa from these clubs for all the work they have put in to ensure the success of this project. Principals Karen Terry and Jill Ramsay are to be congratulated on their hard work, persistence and vision in getting this project going. This has been a project that has been a labour of love for a number of people, myself included, over the last two years. Nearly every month a number of interested people have met at St Helena to plan out the sporting precinct. I thank John Fecondo for his excellent leadership in chairing the working group that has overseen the planning for this project.

What is also interesting to note is that, like the state Leader of the Opposition, whose concern for Montmorency Secondary College only appeared last year, the Liberal candidate for local government also had no interest in this fantastic project at St Helena Secondary College despite being the councillor for the local municipality who got invited to meetings every single month. Did he turn up? He turned up once towards the end. Do members know why he turned up once towards the end? For a photo opportunity! Getting a photo taken at the school was the only reason he

turned up. Do members know what he is? He is symptomatic of what those opposite stand for: absolute stunts. They are not interested in hard work. They are not interested in thoughtful process. They just want to jump up and down and be part of a few stunts.

This is what we are finding: there is nothing much happening opposite. Those opposite are so bereft of ideas that all they could do while they were in government was cut — cut, cut, cut! — and their cuts hurt. Under those opposite, this state, which is to become Australia’s education state, experienced drastic and extraordinarily damaging budget cuts. Our incredibly important TAFE’s were brought to their knees in four short but very destructive years. We know it is not just families and students who are concerned by this situation but industry as well, which has not been seeing the skills it needs to help its businesses grow. There has been a decline in apprenticeship and traineeship numbers, which were reduced by half during 2012 and 2014. Why did that happen? Because those opposite could not get their act together and because they cut the bejesus out of TAFE. They just kept cutting, and they cut without any care in the world for the needs of people living across our state.

Do members know who did care? The good people of Eltham cared. The good people in the seat of Bundoora cared. The good people in the seat of Yan Yean cared. That is why thousands of locals signed petitions to say that they wanted Greensborough TAFE reopened and that they wanted investment in our community. They staffed street stalls, they went doorknocking and they talked to local residents regarding the closure of this TAFE. They stood up, and they were counted. They stood up and voted for a Labor government, and that is why with this budget we have money invested back in not only our TAFE system but also Greensborough TAFE.

People get it. They understand that when you close a TAFE you affect the whole community. You affect local kids who want to get the training and skills they need to get a job. One kid, Scott, who lives in Eltham, was attending Greensborough TAFE, studying an advanced diploma of building design. Once the campus was closed poor Scott then had to go to Preston, nearly half an hour away, while the Greensborough campus was less than 15 minutes away. It is not easy to get to Preston from Eltham; you have to get a bus, a train and then a bus again. Scott was then shifted from Preston to Prahran once it was decided by someone that Prahran was much more important than Greensborough. Guess how long it took poor Scott to get to Prahran? Around an hour and a half by public transport, and if he could get a lift, it took him an hour if the traffic was good.

It is not just kids like Scott who are trying to get ahead and get the skills and training they need. When you close your local TAFE you do not just affect kids like Scott; you affect a whole range of people. You affect people like local mums who want to retrain as they get ready to go back into the workforce. You affect those who want a career change and are looking to retrain. You affect local businesses, such as the poor people at the Apollo Parkways shopping centre, which experienced a massive downturn in business once the TAFE was closed. Over 600 people were ripped out of that campus. All of those businesses that were servicing the needs of that TAFE suddenly had their budget bottom line go right down.

It was an extremely short-sighted decision to close this campus, and I not only congratulate but also thank the Andrews government on recognising the importance of TAFE in our communities and investing \$10 million in this budget to reopen the campus at Greensborough. I thank the Minister for Training and Skills for his commitment to reopen Greensborough TAFE and for delivering on our election promise. The election of the Andrews government and our first budget have come at an absolutely crucial time for our state and for TAFE. This budget will provide better opportunities to develop skills and get a job through this very important investment in TAFE. There is \$300 million for the TAFE Rescue Fund provided in this budget, including the much-needed \$10 million which will reopen Greensborough TAFE. This is in addition to the \$20 million we have already allocated to the struggling TAFE sector — in fact that was one of the first things we did upon being elected.

Not only will my community benefit from a reopened Greensborough TAFE but in my community we also have one of the best local learning and employment networks (LLENs) you will find: the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network. It is staffed by wonderful people who are absolutely dedicated to creating opportunities for young people and getting them into the education and jobs they need. They work incredibly hard. They are dedicated people, and they get excellent results. It was an absolute disgrace that last year these dedicated workers thought they were going to have to pack up their programs and say goodbye to their kids due to the then state government refusing to keep funding them. The \$32 million announced in this budget is an excellent boost to this much-needed program, which needs all the support this government can provide.

Among the many services the Banyule Nillumbik LLEN offers is the really important Learner Driver Mentor program, L2P. It was wonderful to see my local

council recognise the work of local volunteers to this program. It recognised people such as Steve Cochrane from Research, who is a Country Fire Authority volunteer and was also a L2P volunteer for many years.

This program also looked to be in doubt thanks to the mean-mindedness of the former government. One of the many disgraceful things about the former Liberal-Nationals government was its ability to inflict deep wounds on small but very important programs. The L2P program was one such initiative. These programs are small but are so very important to many kids who cannot afford formal driving instructors and do not have access to adults who can help them in their lives. It was only through the commitment of this government and this Premier that certainty of funding was guaranteed and that the L2P program lives on. We also have \$12 million for 10 tech schools, including one in the Banyule area. This is a fantastic initiative by this government.

Thanks to this budget we have much-needed investment in our health services, including the Austin Hospital, which provides world-class health care to my community. We will see increased funding to expand elective surgery, with an additional 700 patients a year receiving treatment. This is a tremendous increase in health funding across the state — \$1.38 billion — and it is exactly what we need. Those opposite have no real commitment to universal health care. They have no commitment to the healthcare needs of our community. They are not interested in an affordable healthcare system that ensures that families — children, parents and grandparents — can access the health care they need. We only have to look at the federal Libs and the changes they have made to GP charges.

All the Liberal Party wants to do is make sure that you have to pay more money to go to the doctor. It wants a user-pays system, which is absolutely unfair. For a party that likes to portray itself as the party of fiscal responsibility, it is nothing short of amazing that the Liberal Party does not understand the returns you get when you invest in health and your community.

Dr NAPTHINE (South-West Coast) — While there are differences across all sides of this house on a number of issues, I think there is fairly universal agreement about this budget — that it is a typical Labor budget.

An honourable member interjected.

Dr NAPTHINE — Yes, and we do get agreement on that. It is a typical Labor budget. When you look at this budget you see the characteristics that are in

evidence in every Labor administration: that Labor cannot manage money, that Labor cannot manage major projects and that the Labor approach is record levels of tax, tax, tax, and record levels of irresponsible expenditure — tax and spend, tax and spend, tax and spend.

We see other typical characteristics of Labor budgets in this budget. It is a city-centric budget — a budget that is about union mates, a budget that is about Labor mates and a budget that completely ignores regional and rural Victoria. It is a budget which is about Labor DNA: waste and mismanagement. We only have to look at the recent history of Labor governments: the \$750 million white elephant that is the north–south pipeline, which has never, ever been used; the desalination plant, which costs Melbourne and Geelong water users millions of dollars each and every day — too big, too costly, \$2 million a day; the myki mess; the smart meter mess; and the Melbourne Markets mess.

The regional rail link opened recently. This is a project that under Labor was an absolute dog of mismanagement, underscoping and overcosting. The coalition turned that dog of a project into the national infrastructure project of the year. The regional rail link opened for business on 21 June this year because of the good work of the coalition government under former Treasurer Kim Wells and former Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder.

Ms Green interjected.

Dr NAPHTHINE — The member for Yan Yean can talk, but she was in the government that lost \$3 billion selling poker machines. It could not even sell a licence to print money at a profit. The Auditor-General said they were worth over \$4 billion, and they were sold for under \$1 billion. On top of that we had a former Minister for Health and current Premier Daniel Andrews, former Attorney-General Rob Hulls and former Premier John Brumby saying, ‘Don’t worry, there won’t be any compensation for the previous operators, Tattersall’s and Tabcorp’.

Ms Green — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I draw to your attention that the member for South-West Coast is referring to members by their first names. He has been here long enough to be aware that he should refer to people by their titles and not their names.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — Order! The member for South West Coast, to continue.

Dr NAPHTHINE — Not only did the previous Labor government lose \$3 billion in selling the pokie machines, but we then had to pay out over \$540 million

in compensation to Tattersall’s, and Tabcorp is still going through the courts.

What about this budget? The budget before us today has a headline surplus of \$1.2 billion, but that is underpinned by \$1.5 billion worth of commonwealth money which has been specifically allocated to the east–west link. Without that commonwealth money, once again Labor would be running a deficit budget of \$300 million. Labor has already spent and wasted \$640 million to \$900 million tearing up the east–west link contracts.

This budget is littered with references to the West Gate distributor. We remember that in the lead-up to the 2014 election the West Gate distributor was a shovel-ready \$500 million project that was going to start straightaway if Labor were elected. In this budget there are several mentions of the West Gate distributor. Money has been allocated, but we already know that project has been absolutely dumped — because it was a dog of a project in 2013, it was a dog of a project in 2014 and Labor has finally woken up to the fact that it is a dog of a project. Now we have the government saying it is going to have a look at the Transurban western distributor. But let me advise the house that that project is also a pale imitation, a second-rate option, compared to what should be done to provide a second river crossing — that is, build the western section of the east–west link. That is what is needed, and it is about time this government got on board with that.

This budget delivers tax increases. We only have to look at the 7.2 per cent increase in fire service levy collections. I refer to budget paper 5, page 165, which shows that there will be a 7.2 per cent increase in collections in 2015–16 from collections in 2014–15. One of the best things the coalition government did was to have the gumption to change the fire services levy system from the old insurance-based system to a fairer, more equitable property-based system. But in its first budget Labor is roting the people of Victoria by massively ramping up levy collection by 7.2 per cent.

On 5 November 2014, the current Premier, then the Leader of the Opposition, was asked the following question:

So that’s a rock solid commitment that fees and fines, charges, none will go up other than indexation over four years?

DANIEL ANDREWS: That’s exactly right ...

In the Premier’s first budget indexation is 1.8 per cent yet the fire services levy is going up 7.2 per cent. Why

is that? It is because once again you have Labor in charge of a budget. It cannot help but spend like a drunken sailor. We see in this budget, when the CPI is 1.8 per cent, a 7.1 per cent increase in the wages bill for the state public sector. There is a 7.1 per cent increase in the wages bill for the state public sector in this budget yet CPI is 1.8 per cent. The Minister for Local Government, who is sitting at the table, is telling councils that they will be subject to rate capping because they need to control their expenditure. It seems to me that that is hypocritical because the state government should be leading that process.

We have seen massive cuts in funding to regional and rural Victoria. The \$160 million country roads and bridges program is absolutely gone. It was an essential program to fix country roads and bridges in shires across regional and rural Victoria. Then there was \$8.8 million for Landcare facilitators, which was a vital program. We were in here recently speaking on the condolence motion for Joan Kirner. One of the things Joan Kirner was famous for was for establishing Landcare. Joan Kirner would be extremely disappointed that the first action of the re-elected Labor government was to take \$8.8 million from Landcare across the state. It is absolutely disgraceful.

The Regional Living Expo is going, going, gone. If you look at budget paper 3, page 123, the variation in the 'regional development' line item from the last budget to this budget is minus 24 per cent. For 'tourism, major events and international education' the variation is minus 54 per cent. Tourism is a vital component of the economy in regional Victoria. The 'trade' line item is minus 61 per cent, so the programs undertaken by the previous government to sell Victorian produce — our clean, green produce, our specialised niche manufacturing, our marketing programs — internationally have been cut to ribbons by the Andrews Labor government. That is cutting your nose off to spite your face. We have to engage with the world. We have to sell our products to the world to grow the economy and grow jobs.

Budget funding for agriculture is down 12 per cent at the same time as we are producing record amounts of agricultural produce and the federal government is opening up new trade opportunities through free trade agreements with Japan, Korea and China. Despite these opportunities for clean, green agriculture, the Andrews government is cutting funding to agriculture and agricultural innovation.

There is a 21 per cent cut in funding from last year to this year for road asset maintenance. The Treasurer talked about potholes today. There will be heaps more

potholes once you cut roads funding in regional and rural Victoria by 21 per cent. There is also a 4.4 per cent cut in funding for road operations and networks.

We are seeing cuts right across regional and rural Victoria. An article in the Warrnambool *Standard* headed 'Budget delivers little for region' says that the only contribution from the budget for South-West Coast was \$5 million for the Warrnambool Special School. That is not enough to build a new school or a new site. The coalition promised \$10 million. That is what is needed, but this Labor government delivered only half of what is needed.

As I drive around the electorate, in contrast —

Mr Nardella — You had four years when you were Premier.

Dr NAPHTHINE — I thank the member for Melton; I appreciate that. I drive around my electorate and I can see that under the previous government there were new fire stations built, including \$8 million for one at Warrnambool. There is a new fire station being built at Portland, which is another \$8 million investment. A comprehensive cancer centre is being built in Warrnambool. There is the \$5.3 million upgrade of Heywood-Woolsthorpe Road, a \$4.9 million upgrade of Warrnambool airport, \$8.25 million for the state government offices development in Raglan Parade, Warrnambool, a \$1.95 million upgrade of Flagstaff Hill at Warrnambool, plus work is yet to start on a number of other projects that were funded under the coalition government. They include the Narrawong Primary School redevelopment, the \$3 million community health facility at Moyne Health in Port Fairy —

Mr Nardella — You were good.

Dr NAPHTHINE — I thank the member for Melton. We certainly did listen to country Victoria and we delivered for country Victoria. Country Victoria is now being ignored and neglected under the city-centric, union-dominated Labor government.

There was \$4.2 million for a new mental health facility at Warrnambool hospital, \$2.2 million for a new short-stay unit at Warrnambool hospital and \$700 000 for the Portland foreshore upgrade to complement the \$7 million marina built by the coalition government to take advantage of the recreational fishing boom through bluefin tuna. The previous government cared about country Victoria, it listened to country Victoria and it put in funding for country Victoria. This government has failed to deliver for South-West Coast. This budget is a terrible disappointment for south-west Victoria, but we are not surprised because when you get a Labor

government, you get a government that cannot manage money and does not care about regional or rural Victoria.

This government has failed to deliver important projects like additional V/Line services for south-west Victoria. These were promised under the coalition government. We invested in a new passing loop at Warncoort and we invested in the regional rail link. The new passing loop that we put in place replaced the passing loop ripped out of south-west Victoria by the Bracks and Brumby Labor governments. We had to rebuild it to put in the infrastructure to deliver additional train services. Those train services were promised by the coalition and they should be delivered.

We need the stage 2 redevelopment of the Warrnambool hospital and we need the upgrade of the kitchen at Heywood Rural Health. These were commitments made by the coalition in the lead-up to the last election.

There is a great opportunity to invest in geothermal energy in Portland. The geothermal bore was closed under the Bracks and Brumby governments. The Glenelg shire is now keen to reopen it and we were committed to work with it. I urge the government to get on board with that project.

I will conclude on Portland Bay School, which is a special school in Portland that is in need of additional assistance. We as a government provided an additional portable, which was supposed to open at the start of the school year and which would provide two additional classrooms. It is yet to open. The portable is onsite but it has a fence around it and there has been delay and frustration in opening it. That was only a temporary solution. What is needed is community consultation across all the educational facilities in Portland to get a commitment to a new school on a new site to cater for the growing population of Portland Bay School.

I conclude by saying that this is a typical Labor budget. It is a budget about economic vandalism, it is a budget about economic mismanagement, it is a budget about high taxes and irresponsible spending, and it is a budget that is about city-centric politics and which does not care about regional and rural Victoria.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) — I am very proud to be standing here to talk about the Andrews Labor government budget and all the great things it is going to do for Victorians going into the future.

The previous speaker, the leader of the failed coalition government, the member for South-West Coast, is completely out of step with Victorians and what they

are thinking, as we just heard in his presentation. I do not think I heard anything in his contribution that talked about what the coalition government had done over the last four years until about 14 minutes in. The reason for that is that he cannot say much about it, because the previous coalition government did absolutely nothing to get this state onto a strong and fair footing into the future. Of course the Labor government cannot do everything in its first budget, because nothing was done for the last four years and so much needs to be done. We cannot get those four years back.

We know there were many communities starved of resources, not just in metropolitan areas but in Shepparton, Thomastown and many other places throughout the state. We cannot get that time back, but the government we have now is certainly getting on with the job and has made a great start in putting Victoria back on the map internationally and in good faith with the people of Victoria.

I am proud to be part of the Andrews Labor government, and the budget it has put up is starting to put things back on track in terms of fairness and equity. It is a budget that is putting things back on track in terms of supporting the people who need support from government as well as giving people a future, a vision and a reason for working hard, studying hard and achieving because there is somewhere to go. Under the former coalition government there really was no vision for the future. We struggled along. Everyone was out for themselves. Everybody had to fend for themselves. There was no way that we were looking forward in terms of growing the state of Victoria and making sure that it was one of the most progressive states in the country.

I will go through some of the examples in the electorate of Thomastown of things that received nothing at all from the Liberal-Nationals coalition government. In terms of all the social and economic data, it is an electorate that has a large population of people who need and rely on government services. The electorate received absolutely nothing from the coalition government for four years. It received nothing for schools, nothing for roads, nothing for manufacturing, nothing for employment — absolutely nothing in any category that you could look at in terms of what a proper social and equitable government should be doing for communities.

I will give a couple of examples of what we are looking at doing now for the Thomastown electorate and what people in the electorate are looking forward to. One of the biggest issues, particularly for the growth areas in the north, such as Wollert and Epping, is the inability

for people to get around. There is no access by road or public transport to get around the area — to get to work or to school — other than one road that is chock-a-block full of cars. A student who lives about 2 kilometres away from the school he attends told me recently that it was taking him 40 minutes on the bus to get to school because of the congestion on High Street. Luckily for the people who live in the electorate of Thomastown, a Labor government was elected, because it has promised to fund the O’Herns Road project connecting O’Herns Road to the Hume Freeway. Allowing people to get onto the Hume Freeway as they travel west into the city for work, or whatever, is a first step in getting some of the cars off the road, as they will then not clog up the local roads that allow people to get around.

This is not just an issue of convenience and congestion; it is also an issue of safety due to the lack of roads and the inability for people to get out of areas because of a lack of investment in infrastructure. During the time of the Liberal government, we had grassfires in the growth areas where houses had not yet been built, and people could not get out of those areas. There was one road in and one road out, and that was it. If it had not been for the great work of the firefighting services, both the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the Country Fire Authority, who knows what would have happened. That fire was able to be controlled, yet the issue was completely ignored by the previous government. It was not seen as an issue; it did not matter if people were unsafe in the northern suburbs. There was no funding for any support for infrastructure.

The Labor government has promised to commit \$40.7 million to the project, but it is now waiting on the commitment from Whittlesea City Council, because part of the commitment was that the council would upgrade and extend Edgars Road, which it is responsible for. I urge the council to do the right thing and do what it promised it would do when Labor said it would provide the \$40.7 million and that the council makes sure it funds the extension of Edgars Road so this project can be developed and people can start to move around the area free from congestion.

The only other thing that is going to stop this project from happening is the Abbott federal government. Even though this project has been discussed, talked about and debated for well over a year, Tony Abbott has to date refused to provide any commitment to the part of this project that is a federal responsibility. The Hume Freeway is a national road, and it requires a national contribution to connect it to O’Herns Road. I urge the Abbott government to change its mind, to come to the

party and for once be prepared to give something to the people of the northern suburbs.

In terms of other infrastructure, while the community was starved of funding for the four years of the Liberal-Nationals government, Labor has committed to purchase the land for a secondary school in a growth area. This may seem like a simple and small thing, but the one and only existing primary school in the area is accommodating three times the number of students for which it was built. It was of course built under a Labor government a number of years ago.

There was supposed to have been another primary school built. Again, this project was cut off at the knees with the election of the former Liberal government for four years. Now there is stress and strain on families that are unable to get their children into a primary school in the local area. So what do they have to do? They have to drive on that highly congested road to get into the more established areas of the Thomastown electorate. That is unfair. Not only is it unfair but it also creates all sorts of problems within the community. It encourages isolation, anger and frustration. By the time people get home from work after a 2-hour drive along maybe 10 kilometres of road, they are angry and frustrated, and this causes all sorts of other problems. The Labor government is putting its money where its mouth is and is committing to O’Herns Road. It also has some vision and is looking to the future in committing to purchase land for a secondary school. The new primary school is well on track, due to be started early next year and to open in 2017.

I could go on and on about the good things in the budget for people in the northern suburbs, but I will talk about a few others that directly relate to the Thomastown area. There is the \$100 million bus plan that the Labor government has promised, which will do a great deal for people living in the northern suburbs and the Thomastown electorate. There will be more bus services. The route 575 bus service will increase in frequency — instead of being every hour it will be much more frequent than that — and another two services will be provided. Those services will be introduced to try to get people moving, stop the congestion and make sure people can properly integrate and take advantage of all the other facilities in the electorate of Thomastown and surrounds.

No doubt those facilities have all been built by Labor governments. I have not seen one plaque that indicates that anything in the area has been opened by a Liberal Premier, minister or member of Parliament. The exception is the Thomastown railway station, which was built by the Labor government and opened by a

member of the Liberal Party who was taking credit for things his government did not do.

When we are talking about infrastructure, we are talking about education. Children need a good education to give them the best opportunity in life and the best prospects for employment into the future, to make them resilient and to ensure that they know their rights and are able to get on in the world. Of course they also need jobs. The electorate of Thomastown had a TAFE facility that was on its knees. It was in considerable debt, it was struggling and it was cutting courses, but thankfully with the election of the Labor government Melbourne Polytechnic, formerly Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, is able to continue. It has a bright future. Students are again piling in to do the training to get the skills and the jobs they deserve.

The northern suburbs and the electorate of Thomastown rely on the manufacturing sector, whether it is the food industry or metal manufacturing. There is good news in the budget with the Labor government's promises for local procurement. It is great that we will get rid of congestion and dangerous, unsafe, unproductive level crossings, but it is also great that these level crossing removals will provide an opportunity for local employment and local companies to supply the services and goods needed to build those projects. This is good news for people living in the electorate of Thomastown.

The people who come to talk to me in my electorate are pleased and relieved to hear that the O'Herns Road project is a commitment of Labor. They are really angry that the Liberal federal government has not yet committed to the project, but hopefully that will happen very soon. The more pressure we can put on the federal government the better. We must ensure that the federal government does the right thing for the people of Thomastown.

We have to assess budgets on the basis of what they do for people. This budget has equity and fairness. One resident was telling me we need to have a can-do attitude. The Labor government is taking a can-do attitude rather than blocking, whingeing, harping and whining about all the things that should have happened. Not one opposition speaker has put forward an example of anything of any significance that they have been proud of. Not one of them has said, 'This is what the Liberal government achieved in its time; this is what Labor didn't do'. They have done nothing but complain, whinge and say how unhappy they were that they did not get things for their electorates when in fact they had four years to achieve that. They did not give those things to their own electorates either!

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — I can say a few positive things regarding the budget for the benefit of the member for Thomastown. I can compliment her. I can say this is a Labor budget. This definitely is a Labor budget. I can also say I can think of people who would be proud of this Labor budget. Who comes to mind? Wayne Swan comes to mind. I reckon he would be proud of this budget. I reckon Tony Sheehan would be proud of this budget. In fact a conga line of former Labor treasurers would be very proud of this budget.

Unfortunately that is about as much as I can say, because this budget takes a budgetary setting that was on a sound footing, a stable foundation, and puts it on a precipice. You may not see all of the damage now but it is all in the pipeline. Make no mistake: this budget has made Victoria's economy weaker, more vulnerable and more susceptible to external shocks. All you need to do is look at the basic settings around this budget to see that it will give any reasonable Victorian cause for great concern.

When you look at the surplus profile, you see that the surplus was accumulating to the tune of around \$9 billion out to 2017–18. It has been slashed by around half. In just six months the government has broken a Guinness world record by cutting a nearly \$10 billion surplus in half.

Why is that significant? You do not accumulate surpluses for the sake of surpluses alone. You accumulate surpluses to fund things like infrastructure, and that was the coalition's plan. You accumulate surpluses so you can build things like schools, hospitals and major road arterials that will enable Victorians to spend more time with their families. Another important thing that a surplus achieves is a buffer, a protection, from external shocks, and I will come back to why that is so important.

Debt has not been dealt with, and the most worrying sign that we should all take note of in this state is that the commitment to debt reduction has gone. In six months that has changed. As a state it seems that we are no longer committed to reducing debt, which is a burden on future generations of Victorians. We have said, 'We will crank it up. We will put more on the credit card, and as long as we can maintain it, that is our goal'. We do not have a plan any more to reduce it, and that is a problem, not only because it imposes an intergenerational burden but also because anyone who thinks you can crank up debt and maintain it has marbles in their head. You cannot maintain debt when you do not have a commitment to reduce it, because it is almost impossible to contain the growth in debt. Your servicing costs start to blow out, and the

opportunity cost that comes with maintaining a high level of debt gets greater the longer you delay important infrastructure work. I am afraid to say that not committing to debt reduction will come at great cost to this state.

Another worrying sign in the budget relates to wages policy. We all want our public sector workers to get fair and decent wages; that is not the issue here. The issue is whether you can ensure that service delivery improves over time. If you look back over the record, you will see that wage outcomes for Victorian public sector workers were actually very strong, but what we were able to negotiate in agreements was improvements in the delivery of services for Victorians. Let us have a look at what this budget does. It commits the government to a 7 per cent-plus increase in wage costs in year one alone. In 2015–16 there is a 7 per cent increase in wage costs followed by 3.5 per cent increases over the rest of the forward estimates. What a lot of people on the other side of the house may not understand is that you do not just look at the superficial increases in wage rates. You have to look at the associated costs that come with maintaining those wage rates, like the costs of progression, which are enormous.

If you grow the public sector beyond your capacity, you will find that not only will the wage rates become harder to bear but you will also have to deal with progression up the pay scale of a larger number of employees receiving higher rates of pay and not get anything in return to improve service delivery for Victorians. That moment of reckoning will come for the government in very short order. The government has not explained how it is going to do that. We understand the rhetoric; we get it. We get that the government says it is going to sit down and negotiate the agreements. That is all fine, but at some point it will have to produce an outcome, and it will have to land the plane, and that will contain a result.

The other thing I want to mention, because it will bear on this budget and future budgets, is that a lot of Victorians may not have picked up that in the government's submission to the Productivity Commission on workplace relations it made a commitment to revisit the constitutional separation of powers between Victoria and the commonwealth. For over 20 years it has been bipartisan policy in the state to refer industrial relations powers to the commonwealth. One of the difficulties that governments, Liberal and Labor alike, over many years have had to wrestle with is trying to ensure that enterprise bargaining agreements do not unduly encroach upon the ability of responsible and independent managers of our agencies, like hospitals, ambulance services and other public sector

bodies, to manage their organisations in a way which meets the needs of Victorians.

One thing those agencies and their leaders have had to deal with is claims that unduly inhibit, restrict and constrain their ability to deliver services. On page 67, points 8.11 and 8.12 of the government's submission to the Productivity Commission, it says:

The Victorian government has proposed amending the referral act to provide the FWC —

the Fair Work Commission —

with jurisdiction to approve agreements containing matters that are otherwise excluded from the referral of powers. This proposal is currently being developed and will take into account the recent Federal Court decision in *UFU v. CFA* noted above.

That was a decision where the Country Fire Authority was successful in arguing that some clauses which were being sought by the United Firefighters Union were beyond constitutional power. I do not want to get into too much of an argument other than to say to the government that it needs to watch this very carefully because it may not realise what it is biting off. If it unduly restricts the people it appoints to deliver public services, whether it is CEOs and the boards of public hospitals or any other public body, and if the government subjects them to a broader range of claims where their ability to manage the delivery of services is so compromised that nothing can be done, it will find that it has an enormous problem.

The only other thing I want to note as an overview is that infrastructure spending has been cut by \$6.5 billion. How good is that? We have a budget, which by the government's own admission depends on household consumption, external demand — that is, international demand and demand from other states — and the value of the Australian dollar. We have an economy that is very susceptible if growth falls. You need to propel growth, you need to fuel it. But if you lower infrastructure spending, as the national accounts have shown in recent months in Victoria, you expose the Victorian economy to poorer outcomes.

It is worth noting that the coalition government was very conscious of the need to protect the state from external shocks. That is why we ensured that average revenue growth would be 3.5 per cent over the forward estimates and that the growth in expenses on average would be 2.5 per cent over the forward estimates. This government has slashed it by over half. It has cut it from those numbers to average revenue growth of 3.4 per cent and expenses growth of 3 per cent. I can understand why the government wants to do that. It has

said it wants to crank up public sector expenses. But that has meant that the buffer, the ability to absorb external shocks, has now been weakened severely.

At a time when we are so dependent on growth we have a government which as its first actions introduced two extra public holidays and abolished the east–west link contract, which entailed 3500 jobs or even more. It also abolished the construction code, which was all about delivering major infrastructure in a more efficient way and in a way which delivered taxpayer value. The government has introduced state taxes to crank up revenue from stamp duty and land tax, and it has cut infrastructure. These are appalling outcomes which expose the Victorian economy in ways it has not been exposed for some time.

I turn to the justice portfolio and note a few things. I happen to like the Attorney-General very much, but he has the accolade of delivering the worst outcome for his portfolio in around five years. Table 2.14 on page 269 of budget paper 3 shows growth across the portfolio of 3.3 per cent compared to 10.7 per cent in 2014–15, and 18.8 per cent in the year before that. The portfolio has been basically cut by being maintained without any real growth in the areas I cover, and that is very disappointing at a time when we face a number of challenges on the law and order front. The Attorney-General seemed to have conceded as much at hearings of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee when his answer to the member for Gippsland South was to say:

But Labor’s first budget — and we make no apology for this fact — is a budget where the lion’s share of our additional funding commitments went to those matters that were the subject of our election commitments. All of those election commitments have been dealt with and have been funded ...

What he is really saying is, ‘I can’t point to any substantial or significant increases in my portfolio’. Members will be disappointed when they look at it in detail. Policing will receive a 3.2 per cent increase in funding. That will not even cover the enterprise bargaining agreement, so in effect it is a cut. ‘Supporting legal processes and law reform’ entails legal aid funding and support for people in need. It will receive a 0.5 per cent increase. The numbers do not lie. They are what they are, and they are the government’s numbers. ‘Personal identity and individual rights’ covers equal opportunity and the Office of the Public Advocate. For that there is a decrease of 3.5 per cent in funding. These are the government’s numbers. It is an appalling outcome.

I also note that while the government has been talking a lot about the Productivity Commission report, which

calls on commonwealth and state governments to provide an additional \$200 million a year, it provides nothing for additional legal aid funding. There is a limited amount in the family violence portfolio. On my reading that is limited to \$5.2 million for 2015–16 and 2016–17, with nothing committed after that. I am afraid to say it is a particularly poor outcome for my portfolio.

I am privileged to represent the Hawthorn electorate. I was very proud as a candidate prior to the last election to make commitments for my electorate on behalf of the coalition that totalled around \$18 million, particularly focusing on schools. As I have said previously, schools are one of my electorate’s most important features and one of the reasons so many people want to live in the area.

The former government made a commitment of \$10.8 million to Camberwell High School, which is in desperate need of works, particularly basic piping works. There are cracks in the walls. We allocated \$4.5 million to Camberwell Primary School. We committed \$1.1 million to Swinburne Senior Secondary College to complete improvements at Fritsch Holzer Park, a lovely open space that desperately needs work. We allocated nearly \$1 million for Auburn South Primary School, one of the most popular government schools in the state. It desperately needs money. Similarly \$1.2 million is much needed for Hawthorn West Primary School, which is severely landlocked and requires government help to ensure that it can create more space for its students and parents.

We made these commitments. I have repeatedly called on the government, if it will not meet those commitments in full, to embrace something along the lines that would assist the schools in our community. I have also asked for CCTV on Burke Road for the Burke Road traders. I am afraid to say, however, that there is nothing — not a cent — of new money in the budget for Hawthorn. It is a great disappointment. I note in this place that the Andrews Labor government has done nothing for the residents of the electorate of Hawthorn.

I wish I could say some positive things about this budget, but the settings of this budget take us from a sound foundation and put us on a precipice. The surplus is down, debt is to go up, infrastructure is down and taxes are up. All of the indicators point us in the wrong direction. As I said soon after my election, the Andrews Labor government hit the ground running, but unfortunately it was in the wrong direction.

Ms RICHARDSON (Minister for Women) — I am pleased to rise to speak in support of the state budget. I

only caught the end of the member for Hawthorn's contribution today, and I wonder whether in that contribution he was prepared to criticise his federal colleagues with respect to legal funding because they have been assiduous in cutting legal funding to community legal centres (CLCs) and to Victoria Legal Aid. I think I would take the member for Hawthorn more seriously if he were prepared to be critical of the cuts that have come by way of the federal government. I would be very pleased to hear from the state member for Hawthorn on those matters because if he is only going to complain about additional funding from the state Labor government and not call to account the federal government for its cuts to legal aid and CLCs, clearly he is not someone who can be taken seriously in this place.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer. This was a significant Labor budget. It has key investments in education, health and transport, and it has a plan for 100 000 additional jobs. The Treasurer should rightly be proud of what he has delivered. He has kept faith with the people of Victoria, and he has stayed true to Labor's core values.

Education received the biggest investment — a record \$3.9 billion — and \$2.1 billion was invested in health. In addition to that there was investment in kinder services, TAFE and transport and in particular in removing 50 level crossings in this state — an issue that is very close to my heart and to the people of Northcote. Speaking of kinders, just this week the Premier and the Minister for Families and Children announced another \$83.7 million for kinders to reduce the ratio of teachers to kids from 1 to 15 to 1 to 11. This is in stark contrast to the federal government which has looked to cut funding to kinders.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer for shaking the cobwebs off the state economy. For the past four years under the former Liberal government the state's economy struggled. The Liberals had what could almost be described as a Lord Voldemort effect on the state's economy. The member for Malvern is the Lord Voldemort of our state Parliament, with a dark, outstretched hand extinguishing the hope of businesses and leaving us all gloomy and afraid of what is to come. I remember every single year for the past four years of the Liberal term we told ourselves in opposition that surely this would be the year that the Liberals would do something with the power of government. In fact we often cried out from the opposition benches, 'Do something!'.

Nothing happened, however, except a proposal for a road tunnel and a shonky side deal designed for

political purposes, not the common good. Thankfully we now have in place a Labor Treasurer who takes a completely different and very Labor approach. He does not want to slow down the wheels of government. He does not want to cool the jets, so to speak. He wants to shake things up, promote business activity and provide Victorians with the opportunities they deserve and the services they need.

We recognise that government is the biggest business in town by a significant margin. When the biggest business in town closes down, as it effectively did for four years thanks to the Liberals, the consequences are terrible for the state of our economy and all Victorians. That is why our economy went from being ahead of every other non-resource-rich state to being near the bottom. It is why our jobless rate rose and why our business confidence fell, and the Liberals did not stop there. They cut funding to our TAFE system, schools, hospitals, transport network and community services. They showed wanton disregard for the needs of Victorians and for our economy.

It takes a bit of effort to actually stop the wheels of government from turning, to bring them to a complete standstill, but that is precisely what the Liberal government managed to do. Troubling too is the fact that the man responsible for that failure is in charge of the opposition Treasury benches as we speak. It is bizarre maybe, and arrogant most certainly, but thank heavens this Labor budget approaches the challenges we face in an entirely different way — in a very Labor way.

I will start by focusing on the budget's many benefits for my electorate of Northcote and in particular with the Chandler Highway bridge. It has taken a very long campaign — six years in fact — thousands of signatures and the raising of this matter 21 times in Parliament, but now we have \$110 million committed to the duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge. I note that the Liberals have found their voice on this issue — albeit just one Liberal member of Parliament, the member for Kew — and I note also that Labor's efforts were opposed by the Greens for all those years right up until the eve of the last state election when they suddenly sang a different, somewhat opportunistic, tune. In truth this has been a Labor priority for all those six years, and it is a Labor government that will deliver on this significant development for my electorate.

As part of the biggest investment in schools in our state, Northcote High School is receiving \$3 million for stage 1 of its master plan to upgrade its visual and performing arts facilities. Just last week I visited the school with the Minister for Education. Along with

principal Kate Morris, teachers, staff, students and parents, we celebrated this significant investment and the change it will bring to the school. Important investments like these were put on hold under the former government, but now, thanks to this budget, our kids will get the investments they need to help them reach their full potential.

The budget also provides additional funding to begin planning work for a second school campus in Alphington. This is needed because Alphington's population is set to double as a consequence of the Amcor development and local schools are already at capacity. This is an important investment to meet the future educational needs of our community.

There is significant money in the budget for women's sport. As we all know, women's sport has received a bit of a raw deal from many past governments, not only in prize money but also in funding — more often than not there has been greater funding of men's sport, particularly at the grassroots level, than of women's sport and facilities. It occurred to me, the members for Richmond and Brunswick and the former member for Melbourne that the best illustration of this is netball — the fastest growing sport in Victoria. The only thing that is holding it back in the inner city is the lack of facilities. Working together before the last election, we put forward a policy to build additional facilities in the inner city, and I am pleased and proud to see that there is now \$9.6 million for 64 courts across the inner city municipalities of Darebin, Moreland, Yarra and Melbourne. Again, it is only a Labor government that recognised the gap in facilities and that is making this investment.

Then there is our \$5 billion to \$6 billion investment in level crossing removals. My community will benefit directly from this investment with the removal of the level crossing on Grange Road in Alphington and two level crossings on Bell Street in Coburg and Preston. This has a benefit not only in terms of reducing congestion but also in terms of public transport.

This is all good news for my electorate, but I must say it is the investments in tackling family violence that I am particularly proud of, because nothing is more important than ending the harm that is caused by family violence. That is why we initiated the first Royal Commission into Family Violence in Australia and why we have invested an additional \$81.3 million in family violence services. We have also fully funded and delivered each and every one of our election commitments on the issue. For example, there is \$2.5 million for additional crisis accommodation, \$2.5 million for additional counselling services,

\$900 000 to trial a duress alarm system for high-risk victims and \$1.2 million for the Coroners Court to re-establish the family violence death review.

On top of those election commitments we have also established a \$16 million Family Violence Fund to support services as the royal commission is underway. We also provided an additional \$2.1 million — above and beyond our election commitments — for legal assistance for victims, \$2 million for culturally and linguistically diverse communities experiencing family violence, \$1.3 million for responses for Aboriginal people — I note that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who is at the table, is very pleased to see that additional investment — \$3 million for men's behaviour change programs and \$2 million for prevention programs. All of these are significant investments that go to the heart of our concern in addressing family violence and the harm it causes.

Then there are the other significant budget initiatives that will improve our prospects of tackling the harm of family violence: a \$40.3 million investment in the homelessness innovation action project and a \$48.1 million investment in Child FIRST to strengthen our response for the most vulnerable — our children. All these investments and more are significant investments aimed at reducing the harm of family violence and helping prepare for the government's response to the recommendations of the royal commission, which are due in February next year.

In summary, this budget delivers in full to my community of Northcote and to the people of Victoria. Importantly too — it is official — the brakes are well and truly off Victoria's economy. We have delivered on our commitments and now we are getting on with the job of making Victoria strong again.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — Small business is the engine room of the Australian economy, and 96 per cent of Australia's businesses are small businesses. They employ over 4.5 million people and produce over \$330 billion of our nation's total economic output.

Sir Arvi Parbo, who at the time was the head of Western Mining Corporation, once remarked that a worthwhile society must be underpinned — undergirded — by a prosperous economic base. The responsibility of government is to control the economic levers to manage the economy so that the private sector — the wealth-creating sector — can get on and do its job. At the same time the role of government is to reduce the red tape burden and levels of compliance.

A number of years ago, at a time when Australia confronted a recession, which in the words of the federal Treasurer at the time was ‘a recession we had to have’, the remark was made by one commentator that the Prime Minister of the day had promised to take away people’s poverty. A further remark — an aside — was made that that was all some people had left at that time. The responsibility of government is to spend taxpayers money wisely and responsibly.

The lament that the people of Victoria have at the moment is the cancellation of the east–west link and the payout of over \$640 million in relation to that particular project. What could have been bought with \$640 million? The answer to that question is 45 primary schools, 21 secondary schools in growth areas, 1600 new school relocatables, 5800 primary welfare officers at schools, 1 new hospital, 25 new suburban trains, 40 new 24-hour police stations — and the list can go on and on throughout the state of Victoria, electorate by electorate.

Not only has that money been squandered but at a time when in a global economy we are competing for international business we have the destruction of our credibility as a state to contract — to enter into contracts — and to provide for the infrastructure that Victoria needs into the future — infrastructure that was recommended by Labor’s Sir Rod Eddington in his infrastructure report to meet the needs of a growing city of Melbourne into the future. It was against the backdrop too of initial claims that the contract would not be broken and followed through by further claims that there would be no compensation paid through to the payout of compensation and the destruction of over 7000 jobs which would benefit the Victorian economy.

The world is changing at a significant pace. According to some futurologists there are a number of interesting levels of analysis that can be applied. In 2025 it is envisaged that the world population will reach 8.1 billion people, 10 per cent more than today. In 15 years global food demand will rise by 35 per cent, and we have the opportunity in Victoria to capitalise upon the growth food supply into the South-East Asian region through our agricultural resources. It is also noted that today 1 billion people experience water scarcity, and according to a futurologist by 2025 some 3.5 billion people will experience water scarcity.

In the changing landscape of what the future will provide and what the challenges will be as we move forward, it is envisaged — and this is an interesting insight in relation to medical technology — that by 2019 a doctor in China will be able to perform remote surgery on a patient in Ghana. By 2021 licences will be

granted for driverless cars, and education will be able to be delivered to most underserved communities through smart-connected devices, removing the need for teachers in institutions to travel hundreds of miles to deliver education.

Today, and increasingly into the future, education will be available online. By 2020 the number of people online is projected to increase from 2.4 billion today to 5 billion. By 2017 global mobile commerce transactions will exceed US\$3.2 trillion, up from US\$1.5 trillion in 2013, and as a guesstimate 47 per cent of current middle-class jobs will disappear due to robotics and the implementation of new technologies. There is also the bypassing of fixed-line phone networks, going straight to mobile and wireless services. Then there is the advent of new businesses. Uber is currently valued at US\$41.2 billion, Snapchat at US\$19 billion and Airbnb at US\$13 billion — regulated and unregulated enterprises. It is against this backdrop that the Victorian government has the responsibility to deliver good services.

As the member for Sandringham I have consistently advocated the importance of the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College being utilised in perpetuity for education and sporting purposes as a valued state asset. In 1988 the then Labor government heralded as a landmark reform the merging of four schools: Hampton High School, Highett High School, Sandringham Technical School and Beaumaris High School into one school, Sandringham College, with a years 7 to 10 campus in Bluff Road, a years 7 to 10 campus in Beaumaris and a senior school in Holloway Road in Sandringham.

One object of the reform was to provide breadth of curriculum for local students and to offer over 50 Victorian certificate of education subjects. At or following the last state election the Labor Party committed a total of \$8.5 million to public education in the Sandringham electorate, consisting of \$6.5 million to fully fund the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College as a stand-alone school, made up of \$1.5 million towards capital works in the 2015–16 budget and a further \$5 million in the 2016–17 budget. A sum of \$2 million is marked for the Sandringham College Holloway Road campus.

By way of contrast, the coalition had committed over \$17 million towards public education in the Sandringham electorate, including \$6 million for Sandringham College’s Holloway Road and Bluff Road campuses, \$7 million towards the Beaumaris campus of Sandringham College plus an additional multimillion-dollar investment by the Melbourne

Cricket Club. The proposed partnering arrangement with the MCC was to bring additional funding to redevelop the sporting fields and buildings into world-class facilities which would be available to the school community, MCC sporting teams and local sporting clubs. There was also some \$4 350 000 committed to Sandringham East Primary School by the coalition. The more than \$17 million committed by the coalition was in addition to the \$6 million currently being expended at Sandringham College, having been allocated two years ago in the 2013–14 budget in fulfilment of the coalition's 2010 election promise.

The Labor Party claims the deconstruction of its watershed reform of 1988 and its commitment at the last election to spend only half the money committed by the coalition to public education in the electorate as an achievement. The Labor government needs to ensure that the money allocated to Beaumaris will be sufficient to establish the viability of a years 7 to 12 stand-alone secondary school offering an appropriate breadth of curriculum choice whilst ensuring that the continuing structure of Sandringham College, the once watershed reform of the Labor government, is not adversely affected. An amount of \$6.5 million would not build a new stand-alone high school in Beaumaris.

A number of other issues impact upon the Sandringham electorate. In the realm of planning, there is a need for additional services around public transport precincts. Over the past four years the issue of parking around local railway station precincts and the shortage of space in railway station car parks has been raised on multiple occasions within the Sandringham electorate. Parking is also a very big issue in the debate around the new railway station at Southland and has heightened concerns of residents within the Pennydale neighbourhood of Cheltenham, the subdivision to the west of the railway line and the Westfield centre. Local government has endeavoured to address some of the concerns by implementing 2-hour to 4-hour parking zones in local streets, diminishing the volume of city worker commuter car parking. The former transport minister, the member for Polwarth, agreed to the implementation of a trial at the Highett railway station, one of six in Melbourne, whereby Metro and VicTrack would enforce the use of those car parks by commuters only. The use of car parks by tradesmen will continue to be a major issue with ongoing development around railway stations.

There is a need for planning for and implementation of the future of a dedicated local bus service in Bay Road between Cheltenham and Southland and the Sandringham station as an immediate imperative to take traffic off the road and to move the increasing

number of residents owing to the large number of units being constructed along Bay Road. Additionally, early strategic work needs to be undertaken to expand the Parkiteer storage capacity at the Sandringham railway station and other electorate railway stations.

In 2014 the Labor Party made a number of key election promises. One was in relation to establishing a new high school at Beaumaris, where Labor originally committed some \$4 million which later increased to \$6.5 million. Funded in the current budget is a sum of \$1.5 million. Sandringham College committed some \$2 million to the senior campus, and that sum has been funded in the current budget.

On the eve of the last election in November 2014, Labor promised that level crossings at Charman Road in Cheltenham and Balcombe Road in Mentone would be removed. There was no time frame set nor budget allocation made for that particular promise, and only recently has the government advised that those level crossings will be removed by 2022, along with nine other level crossings on the Frankston line. The concern of Sandringham electors is that they were induced to believe prior to the election that the removal of those level crossing would be undertaken within the first term of government. It is only in recent times that they were told this would not be the case. There is also the matter of \$1 million being committed to St Bede's/Mentone Tigers Football Club building and the grounds at Mentone Reserve, which has not been delivered to date.

Labor came to government with its fair share of failures in policy and project implementation, including myki, the desalination plant, Ararat prison, the north–south pipeline, multiple IT projects, the smart meter rollout, the fruit and vegetable market, vocational education funding blowouts, inadequacies in the regional rail link, the development of the synchrotron, CenITex and unsustainable budgets in which more money was being spent from state coffers than was being received. The ALP also has a record of backflipping on major infrastructure. The Mitcham–Frankston freeway was going to be toll free, but a toll now applies on that particular road; the Dingley bypass was going to be built in the 1990s, but it is still being rolled out today; and now Labor has cancelled the east–west link.

Other issues in the Sandringham electorate include the implementation of residential growth zones, which is a very important matter to my constituents. In November 2014 the Leader of the Opposition, then Minister for Planning, noted that:

... the Napthine government will support the City of Bayside should it wish to make any changes to the proposed residential growth zones in Highett and Cheltenham,

particularly land that is not on a main road or within former industrial sites.

There is a disparity between the theory of planning for the use of motor vehicles and the actual practice, which is evident in the Jean Street area of Cheltenham in the city of Kingston. Active work was undertaken by the former Minister for Planning in supporting the heritage listing of the Mentone Hotel, which was recently signed by the current Minister for Planning.

There have been multiple achievements in the Sandringham electorate over the last couple of decades, including the retention of the Sandringham Hospital, which has an ongoing role as one of the community's most valuable assets; the pivotal advocacy for the establishment of the Bayside police station; the Dingley bypass commitment; the New Street gates being opened; the Bayside Bay Trail bike path; the marine sanctuary at Ricketts Point; protecting the Sandringham foreshore from Labor's plans to build a seawall; the funding commitment for the renewal of the Half Moon Bay boat ramp; the funding of the new sporting complex at Banksia Reserve in Beaumaris; the rebuilding of the Hampton Lifesaving Club; the abolition of scallop dredging in Port Phillip Bay; recurrent and capital funding for local schools; the pivotal support for multiple foreshore clubs; traffic light improvement at Bay Road, Reserve Road, Balcombe Road, Bluff Road and Beach Road; the successful advocacy to protect neighbourhood amenity and the ongoing advocacy in relation to other planning issues; the facilitation of the Sandringham Yacht Club development; library and sporting club community grants; mental health service provisions for the middle south-east; coastal erosion protection for Mentone Beach; the protection of the Mentone station and gardens; and the protection of public open space at the CSIRO land in Highett. There is also the reform of section 464B of the Crimes Act 1958.

There is much work yet to be undertaken in the state of Victoria, but most importantly a worthwhile society must be underpinned by a prosperous economic base, which involves supporting the private sector.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government) — I rise to speak on the motion to take note of the budget papers. This Labor budget gets back to basics, and I am very proud of it. It delivers jobs, schools, hospitals, roads and real initiatives in transport. The Treasurer said in his budget speech that the budget provided:

The things that families need to live a good and healthy life.

That is exactly what this budget does. This is certainly a budget that delivers for the western suburbs and for the seat of Sydenham. I will go to five key areas in which there are specific commitments to improving the livability of my electorate and the health of those living there.

Firstly, up to \$6 billion has been set aside for the removal of the state's 50 most dangerous level crossings over the next eight years. This list includes the Melton Highway level crossing, which causes a huge amount of congestion and concern for safety in my electorate. Funded for removal this year are the Main Road and Furlong Road level crossings. The Main Road level crossing in St Albans has seen way too many deaths and injured far too many travellers.

Another key delivery of this budget for those in the west is a \$6.1 million commitment to fix the infamous Taylors Road and Kings Roads roundabout in Delahey, which links the suburbs of Delahey, Sydenham, Taylors Lakes, Deer Park, Kings Park, Taylors Hill, Burnside and Caroline Springs. A huge volume of traffic uses that intersection, and those roads lead to some of the biggest growth areas in Melbourne's west. This funding means traffic lights can be installed, safety can be improved and congestion can be tackled.

Key commitment 3 is the securing of funding to purchase land for the Taylors Hill senior school. The Andrews government has secured \$40 million in the budget for the acquisition of land for four schools in high growth areas, and Taylors Hill is one of these them. I have been very proud to work with many dedicated parents who have campaigned for this new school in Taylors Hill. They have explained to me time and again the uncertainty their children face in not having a senior campus and having to look well outside the local area for public schooling for years 10, 11 and 12.

The previous Liberal government failed to deliver for the Sydenham electorate. It failed to deliver the schools that those parents and children desperately needed and also for young people and families who did not know where to go next due to population growth and a lack of resourcing for the outer suburbs, particularly in the Melton and Caroline Springs region. It proves that only Labor will deliver on education.

Another commitment which has delivered on livability and health for the outer suburbs, certainly in my area, is the establishment of the Interface Councils Infrastructure Fund, the first of its kind. It will support the suburbs within the 10 interface council areas, which will host the highest population growth in Victoria over

the coming decades. The interface fund, secured in the budget, fulfils the Andrews Labor government's promise to establish a dedicated fund to invest in Melbourne's outer suburbs. Residents in the Taylors Hill, Hillside, Plumpton and Caroline Springs suburbs of my electorate will directly benefit from the fund. It will have the capacity to deliver multipurpose facilities, community centres, playgrounds and other spaces desperately needed by the community — those that were not delivered on time as new estates opened up.

The fifth initiative I would like to talk about today is the \$200 million for the Western Women's and Children's Hospital in Sunshine. It is a fantastic initiative. The Andrews Labor government has committed \$200 million to deliver 237 beds, 39 special care nursery cots, 4 theatres and additional clinics, catering for the needs of the fastest growing area in Victoria at the moment. I remind the house that by 2026 the number of births at Sunshine Hospital is expected to exceed 7000 per year, and it is vital that Melbourne's west is able to cope with this future increased demand for health care.

Last year I had the pleasure of going on a tour of the hospital with the now Premier, the federal Leader of the Opposition, a massive contingency of media and many of my fellow MPs from the west, who are here today. We toured the hospital to look at all the special care nursery sites and maternity sites. Many in the entourage complained about the fact they had to go to five different locations around the hospital, going up and down the stairs and on lifts that were not able to take a capacity of 20 or more people moving through at one time. At the end of this tour the announcement was made to commit to that initiative and to take it to the election, and this government is getting on with delivering that.

Many people on the tour were whinging, saying, 'Gee, why did we have to go through all that?'. The absolute reason they went on the tour was for them to see just how hard it is for the doctors, nurses, patients and everybody visiting the hospital to maintain a sense of organisation and connection. With the \$200 million commitment we will be looking at not only an entire new building but also an absolute increase in the capacity of care. That care will cover not only maternity and children's services but also, with an additional \$29 million to the hospital, an extension to offer the full range of critical care services. This is on top of the \$60 million the Andrews Labor government has injected into cutting elective surgery waiting lists and delivering an extra 11 700 elective surgeries. In the western suburbs that is a big achievement. Over the last

four years so many constituents have raised issues with me about being on waiting lists for way too long.

While I talk about the last four years of neglect and the \$1 billion in cuts to health by the former Liberal government, I acknowledge that Victorians have been waiting too long for health treatment, and this government is getting on with it. It is getting on with fixing the crisis in our emergency departments and ensuring that our ambulance paramedics are fully supported.

The Andrews government has also delivered the biggest education budget in Victoria's history, with \$2.9 billion for schools, \$350 million for TAFE and \$59 million for early childhood education, of which \$50 million is directly invested in kinder facilities and \$9 million is to assist children with special needs before they start school so they have the best long-term learning outcomes possible. This was a significant issue for us in the west.

Only a couple of years ago there was a threat to cap the number of assessments at Sunshine Hospital of young children — three-year-olds and four-year-olds — with potential special needs that had been undiagnosed. That resulted in a lot of uproar from parents across the west, and I am really proud that the Andrews government is getting on with restoring those facilities and extending those programs and assessments that are needed for children with special needs, given the detailed attention they require at three and four years of age.

For the first time, this Labor budget sees Victoria fully deliver on its obligations under the Gonski agreement for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 school years. Under Labor, Victoria will be the education state.

Commitments specifically related to my electorate that will deliver fantastic outcomes to livability for the residents of the west go to upgrading the M80 ring-road and finishing the work that should have been finished two years ago. Unfortunately the previous state and federal governments pulled funding from that project, but this government has recommitted to it and has delivered \$150 million. That will ease the massive congestion on the M80 ring-road and, most importantly, upgrade the E. J. Whitten Bridge to create more lanes and make it a safer place. Over the years there have been too many accidents on that bridge and also, unfortunately, suicides. The commitment for the installation of safety barriers will be welcomed by the local community. We look forward to seeing the removal of the bottlenecks, particularly around Sunshine Avenue, where the traffic merges and goes

from four lanes down to two. That problem will be overcome once the project is well underway.

In addition, the Andrews Labor government is getting on with the projects the people of our state expected it to deliver on — the commitments it took to the election. Over \$600 million in projects will ease congestion, cut travel times and improve road safety across the state, and a \$1.3 billion project will widen the CityLink and Tullamarine freeways from the Burnley Tunnel to the Melbourne Airport. They are extremely important initiatives for those who live in my area.

In my portfolios of Aboriginal affairs, local government and industrial relations, I am very proud of the announcements of commitments in the budget, in particular the commitment for Aboriginal cultural heritage and to supporting a strategy going forward. An amount of \$29 million has been committed to strengthen Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage management. That goes hand in hand with ensuring the registered Aboriginal parties, which are a vital part of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage management system, are properly resourced and are treated with respect.

In addition, there is a commitment for a Victorian Aboriginal economic strategy of \$4.5 million over the next four years to establish a Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board to drive strategy and drive employment for Aboriginal people, and to also focus on leverage partners to ensure that job and business opportunities reach all Aboriginal Victorians. In addition to that there will be \$3.5 million over four years to enhance the governance of Aboriginal organisations through Aboriginal leadership and self-determination programs. There is also our commitment to reducing Aboriginal family violence. There is \$1.3 million in additional funding to immediately respond to high-risk communities. Unfortunately reported family violence in Aboriginal communities is still on the rise.

In the area of local government there are some significant commitments. There will be \$5.2 million over two years to assist the roadside weeds and pests management program. We are supporting Victoria's public libraries with a record spend of \$40.5 million in recurrent library funding. We have also made commitments to emergency services capacity funding, and, most importantly, from my discussions with local councils, \$1 million to review the Local Government Act 1989 removing outdated provisions, improving compliance and modernising the relationship between the government and councils, making sure that we have a vitally workable piece of legislation going forward.

We will work in partnership with our public sector to ensure that Victoria gets back on track and delivers the great services we have committed to the Victorian people to deliver. I look forward to the establishment of the central bargaining unit within the industrial relations area of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, which will set strategic negotiating roles within the public sector across enterprise bargaining agreements and improve communication between agencies, employees and unions to deliver a more effective enterprise bargaining process.

This is a budget I am extremely proud of. It delivers for families in the electorate of Sydenham, it delivers for families across the west, and it delivers for families in Victoria. We are getting on with it, and we are putting people first.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I will assess this budget under three headings: choices, falsehoods and unions. If you tried to put the best possible case for this budget, you could say that at one level it is about choices. Labor has chosen to cut infrastructure spending and chosen instead to spend the money on recurrent spending. You could say that the reason Labor has cut the surplus is that it does not need as great a surplus because it does not need the surplus to help generate the cash needed to pay for the infrastructure it is not going to build. That is probably about the best case you could make for the budget.

Of course you can always make out good arguments in favour of additional spending in particular areas, as many of those opposite have done. But even at the level of choices the budget is seriously flawed. It represents a series of broken promises, firstly, because before the election the community was told that the surplus would not be affected by Labor's election promises, but of course it has been. Secondly, the community was told that there would not be new or increased taxes under the new government, but of course there are — new taxes on overseas property buyers and the massive increases in the fire services levy. Thirdly, the community was told that there would be no increase in debt levels under the new government, but of course there has been. So even the case around choices involves broken promises.

Even more concerning are the merits of the policy choice the new government has made to cut infrastructure spending by over \$6 billion in order to fund increased recurrent spending, because that decision comes at a time when Victoria has a rapidly growing population — one of the most rapid population growth rates in recent decades. When the population is

growing, you desperately need infrastructure, and if you do not provide for the infrastructure that is needed for a growing population, you are putting off problems into the future. You are imposing burdens on future generations to construct the infrastructure that you have not constructed, and of course you are imposing burdens on the current generation for everything it suffers due to that lack of infrastructure.

Transport infrastructure is particularly critical. The previous government put in place strategies both for increased road capacity and increased public transport capacity. A large amount of that has been trashed by the current government, not only through the scrapping of the east–west link and the hundreds of millions of dollars in wasted compensation funds the government has paid out, but also through the scrapping of the Melbourne rail project and the airport rail link. A further consequence of Labor’s decisions in that regard is that it has now found itself short of projects. The claims of shovel-ready projects have been shown to be completely unjustified, and Labor is now desperately looking at deeply flawed proposals and rushing in to embrace proposals which have not been properly thought through and which need a lot more work done on them if they are to be shown to stack up, such as the western distributor.

I can illustrate the consequences of the Labor government’s choices at the local electorate level in Box Hill. Under the previous government, having fixed the black holes we inherited from the Brumby government, having dealt with the falling share of GST that Victoria was receiving and having restored the state’s finances, we were in a position to make commitments to substantial improvements to schools across the state, including in my own electorate a commitment of \$8.8 million for Koonung Secondary College and \$5 million for Box Hill High School. How does that compare with infrastructure commitments under the current government? There was an open-ended election promise that Box Hill High School would in some way share in the Labor government’s commitments to education infrastructure, but there were no dollars whatsoever for Koonung Secondary College and there is certainly nothing in this budget for Box Hill High School. Those are two examples in my electorate amongst many schools that have been badly hit by the change of government and by the Labor government’s decision to cut infrastructure spending.

Labor’s desperate need for cash can be seen by the way it is approaching the port lease proposal, where we have had the Minister for Ports admit in this house that it is a conscious part of Labor’s strategy to shut out competition in order to artificially inflate the proceeds

the government seeks to get from that port lease because of its desperate need for cash to pay for projects it could not otherwise afford.

Finally, in relation to choices, one really has to question exactly how much of the increase to recurrent spending by the Labor government will actually flow through to improvements in the delivery of services to the community and how much of that increased spending is going to go to administration costs, research, advocacy, policy development and other secondary roles, which may be of great benefit to those in the Labor Party supporter base — those amongst its so-called volunteers who helped campaign for the Labor Party to win the election — but will not actually result in improved service delivery to those members of the community who need enhanced services. Of course even within service delivery there have been many areas of serious omission, and my colleague the member for Hawthorn highlighted a number of those in his contribution in relation to protecting community safety.

In relation to falsehoods, this budget is put together around the key falsehood of the government telling the community that it is delivering on its election promises while at the same time telling the rating agencies and the Auditor-General that it is not committing funds to deliver on those election promises. It is a two-faced budget, and that two-faced approach can only hold together for so long. The government has gone into this budget process and put out a whole lot of media releases saying that it is delivering on what it really could not afford to deliver in terms of its election promises, but then at the same time you only budget a handful of millions of dollars for major infrastructure projects such as level crossing renewals, and you go to the rating agencies and say, ‘Our figures are absolutely fine because we have not actually committed to this additional funding’.

The government has provided only 10 per cent of the funding it promised for a whole lot of schools. It is going to the schools and telling them, ‘Don’t you worry, this is just the first instalment, the rest is coming — it’s all happening’, while at the same time it is going to the rating agencies and saying, ‘Our rating is sound and our budget numbers are sound because we have not actually committed that extra 90 per cent of funding for our schools’. You can only get away with that for so long before the chickens come home to roost.

Already Victoria is near the limit of what it can afford to have on the books in terms of debt while maintaining a AAA credit rating. To a large extent Victoria has

relied on rating agencies having confidence in the commitments and plans of the state government. They certainly had that under the previous government. Once they lose confidence in the trustworthiness and deliverability of what the new government says, Victoria's AAA rating is going to be very quickly at risk. We also risk having a repeat of what we had under the previous Labor government where a whole lot of initiatives were being funded on paper but when we came to office we found they were not funded and we had to cope with the black holes that had been created.

The third heading I want to comment on is that of unions and the flowthrough issues about wages. In the contribution preceding mine, the Minister for Industrial Relations, while she referred to the establishment of a centralised bargaining unit, said nothing whatsoever about the government's wages policy. That is probably no surprise, because it has been an incredibly fraught issue for this government. When straight after the election the Premier went out to talk about settling the paramedics dispute he told reporters who asked about it that the government was not going to follow the previous government's wages policy of 2.5 per cent plus productivity increases but instead it would decide everything on a case-by-case basis. Since then the Treasurer, in an interview with the *Age* and in subsequent public statements, has said that the current government's wages policy is very similar to the previous government's wages policy of 2.5 per cent plus productivity and Labor is just looking to refine it. However, the government's position has become even more vague since then. It is now saying simply that it is reviewing the policy and is going to come up with another one that will work a lot better.

The problem is the government has made a rod for its own back and a rod for the community's back through the wage settlements it has already done, which are way outside the wages policy of the previous government and way outside Labor's own wages policy. In particular I refer to the deal the government did with the paramedics, which was obviously a quid pro quo for the union's support for Labor during the election campaign. Labor did a lot of things that it did not tell the community about prior to the election, and it still has not fessed up as to whether this was a secret deal it had done with the paramedics union before the election or whether the union came along and twisted its arm for some extra benefits after the election.

The deal that Labor ended up doing was based on two years rather than three, and the Minister for Health admitted in the *Age* of 21 December that there were going to be extra costs involved, which contradicts other claims made by the government that that is not

the case. Ambulance Employees Australia state secretary Steve McGee boasted in the *Age* of 21 December that the deal was 3 per cent per annum with no offsets. He thought he got a pretty good deal, and he certainly thought he got a deal which was well outside of the government's wages policy. There are also references in the published announcements to other matters that were not disclosed prior to the election, such as a shift allowance and those at times very useful classification changes which can be used to disguise all sorts of wage increases.

The key question the government has still failed to answer is that given that it did a deal with the paramedics union that was well outside of 2.5 per cent per annum and with no productivity offset, how is it going to continue to negotiate and pay for settlements with all the other enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) that are coming up? As I understand it, and as I was told at the briefing the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee organised, the numbers that are in the budget are based on the previous government's policy of 2.5 per cent per annum funding to departments. Yet if the government ends up negotiating EBA outcomes above 2.5 per cent, the departments are not going to have the money to pay for that. Either services are going to have to be cut because departments have been squeezed from having to redirect their budgets into paying for wage increases above 2.5 per cent not funded through productivity offsets, or alternatively the Treasury is going to have to supplement departmental budgets to pay for these increases over and above wages policy. That is another black hole that is looming rapidly as far as the government and the community are concerned.

That simply reinforces the point I have been making that this budget is predicated on falsehoods and on inaccurate, unsustainable assumptions. It puts the community at risk not only because infrastructure investment is dramatically below what is needed and that is building up problems for the future but also because the sustainability of the budget itself is being put at risk.

The chickens are going to come home to roost. Next year the government is going to have to find the extra 90 per cent for a whole lot of schools that only got 10 per cent. The Treasurer can be like Mr Micawber and hope that something will turn up, but that is not a sound and responsible way to put together a budget and the community is very much at risk of paying the price for that. A large element of that is due to the government's priorities being skewed away from the community's priorities because it is so beholden to the dictates of the union leadership on whom it relies for

support. What the unions are dictating, as we are seeing over and over again at the trade unions royal commission, is in the interests of union officials who these days have very little in common with the interests of their workers, and that is subverting the entire thrust of this government's budget.

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — I am very pleased to rise to support the budget. It is a great budget that is good for Victoria and is good for the Yuroke electorate. In my first speech in this place a few months ago I spoke about my passion for access to quality education and how this has benefited me personally, so of course I am delighted to be standing in this place today as part of a Labor government that in this budget has delivered the single biggest increase in education funding in the history of this state. This is about not just dollars and cents but rather genuine investment and smart programs to ensure that every child has great opportunities in life, from extra support for the kindergarten level through to the rebuilding of a TAFE system that was shamefully trashed by the previous government.

This is a progressive and responsible budget that takes crucial steps to fix the ambulance crisis, shines a light on family violence with the vital work of the royal commission and gets on with building the biggest metropolitan rail project since the city loop. This budget has been warmly welcomed in my electorate of Yuroke, where it is safe to say there are no footprints from the previous government. As a testament to this government's commitment to being the education state, this budget provides considerable investment in school infrastructure in Yuroke. I am very pleased that this budget provides the remaining \$3.6 million for Mount Ridley P–12 College. This funding will complete the important stage 5 of the school's development, which includes building works to bring additional teaching, administrative and counselling facilities to the college; doubling the size of the main car park area; and adding a hard court to the college sporting facilities. I am also thrilled that this budget includes \$12.2 million for a new Craigieburn north west primary school. This is part of the Andrews Labor government's delivery of the biggest school infrastructure program in Victoria's history, with \$730 million allocated to build, upgrade and maintain schools across the state.

I have to say that I am not surprised such a massive investment was required to address the needs across the state after four years of neglect. In the Yuroke electorate, one of the fastest growing areas in the state, with the second-highest proportion of children aged 5 to 14, not one new school was provided in four years, despite prep enrolments continuing to grow and grow. The neglect of the former government has been a

frustration to schools and families. I am glad that this government has stepped up and in its first budget provided a new school for the electorate. Labor's commitment to education is also demonstrated in our passionate determination to rescue TAFE and the \$350 million TAFE Rescue Fund. For residents of the Yuroke electorate this provides an important education option, as many students will access studies at the Broadmeadows Kangan Institute.

I am very pleased that this budget includes the \$1.3 billion freeway expansion, which is welcomed by the residents of the electorate who use the Tullamarine Freeway and CityLink to commute to the city. Under this project the freeway will be widened along its entire 24-kilometre length from Southbank to Melbourne Airport. These widening works will increase traffic capacity by 30 per cent and reduce travel time by 16 minutes on average in the morning peak and 17 minutes in the evening peak. As well as providing great benefits to workers and families, it is also expected to create 1400 direct and indirect jobs.

I also welcome the Interface Councils Infrastructure Fund that is provided in this budget. Ten interface councils, including Hume City Council, are eligible to apply for funding from this \$50 million fund aimed at providing community facilities. I acknowledge the terrific work of the Minister for Local Government in regard to this funding and thank her for visiting the mayor and CEO of Hume City Council with the member for Sunbury, the member for Broadmeadows and me to explain the fund and engage in a meaningful discussion about the process and the types of projects that this fund is intended to assist with. Suffice it to say, the Hume City Council has a number of projects that it will put forward for funding. I hope the fund assists in providing important community infrastructure in what is one of the fastest growing areas in the state.

I also welcome the \$20 million for a railway station car parking fund. I am very pleased that the Minister for Public Transport has informed this place that Craigieburn railway station has been identified as a priority station to receive additional car parking and that the government will soon be moving to the development phase. This issue is of great importance to the residents of Craigieburn, who struggle with a mere 267 car parks for a population of well over 40 000 and growing.

Finally, I congratulate the Treasurer on this great Labor budget. It is a fair budget, it is an equitable budget and it is an exciting budget that will make the biggest investment in public transport and education in the history of our state. It is our responsibility to ensure that

our state is prosperous and that nobody is left behind. No-one should have to go hungry at school, no-one should have to miss a school excursion or camp, no-one should have to wear a tattered jumper or be singled out at school for not wearing the appropriate uniform simply because it was beyond the family budget at that time.

On behalf of the people of the Yuroke electorate, I thank the Treasurer. I am proud to be a member of the Andrews Labor government, whose commitment to people and to fair outcomes is once again demonstrated in this responsible budget that restores balance and puts people first.

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — I am just going to do a few calculations straightaway. There must be a lot in the budget; the member for Yuroke left 10 minutes free. The member could have at least bagged us or had a go at the opposition or something. She had 15 minutes to talk about the budget and could not even fill in that time talking about stuff in her own electorate. I find that disappointing.

I am very proud to represent the Gembrook electorate. As we know, the Gembrook electorate is one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria. In the last four years we have seen much delivered within that area. The community got behind me and supported the coalition government. They were proud of some of our achievements. I particularly want to focus on one to start with, and that is our special school in Officer. The Officer Special School had been called for for a long time. The former Labor government failed to recognise this. In 2010 I went to a function and about 400 local community members turned up. This is exactly why the Labor government ended up where it did — it failed to listen. The then government representative delivered a speech on that day and spoke about the couple of hundred schools — and I will not quote exact figures — that it had delivered over the previous 11 years for the whole of Victoria. The one thing the member did not mention in their speech was the one thing we were there for, and that was for a special school for the Casey and Cardinia communities.

I am proud to say that school is now open. It has a fantastic slogan — ‘Dare to dream’. Those kids should be able to dare to dream because not only do they have a new school but they have a top-of-the-range, state-of-the-art school for students with special needs. It has access for all abilities. It does not matter what ability you have. Anywhere you go in that school, whether you have autism or an intellectual or a physical disability, the school caters for you. It also caters to the teachers to ensure that they have a safe and comfortable

environment that is conducive to teaching so that their students can get the best outcomes. I know the president of the school council, Paul Stephens, is exceptionally proud of that school. Now that the school is finished the only thing he is asking for is — I had a chat to him just this week about it — putting in a playground in the future. Whether that is done via fundraising or by coming back to the state for assistance is something we will discuss later on.

The community should be disappointed with this budget. When we were in government we delivered schools — Emerald Primary School is coming along — worked with local communities and improved the rail network. What have we seen in this budget for the Gembrook community?

Mr Angus — Nothing.

Mr BATTIN — I advise the member for Forest Hill that I would not say nothing. I would not be that cruel to the government; that would be a bit harsh. I will say that we have seen a hoax. Government members came out to our area and spoke to Casey residents about a big health issue that had built up over four years down at Casey Hospital. They said they would deliver a new hospital for Casey residents — that it would be delivered, be open and take patients in by 2018. That is what the government said before the election. What do we see in the first budget? We see in the four-year period total funding for that hospital of \$2.4 million.

It barely covers the cost of planning for a hospital that is going to be eight storeys high with all the mod cons the government said it is going to put into it. The discussion around the local area now, even when you speak to the directors of the local hospital, is that we will be looking at it taking patients in maybe 2020. Maybe! That is dependent on a few other things happening between now and then. We see the growth happening down there, and we see the hospital doing a fantastic job in delivering for that area. The coalition has supported the hospital in the last four years. Even while the members for Narre Warren South and Narre Warren North kept harping on that their hospital was not doing a great job, the coalition got behind it and supported it the whole way. We committed to funding that hospital in a coalition budget, not to doing something at some stage in the future.

I have spoken quite often in Parliament about the issues in the local Casey community around youth suicide and youth mental health. It is something I continue to be very passionate about, and this is an area that I will continue to stand up for. We had a very rapid rise in youth suicide in the areas of Berwick, Pakenham,

Officer and Beaconsfield through to Narre Warren. A few state and independent schools were affected. At the end of the day the only way to solve this problem was a whole-of-community approach. It could not be sorted out by one school. The issue was that at first one school was trying to take responsibility, but the outcome was that without having the whole community behind the effort we were not going to get anywhere. In government the coalition delivered funding so we could ensure that we had a whole-of-community approach.

The process is still moving forward. We have seen a reduction in youth suicide in the area, but mental health is still a very big issue and something we need to address. About three months prior to the election we sat down with that group and the Berwick secondary college, and the one thing that came out of that was that they wanted a mental health facility and a health facility at Berwick College. It was not a big project and it did not require a huge amount of money — about \$1 million — but it gave access to students who were leaving school during the following 12 months to go back to the school for consultation, maybe for recommendations to move on elsewhere and to make sure they had the opportunities available to them when they were struggling with mental health issues.

We have seen nothing for that project in this government's budget. I would say it is one of the most important community projects in the Casey-Cardinia area and throughout the Gembrook electorate. I am going to call on the Minister for Education — I have spoken to him offline as well — and I will continue to talk to him and to raise this matter. A general health and mental health facility is needed in the area. We have seen a rapid rise in community and mental health issues. They predominantly affect young people, and the identifying factor that most of them have in common is that the issues arise within the first 12 months of leaving school. It is in the first 12 months after young people leave school that they face the biggest issues in their life.

I will talk about public transport in the area and particularly about the Pakenham-Cranbourne train lines. One in 10 passengers across the whole network travel on those lines. Before the election the coalition came out with a policy and funded a program that was ready to go for the removal of level crossings and the upgrade of lines. At first the then opposition said that was a waste of time and money, but when it came into government it said, 'No, we are going to get on board. We are going to look at these private-public partnerships with Metro and see where we can go from there'. But what do we see now? The government has cut the signalling out of the upgrade to the

Pakenham-Cranbourne lines, and the one thing that the independent body looking at public transport said was, 'Without the signalling upgrades, you cannot fit more rolling stock; therefore you cannot increase the capacity'. If you cannot increase the capacity as the Officer and Beaconsfield areas grow, you are going to have more and more people having to either travel outside those hours or be more and more crammed onto the trains they currently travel on. That is not good for the future.

What is worse than that is that just in the last couple of weeks this heartless government, which is going to make people wait longer on platforms, has now come out and cut access to V/Line trains for people travelling from the Pakenham railway station. More than 200 services every week from Pakenham going into and out of the city have been cut. Around peak times, when trains are reaching capacity, these passengers are being forced off V/Line trains. Pakenham residents will not stand for it. They are signing petitions and standing on the platforms speaking up about it. In order to push it under the carpet a little bit, the government has come back and said, 'We might give them a six-month leeway before we start issuing fines'. But let me assure members there is only one option for this government, and that is to reintroduce access to V/Line trains and allow people on the Pakenham line to travel into the city. The matter has been reported in the papers this week, and I know the Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition has committed to that. If re-elected, the Liberal Party will commit to allowing passengers to recommence catching V/Line trains from Pakenham to go into the city and come back out again. Often the V/Line trains are not anywhere near full at the relevant times.

There are also issues around emergency services in our area. To start off with I will speak specifically about the Emerald State Emergency Service (SES). The Emerald SES came forward with some plans for the future, which the coalition had a look at. The unit does more than 1000 turnouts for its local community. It requested funding before the last election, and the coalition government committed \$2 million in funding for it to build and redevelop on site. Earlier on we had looked at another program, working with Ambulance Victoria and the council, but that did not come off, so we committed \$2.2 million to the Emerald SES unit so it could rebuild on its current site and ensure that it had the facilities it needed. Now the project has been cut. It is gone. It is finished. The Emerald SES unit does more than 1000 turnouts per year, and it does not even have the room to put its trucks inside the station it has at the moment, so how is it supposed to upgrade its trucks?

The Clematis Country Fire Authority (CFA) station is a priority station, yet there was nothing in this budget for it. The government has cut funding for the Clematis CFA. A letter from the minister, received in the last two weeks, states that the reason the station is not getting funding at the moment is that there is no land available in the area because of its topography.

Mr Angus — It's not true!

Mr BATTIN — It is not true, member for Forest Hill. Why is it not true? Because it is going to build on the site it is on. It does not need to move. If you read the original letter that went through to the minister, you will see it actually states the station is on the site it is on. The only problem is the incompetence of the minister and her staff — maybe there should be a review there — who will not speak to the council and establish how the government can work with that council-owned land. I have made an offer. I am more than happy to go and negotiate for that. I am more than happy to work with council. I am more than happy to work on behalf of my constituents to ensure that we get a positive outcome for local volunteers and the community in one of the most fire-prone areas in Victoria.

I am going to speak briefly on the environment. I have responsibility for the shadow portfolio area of environment. I was very disappointed when I saw the budget for the environment. The issue was raised by the member for South-West Coast earlier. As he said, the person who established Landcare would be very disappointed with what has happened to Landcare in Victoria. We have seen an \$8.8 million cut to Landcare in Victoria over the four years of the forward estimates. The 68 coordinators the former government funded for four years — who those opposite were going to cut in 2010 and we saved to make sure they were there for the future — will be cut.

The Acting Speaker would know how important the coordinators are because they have done work in his area of Mildura. I have met them and seen the work they have done there. This government wants to cut them. It wants to get rid of the coordinators. It has cut their funding so much that a person who is a coordinator now would be expected over a four-year period to operate on \$10 000 a year. That puts them well and truly below any union fee and any average rate. The government is basically saying to the coordinators, 'We don't really want you here'. Alternatively it is going to reduce the 68 coordinators to 20 or 15 coordinators across the state, and that is not going to achieve the results we want.

In my electorate we have the urban fringe weed management initiative, and that is a great initiative. It has worked with community groups, gone out with Puffing Billy and ensured that it can get rid of invasive weeds using community resources. It is great value for money because volunteers get involved and enjoy what they do. They have removed the weeds, and that has a fire reduction effect through the Belgrave area and the top end of the hills.

Mr Angus — Plenty of weeds in Monbulk!

Mr BATTIN — There are plenty of weeds in Monbulk. This is where the program would go. It would continue through and start working with private landholders to see the best outcomes. The first thing the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water did when she walked into that office was cut that program. Program staff have seen us and the coordinator of that program has spoken to us. In the past six months they have not been able to even get a discussion with the minister to ensure that that program will be looked at for the future. The reality is the government is not considering it. It is not considering a program that has real outcomes for local communities and fire reduction. You cannot get a much better program than the program run in that area.

The new government promised it would not increase taxes, but one of the big changes to income is in relation to the fire services levy. The income from the fire services levy has been increased by 7.2 per cent after we heard that it would not increase at all. Whilst those opposite are trying to blame 'mismanagement from those in the past', the reality is this is the government's budget, not ours. It has increased the levy because it is spending funds elsewhere, and that is not appropriate.

It is very important we put on the record that this government has tricked the emergency services workers, particularly the firefighters. It got the firefighters to knock on 40 000 doors, make phone calls, put letters in the paper — the whole lot. Interestingly, Peter Marshall, the secretary of the United Firefighters Union (UFU) said:

The Premier has completely and utterly disrespected our agreement on at least two occasions ... This is a kick in the face. It's not going away.

That is a message those opposite should be aware of. The secretary of the UFU has come out and said, 'This is a kick in the face. It's not going away. Do not forget all those firefighters who knocked on doors for the Labor Party. Do not forget the UFU members who were continuously out there'. They are knocking on one

door now — the Premier's door — and they expect something in return. I am sure you are going to see more and more on this in the papers in the future.

Mr Angus — Payday.

Mr BATTIN — Payday is coming — exactly right — and this government cannot afford the cheques it has written because it wrote them on behalf of Victoria, and it should be punished for it.

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to support the budget. This budget delivers for Victoria. It is a budget that delivers for families. The budget shows that we on this side of the house are focused on doing things that Victorians have asked for for so long. Other members of the house have commented on how well the budget has been received, and I back this up completely. Locally and across the state this is a budget that delivers.

After four long, lonely, dark years Victoria has been awoken by a budget that supports vital programs, services and key infrastructure that will propel us into the next decade and beyond. The Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015 outlines numerous outstanding projects and announcements. To name a few: \$1.5 billion brought forward for Melbourne Metro rail; \$4 billion for schools, TAFEs and kindergartens; \$1.3 billion for the Tullamarine Freeway widening; \$508 million for the Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund; \$50 million for Homesafe to run 24-hour public transport for a 24-hour city; \$600 million for new trains and trams; \$6 billion to remove 50 of our most dangerous level crossings, three of those on the Sunbury line; \$150 million for the widening of the M80 ring-road; \$200 million to establish the Future Industries Fund — —

Mr Battin — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr J. BULL — Where was I before the quorum was called? There is \$6 billion to remove 50 of our most dangerous level crossings, three of those on the Sunbury line; \$150 million for the widening of the M80 ring-road; \$200 million to establish the Future Industries Fund; \$80 million to attract more major events to Melbourne and boost tourism; \$100 million for the bus package; \$178 million for uniforms, textbooks, free breakfasts and free eye tests for the most disadvantaged Victorian students; \$2.7 million for lifesaving defibrillator units; and of course — who could forget? — \$50 million for the interface fund to

support our 10 interface councils. Member for Frankston, the list simply goes on.

Mr Edbrooke — Yeah, it does, doesn't it? Shame!

Mr J. BULL — I am proud of the priorities and the direction we have set ourselves. Victorians can have faith that this government delivers what it has promised. I would like to commend the Premier and the Treasurer and his department for their outstanding work in delivering a budget that understands the needs of Victoria and sets a course for delivering them.

At its core this budget is about jobs, education, health and transport. I have heard many people say it is a predictable Labor budget, and we are very proud of that. This is a budget about families. Both federally and at a state level over the past four years we saw cut after cut, so much so that community morale was at an all-time low. This budget is a beacon of hope from a new kind of government with a new kind of budget, one that supports families and one that works for people who want a job. This is a budget focused firmly on what we can achieve, with a stronger education system, a more resilient healthcare system and a jobs-building plan. This budget is about following through with what we said we were going to do. It is a budget that delivers on 96 per cent of our election commitments.

Headlining our infrastructure program is the Melbourne Metro rail project that will get Victoria moving again and bring our capital city into the 21st century. There will be no need for a timetable, with the construction of two, 9-kilometre tunnels to connect the Sunbury and Pakenham and Cranbourne lines. There will be five new stations in the hospital precinct at Parkville, enabling people to get in and out of the city from the north. Coupled with our Homesafe 24-hour public transport plan, \$600 million for new trains and trams and \$100 million to get our bus services up and running again, finally Victoria has a government that understands the benefit of a world-class public transport system. The budget makes good on our promise to remove 50 level crossings from the grid over the next eight years. It is about getting rid of dangerous and congestion-causing crossings that frustrate people and, sadly, take lives.

The budget delivers \$1.3 billion for the widening of the Tullamarine Freeway, a project that is a positive boost for my local community. It means jobs in construction and an estimated 20-minute reduction in travel time from Sunbury to the CBD. We are continuing the M80 ring-road widening project and working towards getting one of the most important roads in Melbourne up to the standard that our state needs.

In my inaugural speech I discussed my passion for an improvement in mental health services, and I am thrilled to see \$118 million to treat and support people with a mental health illness.

The government stands by its commitment to make Victoria the education state. We understand that an investment in education is an investment in life. That is why this is the single biggest education budget in Victoria's history, with almost \$4 billion for kindergartens, schools and TAFE.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr J. BULL — Nothing. We are giving families the help they need to cover the expensive but essential parts of their child's education, and that is something I am extremely passionate about. This budget is about fairness. Breaking the cycle of disadvantage starts in the schoolyard, and our kids deserve the best start no matter what their background might be. The value and necessity of a strong education system cannot be overstated. Our students at all levels need a variety of pathways, whether it be to TAFE or university or in having a strong primary and secondary schooling system that meets the needs of today's students and their families. This government knows that is not an easy thing to do, and that is why the Andrews Labor government has put an emphasis on rebuilding our education system, which was torn apart by years of Liberal neglect. I am so proud of the \$178 million to help Victorian families and students to get uniforms, textbooks and health checks, because we know that every day spent at school means a better future.

These commitments will make huge differences to schools in my electorate, and I have already visited Sunbury Heights Primary School, which is my old school, Sunbury Primary School, Killara High School and Diggers Rest Primary School. I am proud that the budget delivers for the Sunbury electorate. We have been able to secure two multimillion-dollar projects that were committed to during the election. Sunbury College is a fantastic school that does fantastic work, and I was thrilled last week to join the Minister for Education, who is also the Deputy Premier, to tour the school to discuss our election commitment to build a new science wing. The \$3 million investment will enable students to get the high-class education they deserve. In the existing science wing trolleys actually move on their own because of the gradient of the floor. They roll down the corridor of their own accord. Despite repeated calls for assistance the former government failed to come to the party.

Another local commitment we are delivering is the noise barriers along the M80 ring-road for the people of Gowanbrae. While doorknocking in Gowanbrae I received a terrific response to the announcement. I also recognise the work of the former member for Pascoe Vale, who fought long and hard for these barriers. With a \$10 million noise barrier commitment in the budget, the project will change the lives of everyone who lives in the area. It is a key example of our commitment to put people first.

I was very pleased to see \$2.7 million being allocated for lifesaving defibrillator units. During the election I was a vocal advocate for the placing of these important devices around our communities, and I am proud that the Andrews Labor government has made the commitment. As I have already mentioned, residents in my electorate will benefit from the exciting \$50 million Interface Councils Infrastructure Fund, with Hume City Council being one of the councils. The government recognises the significant growth in these areas, and this fund, the first of its kind, will provide funding for the local community infrastructure that is so desperately needed in high growth corridors.

This side of the house stands for jobs, and that is why our first action in coming to government was to pass the Back to Work Bill 2015. Everything in and about this budget is about getting Victoria working again and building the confidence, the skills and the projects that we know Victorians need and want, and equipping people with the skills for technology and manufacturing to generate the ideas of the future today that we need tomorrow. Whether it is massive and life-changing construction projects like Melbourne Metro rail or the removal of dangerous and congestion-causing level crossings across the grid, the government is getting on with it. Each and every aspect of this budget is about getting our families, our communities and our state working towards a common goal — that is, a better, fairer, safer, stronger and more prosperous Victoria. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr MULDER (Polwarth) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the budget for the state of Victoria. I am bitterly disappointed, my community is bitterly disappointed and my councils are bitterly disappointed, because since we have had a change of government there appears to be no emphasis or any sort of focus whatsoever on the seat of Polwarth. The Surf Coast Shire Council, the Golden Plains Shire Council and the Moyne, Corangamite and Colac Otway shire councils know how well they were treated under a coalition government, and they do not see any of that love or any of that warmth coming their way from the Labor government.

When I looked at the budget papers I found one major project funded in my electorate, and that is \$5 million for a school at Bannockburn, which is on top of the \$12 million that the former government had allocated for the primary school. Beyond that, there is nothing. We have a real problem in relation to Colac police station, which has been well and truly publicised. In government we made a commitment to rebuild the police station. I do not care whether it is at Colac, Geelong or Melbourne, police move around the state and the police who have to work at Colac police station are working under the most atrocious conditions you could possibly imagine. That is why the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services determined that we would rebuild the police station. We have a local advocate up there, Ian Pugh, a lawyer who has been very prominent and who visits Colac police station to make contact with a number of his clients, because the courthouse is alongside the police station.

I think the police station was last modernised in the late 1970s. The building does not meet modern policing standards or needs with regard to some of the gear and equipment police have to carry. Their temporary lockers are jammed up against the windows, and when people come into the station there is no real place to take them aside for a confidential discussion. When you look at some of the exhibits laying around, particularly down in the criminal investigation section, you understand very well that the police are not being catered for at Colac. The cells have basically been condemned, which means that the Colac police cannot hold people overnight; they have to be taken either to Geelong or Warrnambool and then brought back the next day, with added expense that entails. The minister has given me a commitment that at some stage he will visit Colac police station, and I trust that once that visit has been made we will get a commitment to do something about it, because it is extremely important to the community.

Central Reserve in Colac was mentioned in the house yesterday. Somewhere in the order of 47 individual sport and recreation grants were provided throughout my electorate by the coalition government. One very important recipient was Colac Central Reserve. We put about \$750 000 into the oval to drain it. It is now one of the best ovals in Victoria. The Santa Ana couch drains well and is undersown by rye grass that comes up through the winter months. It is a beautiful playing ground. Anyone who looks at Colac Central Reserve at this time of year will hardly be able to see where the players have been on the ground, yet in the past it was a mud heap. The reserve needs money for lighting and for an upgrade of the netball courts. I implore the Minister for Sport to have a look at what the coalition

government put into that region and make a commitment to Colac Central Reserve.

I spoke the other day about the country roads and bridges program. If you suck \$20 million from five councils in my electorate, you can understand the impact it is going to have on them. Our concern is that the money we put into the country roads and bridges program by way of rebuilding bridge decks, putting shoulder seals on roads and even resheeting gravel roads in some locations is going to fall away quickly. All roads and bridges have a life span, and unless support is given to councils with small rate bases that are also facing rate capping, that is going to have a devastating impact on them.

We made a significant commitment to improve rail services in the outer regions of Victoria. In my area the track used by the train service through to Warrnambool was in appalling condition when we came to government. We put new ballast and sleepers down. New rails have been installed. A lot of the level crossings have been upgraded from stop or give-way signs to boom barriers and flashing lights. A \$10 million to \$12 million passing loop was installed near Warncoort so we could run more freight and passenger trains in the future. We gave a commitment that we were going to do that.

There was a strong call from the councils along that line for additional services, and we would like to see that matched during the term of this Labor government to make sure we get additional rail services into that region. The rail service from Geelong to Colac is scheduled late at night. I put a bus on that route on a trial basis, and it was almost full. That bus service continues to run. It is a very important add-on to the rail service, but it is a bandaid solution. It is a short-term measure. We need a commitment from the government to make sure we get that rail line upgraded.

I have asked my staff to keep a record of the funding commitments made in each portfolio over the next four years. It will give me an opportunity as a local member to gauge the level of support being provided for my local area. The Premier made the statement that he is going to govern for all of Victoria. I would like to gauge department by department, portfolio by portfolio, minister by minister, what level of support is being provided in each location.

Nine individual projects were funded by the agriculture department. We funded six very good projects through the arts portfolio. Three projects were funded in aviation. I have always said in my electorate that if you get the roads right, the rail right and the airstrips right,

you have got a solid basis in terms of the infrastructure that businesses look for when deciding whether they will establish themselves in the area. We have the duplicated highway coming right through to Colac. The section through to Winchelsea is almost finished. The next section was funded jointly by the federal government and the coalition government. That is coming through. We will have a very good highway right through. We have put the foundations in place for rail services to be added. We need a government to commit to that.

Airstrips are very important for regional communities. We gave the Colac aerodrome \$160 000, which it used to seal its strip. The Cobden aerodrome received \$200 000 and the Lethbridge Airpark received \$1 million. There had not been a commitment to country airstrips in the past by governments. These funds have made an enormous difference to these communities.

I looked at the early childhood development portfolio. I had 17 grants totalling nearly \$3 million come into my electorate when we were in government. Some of the larger grants were for: Anglesea kindergarten, \$350 000; Terang Children's Centre, \$770 000; Bannockburn kindergarten upgrade, \$11 500; Bannockburn long day care, \$300 000; and Rokewood kindergarten, \$228 000. They are very important projects for those small communities. When I went to Rokewood in the early days the kindergarten was being run out of the town hall; it was basically back in the kitchen. It was freezing cold, and the conditions were appalling. I was able to lobby to get the kinder into an old school building, and now funding has been provided for a capital grant to improve its facilities.

In the community services portfolio 13 grants were made, a lot of them to men's sheds in the region, including at Terang, Lorne, Dereel, Forrest and Simpson. The Winchelsea Men's Shed had a funding boost on top of that. An enormous amount of money went into these smaller communities. Those 13 grants helped build on those facilities for men in rural communities. We know there is an issue with men's health in a lot of these areas, and there is no doubt that providing them with a good men's shed gives them the ability to get together to discuss their issues and problems. That has been a successful program, and I will be measuring that under the portfolio of community services to see what level of support comes into my community in the future.

The crime prevention portfolio saw 21 individual grants made, including to the Fairhaven Surf Life Saving Club, the Kennett River Surf Life Saving Club, the

Wye River Surf Life Saving Club and the Lorne Surf Life Saving Club, and Surf Coast Shire Council for solar lighting along the Anglesea riverbank. There were a whole range of different small projects that helped a lot of the smaller communities protect their assets. As I said, there were 21 projects. There was a great deal of support for those projects locally, and it was a very popular round of funding. I will look closely at how that compares with what the current Labor government chips in.

I made mention of this yesterday when the Minister for Education was in the house talking about run-down schools and rotting buildings, but \$36.6 million went into Polwarth electorate over the four years for upgrades to schools. Bannockburn Primary School received \$12 million; Apollo Bay, \$6 million; Timboon, \$5.2 million; stage 3 of Colac Secondary College, \$11 million; and a host of other grants were made to our schools courtesy of a fantastic education minister. So far we have \$5 million allocated to Polwarth. I will be interested to go through my lists and start to work out what has been provided as we work through the next two or three years. It will give me a great opportunity to tell the community a story about what level of support we are getting in rural and regional Victoria.

I turn to environment and climate change. The Polwarth electorate received 54 individual grants. I am sure that when you look across regional Victoria the \$4.159 million we spent on a mass of smaller grants — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MULDER — Yes, a mass of very small but fantastic grants for those communities. There was \$490 000 for the national park at Erskine Falls, \$700 000 for a new bulldozer for the Otway's planned burns, \$640 000 for a new bulldozer for the Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership and \$325 000 for the Southern Otway Landcare Network. The list goes on and on. The very popular minister funded a very popular range of programs in my electorate.

I am sure that the Minister for Health will be very interested to see what the former coalition government funded in the Polwarth electorate. It amounted to \$4.891 million. There was \$229 000 for Otway Health and Community Services from the Rural Capital Support Fund, \$2 million for the Bannockburn ambulance station, \$326 000 for the Terang and Mortlake Health Service's acute care refurbishment and \$400 000 for the Terang and Mortlake Health Service. Those little capital grants for small health services in

regional and rural Victoria are so important. Many of them are not for big sums of money, but they go a hell of a long way.

On the weekend I was at a ball in Colac for the Long Road Appeal. There are people in Colac who have to travel to and from Geelong for cancer treatment. One woman spoke about — and many others reflected on — vomiting on the road on the trip back and forth and continually having to rely on the support of friends to drive her when she was too sick to drive herself. I inform the minister that the appeal set out a fundraising target of about \$250 000, and it has raised nearly \$350 000. It is looking for a small capital grant for that project. You would not get a more worthwhile project than the Long Road project in Colac. One man, Mr Frank Minchinton, made a single donation of \$150 000 towards the project because he sees the importance of it. I have friends who travel what we call the long road backwards and forwards. The idea of this program is not to offer all types of cancer treatments but to provide some treatments in Colac via a link-up with Geelong. It is a great project.

Let us look at some of the other portfolio areas. We had innovation and small business. We had grants to local government. We had a lot of grants in relation to manufacturing, multicultural affairs and citizenship — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MULDER — I have lost a bit of weight, and my teeth are slipping, so you will have to forgive me for that. I have to get to a dentist, but one of those good ones, not one of the dodgy ones you have in Melbourne at the moment. I will choose mine wisely.

The former Minister for Police and Emergency Services provided my electorate with 57 different grants, including for a new Kawarren fire station, a Wye River refurbishment, Yeodene, Lorne, Wye River again, Winchelsea, Fairhaven, Anglesea and the Camperdown fire brigade. The list goes on and on. Once again, they were fantastic projects.

I will quickly talk about a couple of road projects. One of them was the Fairhaven underpass. Anyone who has driven along the Great Ocean Road in the summer months will have watched kids run backwards and forwards from the residential area across to Fairhaven beach and the Fairhaven Surf Life Saving Club. People drive along, rubbernecking at the hang-gliders while kids are crossing the road. It was only a matter of time before there will be a fatality in front of that surf lifesaving club. Our government provided the money to

put an underpass there. I understand that VicRoads is undertaking that work at the moment. It will add to the funding we provided to the surf lifesaving club at Fairhaven. There is a fantastic set-up there. The then Minister for Police and Emergency Services was down there to open it. Unfortunately I could not be there on the day, but people are very grateful for the work we put into that community.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — It gives me great pleasure to join the debate on the budget papers. It is the first time in four years that the Yan Yean electorate has had any decent news on significant infrastructure and service delivery in this area. I am pleased about and proud of the efforts of my colleagues the ministers, the Premier and the Treasurer in ensuring that the Yan Yean electorate has finally, again, received the funding that it deserves, particularly given that it has one of the fastest growing populations in the state and indeed in the country. The population of the Mernda and Doreen postcode area has doubled from 2011 to 2014; it is now almost the size of Shepparton's. Mernda and Doreen residents have heaved a sigh of relief that the drought has finally broken in terms of their infrastructure needs being recognised.

This first Andrews Labor government budget is a game changer for the outer north after that pause — those four years of neglect by those opposite. The budget delivers a record investment in education funding. It gets the ball rolling on vital transport infrastructure and provides much-needed funding for other community facilities, such as a police station for Mernda and Country Fire Authority buildings in Wattle Glen and Plenty.

Overall, families in the Yan Yean electorate, which form the majority of household units, are the big winners from the state budget. The education allocation in this year's budget is the biggest ever in the history of this state. Yan Yean electorate schools will share in this, with a total of \$17.7 million for building and renovation projects, including \$5 million to complete the Wallan Secondary College upgrade. The first stages were built by a Labor government, and despite the growth through that corridor between Craigieburn and Wallan, during the previous four years no funds were allocated to complete this great school. I commend the staff and students at the school. They have had quite a bit of difficulty in recent years due to fires in the area, and this funding is a great reward for their effort and will continue to put a focus on education.

There is \$7.8 million in the budget for Hazel Glen College. I thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier personally for their involvement and their drive in

ensuring that this government more than doubled its election commitment to Hazel Glen College. Both the Premier and the Deputy Premier, who is the education minister, have visited the college since the election. The project at that school was a mission begun by Labor in 2010. We set aside land for this great school, but negotiations for the funding that was provided for in the 2010 budget stopped stone dead when those opposite took the government benches in 2010.

Now I am very pleased to see that the school project is up and running. However, it has only come about after a great campaign by the local community and after the collapse of the former Acacia College. Sadly for the member for Yuroke, who sits in this chamber a few seats up from me, the only reason any capital funding was put into the building of Hazel Glen College by the previous government was that Acacia College had collapsed. Poor old Mount Ridley College had been expecting its next stage of funding, but at the last minute — during the previous government's term — Mount Ridley had its money cruelly ripped away and given to the Doreen community because those opposite had failed to plan.

But now we do have a plan that will complete this fantastic school. Hazel Glen College has early childhood services at one end of it, so we have prenatal, preschool and early intervention services all co-located, right up to year 12. There will also be a hospitality centre, which will be available to the community, and community members, not just the kids who are enrolled there, will be able to be trained in that centre. We have funded a great future and have a great agenda in hospitality and food. I believe that investment coupled with tourism will see job growth which will somewhat offset the loss of manufacturing, particularly automotive manufacturing, due to the imminent closure of Ford, which had been picked on and urged out by those economic vandals, the members of the Liberal federal government in Canberra.

Members of this government, including the Minister for Industry, who is at the table, the member for Broadmeadows, the member for Yuroke, the member for Thomastown and the member for Sunbury stand united. We will work hard to mitigate the impact of the shocking closure of Ford that is already causing employment heartache in our area. We will make sure that there are other educational and TAFE training opportunities to retrain automotive workers and give our young people some hope of being employed in new industries.

While the Minister for Industry is at the table, I take this opportunity to thank her for the recent forum she held

in Broadmeadows, which was attended by a number of current automotive manufacturers and in particular tiers 4 and 5 smaller manufacturers. Those people have been listened to on how we can transition and assist them to keep operating if their supply chain to the large motor vehicle manufacturers is truncated when manufacturing ceases. Although Mr Ondarchie, a member for Northern Metropolitan Region in the Council, has made accusations that we have not been undertaking this work, we absolutely have been. We have not sat by and been commentators, as those opposite did and as Mr Ondarchie does. We are getting down, doing the work and making sure that that transition can occur, and we call on those in Canberra to match our efforts.

It is very important to see the development of a TAFE college in the Whittlesea region. The Mernda Central P–12 school will also be constructed in Mernda. Many students in the Yan Yean electorate attend Montmorency Secondary College, St Helena Secondary College or Greensborough College, which will also receive new and ongoing investment. I mentioned earlier that Mernda will get a new police station. Some \$15 million has been allocated for a 24-hour police station for Mernda. After many years of campaigning, Labor had plans in 2010, so we went to the 2010 election with a commitment that we would rebuild Plenty and Wattle Glen fire stations. They were high up on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) list of priorities, but those opposite just did not listen to the people at those fire stations, those volunteers who not toil in their local areas but also perform road accident rescue. The Plenty Gorge Park area is one of the most fire-prone areas in the Southern Hemisphere, and those opposite saw fit to overlook the need for a new fire station there. I note that the member for Gembrook, the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, made his contribution to this debate a little earlier this afternoon. He has made a lot of statements.

Turning to the budget, I endorse what the government has done in closing the dangerous and risky CFA facility at Fiskville, and I am very pleased to see that there are funds in the budget to look at alternative places for people to train. I note that I am in the chamber with my brother firefighter the member for Frankston, who has been a career firefighter. We work collaboratively together in this Parliament. The Country Fire Authority is one of the best fire services in the world. It is an integrated fire service, and it is successful not only because it has well-trained career firefighters but also because it has professionally trained volunteer firefighters.

I decry the efforts of the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, who plays divisive politics around this issue. He has been out in the community and up at Fiskville trying to get an easy run on the regional news, saying he will stand up for firefighting in Fiskville. Fiskville is dangerous and has been the site of a cancer cluster; we know that. Those opposite tried to cover it up on their watch, and I commend the work of this Parliament's Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee, which is chaired by the member for Thomastown. That committee's interim report was tabled yesterday.

It beggars belief that a shadow minister who says he is committed to the health and safety of volunteer firefighters resigned from the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee just as the work of that committee was coming together. He seems to think volunteer firefighters are not at risk from that cancer cluster. I am here to tell him that my uncle, Alan Radford, who passed away just over a year ago, believed the various cancers he had were as a direct result of his many training periods at the Fiskville college. I do not know why the member for Gembrook continues to politicise this issue and does not pay attention to his portfolio responsibilities. Why did he resign from the very committee on which he could have made his name? He could have made his name by saying he was standing up —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms GREEN — It seems to me that it is not a coincidence that he resigned from that committee just as a confidential submission from the member for Frankston was leaked. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, I call it a duck. I think the member for Gembrook needs to explain why he has not continued in his role and why he does not support the measures in the budget —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask you to caution the member not to make imputations against other members other than by way of substantive motion. It is in breach of the standing orders and is out of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — Order! I ask the member to continue.

Ms GREEN — I support the measures in the budget that provide alternative safe training for both career and volunteer firefighters, because many firefighters I know have been exposed to substances, the chemical composition of which we do not know. When I was Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency

Services, I attended a graduation at the Fiskville facility. A hydrant on the very pad where chemicals were oozing out of the ground blew and sprayed water over the crowd. Clearly there is a need for new training facilities, so I absolutely support the provision of new facilities for volunteer firefighters. I support the measures in the budget, particularly the capital funding for Wattle Glen and Plenty, which members opposite would not consider.

I also support the Mernda rail extension, because Mernda matters. I doorknocked with volunteers last Saturday to tell the community that we will be delivering Mernda rail, Mernda police station, a Mernda P–12 school and new bus services along Bridge Inn Road. We will be delivering for that community because we actually care. Whatever work the people in our community do, we care about them. No matter whether they are volunteers in our community or professionals in the public sector, including firefighters or paramedics, we are not going to act divisively. We support the workers in our community. We support them working in healthy workplaces. This is a great budget that actually delivers for working families. It is committed to infrastructure and services, and I commend it to the house.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this afternoon to speak on the take-note motion for the 2015 budget papers. What these budget papers do is expose the stark reality that if you live in a Labor seat, you will be looked after, but if you live in a seat not held by Labor, you do not matter. If you did not vote for Labor, you do not get anything. My electorate of South Barwon is made up of some of the largest growth areas in the state.

Ms Green interjected.

Mr KATOS — The member for Yan Yean would make a good minister. As I was saying, South Barwon has some of the state's biggest growth areas, including Armstrong Creek, which was actually approved under the previous Labor government and which consists of 22 000 house lots. Some 55 000 people will be living at Armstrong Creek before long. Torquay is also a substantial growth area, although not of the magnitude of Armstrong Creek. You would think that an electorate of this size and rate of growth, which requires a significant amount of infrastructure, would receive a reasonable amount of money from the budget. This year the only funding commitments made to my electorate are to Moriac Primary School, which will receive \$3 million, and to a children's kindergarten hub in Highton, which will receive \$1.6 million. That is where it stops.

My electorate needs many things that were not committed to by Labor in this budget. In particular — and the shadow Minister for Education and the Leader of the Opposition both visited this site with me — is the purchasing of land in Armstrong Creek to build a new primary school. My understanding is that there were approximately 11 sites around the state that the Andrews government committed to buying, and curiously the only site not purchased this year happens to be at Armstrong Creek. That is interesting. There are also delays in the public-private partnership (PPP) program. The coalition government allocated \$223 million to three South Barwon schools in a PPP program. Torquay North Primary School is supposed to be operational at the start of 2017, but as yet not a sod has been turned. Nothing has happened, but we are supposed to have students on that site for the start of the 2017 school year.

The Labor investment in South Barwon schools is astounding when you consider that Torquay P–6 College — and I was talking to the principal, Pam Kinsman, about this a couple of weeks ago — has 1025 students. The coalition recognised that, so we constructed the Surf Coast Secondary College in a \$37.5 million investment for the Torquay community. That has been very well received, and it is a fine school under the principalship of Scott Diamond, who does a terrific job. We also committed to purchasing the land and funding the construction of the new Torquay North Primary School, but we are still waiting for the Labor government to do the same.

Mr Merlino — You cut it in half.

Mr KATOS — The Minister for Education is chirping that we cut the capital program in half. Looking at my electorate, all I see is that we invested a lot of money in schools.

The Labor government has made no other commitments for the next four years to the South Barwon electorate; what I have already mentioned is all there is, unless the Minister for Education finds it in the goodness of his heart to fund some of the schools that he and his South Barwon candidate did not commit to at the last election. He could choose to fund Belmont High School, which has 1200 students, Grovedale College, Bellaire Primary School or Highton Primary School. The coalition committed to all those schools but not a cent has been allocated by the Labor government. Maybe it is because members opposite perceive Highton to be a Liberal-voting area and therefore unworthy of school funding.

Grovedale College, which I have already mentioned, has enrolled its highest ever number of students. I was talking to Grovedale principal Janet Matthews a few weeks ago when I learnt that her school is forecast to exceed its building-based maximum number of enrolments in the next three years. Grovedale College will have over 1000 students enrolled, but the Minister for Education is doing nothing about it. This school community is growing rapidly. It is important not just for students living in the Grovedale area but also for any students living in Armstrong Creek, for whom this college is the nearest secondary college. It is essential for that school to receive attention.

That is also the case with regard to the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club. The shadow Minister for Emergency Services, the member for Gembrook, has been to the Jan Juc and Torquay surf lifesaving clubs to have a look. In response to an adjournment debate matter I raised earlier in the year the Minister for Emergency Services said, ‘I’m not funding that. That’s up to Life Saving Victoria; go ask them for money’. She has washed her hands totally of Jan Juc. The club needs new buildings. Its current facilities were built in the 1960s and are completely inadequate for those services. As the member for Gembrook has mentioned about Bellarine, curiously this year the Ocean Grove Surf Life Saving Club has received, from memory, \$2.57 million. That is good for that surf lifesaving club. Jan Juc is a very dangerous beach. Unfortunately earlier this year a death occurred on the beach, and urgent funding is needed there.

Another matter that comes to mind is the Barwon Heads Road. Armstrong Creek is growing rapidly, but there is no commitment from this government to do anything about a Barwon Heads Road duplication or upgrade. At the intersection with Boundary Road there is still a give-way sign. There are no turning lanes and it is atrocious, but there has been nothing from the Minister for Roads and Road Safety about that. Also, Reserve Road — —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr KATOS — I can assure the member for Melton that in the four years we were in government I delivered more infrastructure for my electorate than he has in the whole time he has been the member for Melton. He can chirp over there all he likes, but he has never delivered — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — Order!

Mr KATOS — He has never delivered the volume of infrastructure that I delivered in South Barwon in four years. I will refer to some other things that were delivered. The member for Polwarth, formerly the Minister for Roads and Minister for Public Transport, is sitting next to me. There were upgrades to Pioneer Road. There was a bottleneck there at Waurn Ponds and Grovedale. Stage 1 has been delivered, stage 2 has been funded — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KATOS — I will get to the noise barriers. Then there are the noise barriers at Wandana Heights on the Geelong Ring Road, another one funded by the former Minister for Roads; they are excellent. Also for the Waurn Ponds community there is the new railway station.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KATOS — I will get to police. There is the new railway station at Waurn Ponds, which was delivered under the coalition government. It has adequate parking, proper amenities, proper covering, heaters, indoor areas and ticketing — all delivered by the former Minister for Public Transport, the member for Polwarth. Look at the contrast between that and the Marshall railway station. You would not believe it is a railway station. It has no covering, there is no proper ticket office, the parking is terrible. It is totally inadequate.

There is also the Waurn Ponds police station and State Emergency Service complex. I can see that the member for Rowville is very pleased I have mentioned that, and I thank him for the commitment of \$15.6 million for the Waurn Ponds police station and State Emergency Service complex. The superintendent at Geelong said to me that that was the first time in his years of experience on the force that the police had got a police station when and where they wanted it — at the right time and in the right place to service the growth areas of southern Geelong, Armstrong Creek and other existing areas. That was very well received there.

I refer also to the sporting clubs that we funded: the Torquay Football Club, the South Barwon football club, the Grovedale football club, the Highton Tennis Club, the Barwon Soccer Club and the Torquay Bowls Club — a fine facility there. We also made commitments to the Torquay Netball Club, the Grovedale Tennis Club and the Barwon Soccer Club.

I will finish on one thing that was exposed with a piece of legislation debated here, and that is the absolute lies that were peddled about Bay West. They were complete

lies. The bill we will vote on shortly exposes those lies about Bay West to the Geelong community. The three Labor members in Geelong should hang their heads in shame for the lies they peddled to the Geelong community.

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

DELIVERING VICTORIAN INFRASTRUCTURE (PORT OF MELBOURNE LEASE TRANSACTION) BILL 2015

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 24 June; motion of
Mr PALLAS (Treasurer).**

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

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

House divided on question:

Ayes, 44

Allan, Ms	Kilkenny, Ms
Andrews, Mr	Knight, Ms
Blandthorn, Ms	Lim, Mr
Brooks, Mr	McGuire, Mr
Bull, Mr J.	Merlino, Mr
Carbines, Mr	Nardella, Mr
Carroll, Mr	Noonan, Mr
D' Ambrosio, Ms	Pakula, Mr
Dimopoulos, Mr	Pallas, Mr
Donnellan, Mr	Pearson, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr	Perera, Mr
Edwards, Ms	Richardson, Mr
Eren, Mr	Richardson, Ms
Foley, Mr	Scott, Mr
Garrett, Ms	Spence, Ms
Graley, Ms	Staikos, Mr
Green, Ms	Suleyman, Ms
Halfpenny, Ms	Thomas, Ms
Hennessy, Ms	Thomson, Ms
Howard, Mr	Ward, Ms
Hutchins, Ms	Williams, Ms
Kairouz, Ms	Wynne, Mr

Noes, 39

Angus, Mr	Northe, Mr
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr D.
Battin, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M.
Blackwood, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Pesutto, Mr
Burgess, Mr	Ryall, Ms
Clark, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Crisp, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Dixon, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Fyffe, Mrs	Smith, Mr R.
Gidley, Mr	Smith, Mr T.

Guy, Mr
Hibbins, Mr
Hodgett, Mr
Katos, Mr
McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr
Mulder, Mr
Napthine, Dr

Question agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! That is disorderly! Government members will put those posters away immediately.

ADOPTION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from 24 June; motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PUBLICATION OF RETAIL OFFERS) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 June; motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy and Resources).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Southwick, Mr
Staley, Ms
Thompson, Mr
Victoria, Ms
Wakeling, Mr
Walsh, Mr
Watt, Mr
Wells, Mr

ROAD SAFETY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE CAR PARKS) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 June; motion of Ms GARRETT (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT (INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 June; motion of Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION REFORM AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms GARRETT (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Brighton Beach Oval

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — The issue I raise in the adjournment debate tonight is for the Minister for Sport, and the action I am seeking from him is that he fund an upgrade of Brighton Beach Oval. Brighton Beach Oval is used by the Brighton Cricket Club, the Old Brighton Grammarians Football Club and the Brighton Beach Junior Football Club. These clubs combined have membership of around 800 people.

At the outset let me say that the coalition made an election commitment of \$240 000 to fund this upgrade, and that was announced in a press release from me dated 15 November 2014. Of course I completely understand that the Labor government is not responsible for implementing Liberal Party election commitments, but I am asking the minister to consider the meritorious nature of this project and to indicate whether he would consider it in a future budget. The money would have been allocated to the installation of high-quality lighting at the sports oval, which is particularly needed during the winter months when obviously people are training in the dark. The current lighting only provides partial coverage of the oval, and large areas remain unlit. That lighting does not meet Australian lighting standards.

There is also a safety net issue in the sense that there is an absence of a safety net, which needs to be fixed. At the moment footballs and cricket balls hit cars and, in worst case scenarios, pedestrians on South Road. For those who do not know it, South Road is a busy four-lane thoroughfare between Beach Road and Nepean Highway, south of New Street. The Labor Party is familiar with New Street. Safety nets would be of great use to eliminate this problem.

The minister may not be aware that Bayside City Council has already invested significant money in this oval. It has reconstructed the oval to improve the turf cover and a range of other aspects. This particular project, which could be funded by the state government, would add enormously to this oval, which caters for a combined membership of over 800 people from the clubs which use the oval.

Sound, safe sporting facilities are an integral part of communities. The minister would be most welcome to come and see a practice session at Brighton Beach Oval if he were in the area. The local community is a big

supporter of the oval — a lot of locals train there. Therefore, as I said, I ask the minister to fund an upgrade of Brighton Beach Oval in the interests of good community health.

Frankston victims services

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — I rise to invite the Minister for Police to visit the Frankston police station on Thursday, 2 July, to launch Frankston's co-location of victims services. The Victorian government has recently funded a program with Windermere for the co-location of services at Frankston police station. They will work together to address the needs of victims of serious or repeat crimes. In this program there will be a particular focus on high-risk and repeat victims of family violence, and victims services will be working closely with family violence units.

I heard of the need for these services when I attended a domestic violence forum in Frankston earlier this year. I heard of the desperate need for follow-up after family violence has occurred. Speakers at the forum emphasised that the link between the police and support services needs to be strengthened. The new services aim to address this by allowing police to link with support services directly, either on site or via telephone. The new program will reduce any time delays and increase the likelihood of an initial engagement and the success of that engagement. The networking opportunities will benefit both sides of the co-location services. The shared knowledge will be of benefit when assisting victims.

I look forward to the minister's response. I believe the attendance of the minister will be beneficial for the police station, as it will show the government's support for this new and essential program in the Frankston electorate.

Echuca education hub

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — The adjournment matter I raise is for the Minister for Education. It refers to the proposed Echuca schools regeneration project, which will bring together Echuca Specialist School, Echuca South Primary School and Echuca West Primary School on a single site. I ask the minister to receive a deputation from the three schools so that the school councils can present their completed master plan to him.

The concept of developing an education hub in Echuca has been flagged for more than a decade, and these three schools agreed to merge in 2007. Since that time the schools have worked hard to secure funding. They

were prepared to forgo Building Education Revolution funding at their individual schools because of the promise of funding for the three existing schools to be merged on a new greenfields site. The Liberal-Nationals coalition government funded the purchase of the land for a new greenfields school site. In the 2014–15 state budget the coalition government allocated \$200 000 to prepare the master plan at the new site and prior to the election committed \$25 million to build the school. The master plan is now finished, and the school councils are seeking the opportunity to meet with the minister to discuss progressing to the next stage of their development of the new school site.

I congratulate the school councils and their staff for the way they have worked together to develop a master plan of what will be a great education facility when it is built. This is particularly important for Echuca Specialist School, which provides education for children aged 5 to 18 years with special needs. Numbers are progressively growing, with indications that this trend will continue into the future. These students are currently being educated in portable classrooms on leased land, which the Department of Education and Training does not want to spend money on for maintenance.

It is vital that Victorian school students, whether they live in the city or the country, get a quality education, and a modern purpose-built school in Echuca will provide the learning environment that the teachers and students of these three schools deserve.

Hepatitis action plan

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — I appreciate the opportunity to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. The action I seek is that the Minister for Health work with the community to design a strategy that addresses the prevalence of hepatitis B and hepatitis C in Victoria. Hepatitis B and C are two different viral infections transmitted through blood and bodily fluids, causing inflammation of the liver. In some cases hepatitis can cause chronic infection of the liver, eventually leading to liver failure and cirrhosis. Recent statistics reveal that in Victoria alone approximately 56 000 people live with chronic hepatitis B and approximately 65 000 people have been diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C. Measured against other states and territories, Victoria has the highest prevalence of hepatitis B and the second-highest prevalence of hepatitis C among its population.

In addition, research has revealed that hepatitis is most common amongst certain population groups. A large

proportion of those diagnosed with the disease are from migrant communities. In the electorate of Pascoe Vale, a district with a large migrant population, it is estimated that 2 per cent of people suffer from this debilitating condition, with approximately 228 people living with chronic hepatitis B and around 628 people living with chronic hepatitis C.

In light of these figures, more needs to be done to reduce the prevalence of hepatitis. To date, Victoria's response to this issue has languished behind the responses of other states. South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia have taken the lead on this issue through their prompt implementation of action plans. Unlike these other states, an action plan for hepatitis B has never existed in Victoria, and the previous action plan for hepatitis C has now expired. In 2014 Victoria, along with all other states and territories, signed up to all five national strategies for blood-borne viruses, including for both hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Despite becoming a signatory to the national strategy for blood-borne viruses, the former coalition government failed to develop an action plan for hepatitis B and C. Developing an action plan is essential if we are to begin to address the prevalence of hepatitis in Victoria.

I ask that the minister work with the community to identify priority actions that will help reduce transmission and increase treatment options for those in the community suffering from hepatitis B and C.

Manchester Primary School

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — My request for action is to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that he urgently review funding for Manchester Primary School in Mooroolbark to complete its master plan rebuild and deal with urgent maintenance issues. Under the Naphine government, Manchester primary was allocated \$1.28 million to upgrade the school's facilities in line with its master plan. This was funding designated for forward planning as Manchester primary prepared for growth.

I am told that the \$1.28 million allocated to Manchester primary by the coalition for future growth is now being raided by the Andrews government to pay for a new list of urgent maintenance works that have been identified. The money provided was dedicated for a specific purpose. It should not be used to plug gaps in the government's annual school maintenance budget.

I am also told that despite indicative scoping done by the school which showed that \$1.28 million was sufficient for the works, Manchester primary's efforts

to engage architects and consultants is eating into its budget before any rebuild has even take place. As it stands, only a minor rebuild will be done, which will result in the teacher staffroom and administration office being relocated to a portable at the front of the school. In my experience there is no guarantee that the portables will remain the property of the school.

Although Mooroolbark has several wonderful primary schools, including Manchester Primary School, Bimbadeen Heights Primary School, Pembroke Primary School and Rolling Hills Primary School, all of the schools in the catchment are taking on more and more children, and while the teachers do a great job making sure that every child receives the attention and assistance they need, we need to make sure the children have the space they need to flourish. Children should not be crammed into classrooms like sardines.

I ask that the Minister for Education have the department work with Manchester Primary School to achieve its goals to prepare for growth by boosting the budget for its rebuild and by allocating additional funds to meet maintenance needs that will not be captured as part of the rebuild.

Maribyrnong River Anzac memorial

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Veterans. The action I seek is that the minister provide an update on the Anzac centenary community grants program, and in particular the status of the Keilor East RSL Boulevard Anzac Centenary Commemorative Committee application to fund the installation of five heritage panels along the Maribyrnong River in recognition of the Essendon Rifles 58th Battalion.

These heritage panels will stand where a series of trees once stood, marking an avenue of honour, and will display the stories of Brigadier Harold Edward ‘Pompey’ Elliot, who served in the First World War and who was later promoted to the rank of Major General and served in the Australian Parliament; Lance Corporal Scurry, who is well renowned for inventing the self-firing rifle that enabled the troops to leave Gallipoli; Lieutenant Charles Aloysius Denehy, who became the commander of the 58th Battalion; and Victoria Cross winner Captain Rupert Moon, who was a platoon commander of the 58th Battalion. The fifth panel will outline the history of the battalion and the conflicts in which it was involved.

The local community has felt the loss of the old avenue of honour. These panels will ensure that all locals wanting to pay their respects to our diggers will have

the opportunity to do so. I visit the proposed site on many occasions, as do many tourists and locals living near the Maribyrnong River. The installation of these plaques will provide important information about our local history to visitors, ensuring that the sacrifice of those honoured will not be forgotten and that the tales of their bravery will be passed on to future generations.

The project was proposed by the Boulevard Anzac Centenary Commemorative Committee under the auspices of Keilor East RSL. If the project is confirmed, it is expected to be unveiled with a full military ceremony. This project will make a significant contribution to many locals in our area, and I commend it to the minister. I particularly want to thank Trevor Sinclair, who has been a driving force behind this project.

Prahran electorate train services

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, who I note is in the chamber at this time. The action I seek is for the minister to meet with commuters at Toorak, Hawksburn, Armadale and South Yarra stations to discuss ongoing issues with lack of services, unreliability and overcrowding during peak hour. Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale stations are all used by residents in the Prahran electorate and are bypassed by several Frankston line express trains during peak hour. This leads to peak hour waits of up to 12 minutes between trains — that is if services are running well. Delays result in overcrowded trains that leave commuters at the station unable to board, whilst several express trains with excess capacity pass through the stations.

Many of the peak-hour services stop at Malvern before becoming express services, which results in only a 3-minute time saving for those services, while passengers at Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale are left waiting. South Yarra commuters, despite having three lines that service their station, still suffer from overcrowded trains by being the second-last stop before the CBD. This situation is only going to get worse if there is no Melbourne Metro interchange and the Cranbourne-Pakenham line rail bypasses South Yarra station.

I understand that the government is going to introduce a new timetable later this year. I urge the minister to meet with commuters to hear firsthand their experiences so the government can implement a timetable that meets the needs of those residents in the Prahran electorate by providing more peak-hour services and begin to understand why not having a Melbourne Metro

interchange with South Yarra will make overcrowding at that station even worse.

Eltham Rugby Union Club

Ms WARD (Eltham) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Sport. The action I seek is that the minister visit my electorate and the many terrific sporting clubs we have. We are blessed in the seat of Eltham to have exceptional sporting clubs and many great facilities. One of these great local clubs is the Eltham Rugby Union Club. This club is pretty passionate about Rugby Union, and despite the fact that I do not have a comprehensive knowledge of the game, its members are always exceptionally kind and welcoming to me. I would like to talk about what it is that I particularly admire about this club.

Last Saturday I was invited to be a part of its annual ladies' lunch which, Deputy Speaker, as I am sure you can imagine, was a lot of fun. I understand that the Mr Eltham parade later in the day brings with it both fun and a bit of excitement. Unfortunately over the last couple of years I have not been able to stay to see Mr Eltham in action — maybe next year.

Part of Saturday's celebration was not just about the involvement of the many local women with the club, it was also a fundraiser for Assist a Sista. Assist a Sista is a fantastic community-based organisation which helps victims of domestic violence with crisis needs and transition from refuges into independent housing by furnishing homes and providing essential items. This is a great cause for this club to support. The club shows real leadership not only in terms of it identifying need within the community but also in its development of a number of programs that assist women in attaining leadership positions in training and coaching. The club also has a female touch football team.

I invite the minister to come to Eltham to have a look at the great clubs in my electorate. In particular I would like him to see the work the Eltham Rugby Union Club is doing to help advance the cause of women and promote equality in our community. We have many fantastic clubs in my electorate. I would welcome a visit from the minister.

Highton bus services

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for the bus services that have been cut in Highton to be reinstated. On Sunday, 21 June, the Andrews Labor government changed the bus routes and timetables in the Geelong region. These changes to bus

routes particularly affected residents in Highton, and I have received numerous complaints from constituents in regard to this.

Changes to bus routes 16 and 34 have not been well received in the community. I will quote from some correspondence from constituents, including Helen Badham from Highton, who says:

Living in 'old Highton' until now we have used the #16 bus, which serviced Deakin University, via the Highton shopping centre, High Street Belmont and Kmart into Geelong Central. This gave many senior local residents the independence to use the local banks, doctors, dentist, post office, newsagent, public library, pathology services, not to mention supermarkets as well as catching up with friends for a coffee ...

So you can imagine some of our senior local residents' distress to learn that the new #43 bus route does not give them access to any business hub at all south of the Barwon River. Neither does the route intersect with any other bus route so that an interchange could be effected. In other words, our bus route provides no service to the Belmont High Street shops or Kmart or the Waurn Ponds shopping centre or the Highton shopping centre!

Additionally, the new route also withdraws access for local students to Belmont High School.

Jane Stevens, also from Highton, has issues with the no. 34 bus. She writes:

Can you please help me? As a parent of two children who catch the no. 34 bus, one to Belmont High School, I found it hard to believe that this service has been scrapped. We live in Grantham Drive, Highton and one of my children will have to walk with a heavy backpack and musical instrument to school. Can you please help with reinstating this bus route. I cannot understand how a decision like this was made, there is a huge amount of Belmont High students the catch this bus every day.

The new bus routes have obviously not taken Belmont High School into account. There are some 450 students in the Highton area who catch the bus. This means that the kids will either have to catch two buses or spend over an hour on one bus just to travel 3 or 4 kilometres. The buses that did travel routes 16 and 34 in the morning were always full.

I found out today that one bus has been reinstated. That will be full; it is not enough. The changes to these services have focused on linking buses to railway stations and Deakin University. That is good, but it has come at the expense of local bus services so people who want to shop or move about their suburbs can no longer do so. I ask the minister to immediately reinstate former bus services 16 and 34 in Highton.

Thompsons Road–Western Port Highway overpass

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to update the residents of my electorate on the future possibility of installing an overpass at the intersection of Thompsons Road and Western Port Highway in my electorate of Cranbourne.

I was pleased to see the Andrews government commit \$175 million to duplicate Thompsons Road between EastLink and Clyde Road. These works will reduce driving times as well as enhance safety. Labor's commitment will see the two remaining sections — Frankston-Dandenong Road to the South Gippsland Highway and Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road to Clyde Road — duplicated. With this in mind I bring the minister's attention to the intersection of Thompsons Road and the Western Port Highway. Currently this intersection is a major bottleneck during peak times.

Thompsons Road is an important route for local families and businesses. More than 24 000 vehicles use this section of the road each day. Labor's \$175 million commitment comes as a relief to residents who face increased traffic congestion every year. Thompsons Road has been widened between the South Gippsland Highway and Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road. This happened as a result of Labor's investment of \$22 million. Thompsons Road has been widened between the Mornington Peninsula Freeway and Dandenong-Frankston Road. This happened as a result of Labor's investment of \$30.5 million. Unfortunately the Liberal Party walked away from completing this much-needed duplication while it was in government. Labor's Thompsons Road duplication and level crossing removal program will reduce traffic and travel time, make the drive safer and support our growing population.

Responses

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for Pascoe Vale for raising what is a very important issue. The member obviously has a very strong passion for the people in her electorate and for their health and wellbeing, as well as for this very challenging issue that governments and health services of all configurations are grappling with. I am certainly committed to reducing the impact of hepatitis B and hepatitis C on the community. I look forward to working with some of the really fantastic community organisations that are advocating for the removal of barriers in terms of the management of hepatitis in general practice. There are a range of structural barriers

to the treatment and management of hepatitis C in general practice. These matters have been raised in the Victorian submission to the commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into hepatitis C in Australia.

Further, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has considered and recommended that three new hepatitis C treatments be listed on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. I have certainly made representations to the commonwealth on the importance of these new drugs. They can achieve viral clearance in 12 weeks, which is really quite significant in terms of hepatitis treatments, and they have an efficacy rate of about 94 per cent. I certainly hope the commonwealth government acts quickly to list these drugs. It will have enormous benefit for thousands and thousands of Victorians. I thank the member for Pascoe Vale for raising this matter and for her ongoing advocacy on this issue. I look forward to continuing the work this government is doing with the member for Pascoe Vale in terms of improving and reducing the structural barriers for those who are dealing with hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — The member for South Barwon raised a matter regarding the implications and knock-on effects of bus timetable changes in the Geelong community. By way of brief context, as he pointed out, a significant timetable change came into effect last Sunday as a result of the opening of the fantastic regional rail link, the introduction of 10-minute peak-hour services for the Geelong community and increased bus services that link with the train timetable while providing services to some of the growing areas in the city of Greater Geelong.

I am aware of and acknowledge the work undertaken by the Labor members for electorates in Greater Geelong — the members for Geelong, Lara and Bellarine — who have also been talking to me about some of the consequences of those bus route changes. There was extensive consultation. I hope the member for South Barwon took the opportunity to be part of that consultation process undertaken by Public Transport Victoria to make sure that there was a significant level of community input into the design of the timetable. However, we recognise that for some members of the community there have been changes that have caused them concern, and the member for South Barwon has outlined some of those.

Public Transport Victoria has committed to continually review and assess the impacts of the bus timetable changes, and the government has already indicated that there will be an the opportunity to make further changes

to the bus timetable later in the year. I will ensure that the matters raised by the member for South Barwon are looked at by Public Transport Victoria in this short-term period and will be considered as part of any changes later in the year.

The member for Prahran raised a matter primarily around the issue of services for a range of train stations in and around his electorate on the Frankston line. He mentioned a range of issues around unreliability, delays and overcrowding experienced by passengers in this area, particularly during the peak-hour period, and also the knock-on effects of those issues — the loop bypasses and the station skipping, which cause incredible frustration for passengers. I think these are the issues and challenges in our public transport system that we have inherited from a government that failed to address these critical issues, whether through a failure to invest in rolling stock, a failure to invest in infrastructure or, particularly and most glaringly, a failure to push on with the Melbourne Metro rail project — a project that is absolutely vital but unfortunately sat on a shelf for four years because the former government failed to recognise it was the sort of project that is needed to address a large number of those issues.

I appreciate that the completion of the Melbourne Metro rail project is a little way off and that people want to see these issues addressed now. The issues are being considered as part of further timetable changes that will be made later in the year. Of course there will need to be changes to the metropolitan timetable to accommodate the introduction of the Homesafe trial, an important public transport policy commitment made by the Andrews Labor government. I will make sure that Public Transport Victoria has taken note of the issues raised by the member for Prahran as we consider further timetable changes, look constantly for ways we can improve public transport services for people across Victoria — not just the inner Melbourne suburbs — and recognise that we have a legacy of catch-up because of the chronic failures of the Liberal-Nationals government.

The members for Brighton, Frankston, Murray Plains, Evelyn, Niddrie, Eltham and Cranbourne raised matters for various ministers, and those matters will be referred to those ministers for their attention and response.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I take this opportunity to hope that everybody has a safe break if they are going away. The house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5.37 p.m. until Tuesday, 4 August.

