

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Thursday, 7 May 2015

(Extract from book 6)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D’Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. J. F. Garrett, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. A. Somyurek, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

**OFFICE-HOLDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

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, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas,
Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. J. GUY

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

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

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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
Batin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent	South-West Coast	LP
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
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ²	Gippsland South	Nats
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ¹	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
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, Mr Perera 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*): Mr Battin, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson 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.

CONTENTS

THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2015

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply 1369

PETITIONS

Mount Alexander Shire Council 1369
Cranbourne West precinct structure plan 1369
Casey cultural precinct 1369

DOCUMENTS 1369

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment 1369

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Kai Wakenshaw 1369
Frank Swann 1370
Port of Hastings 1370
Country Fire Authority Ocean Grove brigade 1370
Leopold Community Hub 1370
Lowan electorate road funding 1370
Pharmaceutical drug dependence 1370
Kate Maddern 1371
Willmott Park Primary School 1371
Ceres memorial gates 1371
Anzac Day 1371, 1372, 1373, 1375, 1376
Country Fire Authority memorial service 1372
Jessi McEwan 1373
Michael Wilson 1373
Australian Fuzhou Business Association 1373
Anzac centenary 1374, 1375
John Kidd 1374
Community On Ground Assistance program 1374
Frankston electorate community support 1374
Combined Probus Club of Whitehorse 1375
Sikh community 1375
United Nations Global Road Safety Week 1376
Greater Geelong City Council 1376

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA

AMENDMENT (JOBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE) BILL 2015

Second reading 1377, 1450
Third reading 1450

BRAIN CANCER 1385

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS

STATEMENTS

Montmorency Secondary College 1386
Ministers statements: level crossings 1386
Orygen Youth Health 1387
Ministers statements: budget 1388
Glen Eira College 1388, 1389
Ministers statements: community safety 1390
Casey Hospital 1390
Ministers statements: roads and bridges 1391
Wimmera cancer centre 1391, 1392
Ministers statements: apprentices 1392

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Warrandyte 1389

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Gembrook electorate 1392
Macedon electorate 1392

Mildura electorate 1393
Mordialloc electorate 1393
South Barwon electorate 1393
Pascoe Vale electorate 1393
Rowville electorate 1393
Bentleigh electorate 1394
Ringwood electorate 1394
Essendon electorate 1394

APPROPRIATION (2015–2016) BILL 2015

Second reading 1394, 1445

STATE TAXATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Statement of compatibility 1442
Second reading 1444

CRIMES AMENDMENT (REPEAL OF SECTION 19A)

BILL 2015

Second reading 1450
Third reading 1450

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second reading 1450
Third reading 1450

SENTENCING AMENDMENT (CORRECTION OF

SENTENCING ERROR) BILL 2015

Second reading 1450
Third reading 1450

ADJOURNMENT

Macalister irrigation district 1450
Huntingdale bus interchange 1451
Point Nepean Road, Dromana 1451
Taylors–Kings roads, Delahey 1452
Chandler Highway bridge 1452
Rolling stock strategy 1453
Beach Road, Sandringham 1453
Pascoe Vale bus services 1453
School religious instruction funding 1454
Doreen community and family services hub 1454
Responses 1455

Thursday, 7 May 2015

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) took the chair at 9.32 a.m. and read the prayer.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH**Address-in-reply**

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise honourable members that the address-in-reply to the Governor's speech on the opening of Parliament will be presented at Government House on Tuesday, 19 May, at 10.30 a.m. I would be grateful if as many members as possible could accompany me to the presentation. Members may meet me in Government House Drive at 10.15 a.m.

PETITIONS**Following petitions presented to house:****Mount Alexander Shire Council**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of resident and ratepayers of Mount Alexander shire draws to the attention of the house the undemocratic position taken by council and the total disregard by council to constituents' concerns and expectations of council compounded by continual obscene rate rises.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria consider that the Shire of Mount Alexander councillors and senior council administration be removed from office and replaced by commissioners, therefore allowing commissioners to consider the competence of senior management with regard to acting in an unbiased, democratic and good fiscal management and best business practices.

By Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (1354 signatures).

Cranbourne West precinct structure plan

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of Cranbourne West, Victoria 3977, draws to the attention of the house that the 203 hectares of land at 635 Hall Road, 590, 620 and 690 Dandenong-Hastings Road, Cranbourne West, Victoria 3977, is designated for an industrial park within the Cranbourne West precinct structure plan. This is contrary to the expectations of residents based on its close proximity to surrounding residential estates and the obvious conflicts between the two uses.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria join the councillors of the City of Casey in their support to change inappropriately located industrial land to residential as exhibited during community

consultation of the amended Cranbourne West precinct structure plan in February 2015.

By Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) (701 signatures).

Casey cultural precinct

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition by the residents of the city of Casey draws to the attention of the house that as a matter of urgency the City of Casey's idea of a \$125 million Casey cultural precinct be put to a referendum.

Let the ratepayers of the city of Casey decide if this proposed \$125 million Casey cultural centre should go ahead or not.

With rates increasing over 20 per cent over the last four years and a further rate increase of 6.3 per cent for the 2014–15 period ratepayers are deeply concerned that the City of Casey has not got the ratepayers' best interests at hand.

Your petitioners request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria give support for a much-needed referendum as this waste by the City of Casey year after year has to stop.

By Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) (199 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Bendigo West be considered next day on motion of Mr WALSH (Murray Plains).

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notice of approval of an amendment to the Victoria Planning Provisions — VC 122

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Adjournment**

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 26 May 2015.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS**Kai Wakenshaw**

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — On 24 March I had the great pleasure of attending a very significant event at the Somerville scout hall. On that day I witnessed group leader Pat Campisi and cub scout leader Jeff Burzacott, assisted by several other senior scouting office-bearers, present cub Kai Wakenshaw with the

highest cub award available, the Grey Wolf. A good-sized group of cubs, scouts, parents, including Kai's mother, Kristi Wakenshaw, friends and other supporters sat in silence while the ceremony was performed. The importance of being a scout and of achieving the highest cub award available was obvious for all to see in the way 1st Somerville Scout Group approached Kai's presentation and on the faces of his mother and the many supporters present on the night. On behalf of my community I congratulate Australia's scout, cub, guide and brownie organisations, and in particular 1st Somerville and the many people that help make this group the successful organisation it is.

Frank Swann

Mr BURGESS — Last Saturday, 2 May, I attended a memorial service for the 100th anniversary of the death of First World War soldier Frank Murray Swann at St Thomas Anglican Church in Langwarrin. Frank Swann enlisted very early in the war and was killed in action at Gallipoli on 2 May 1915, just before his 21st birthday. His body was never found and therefore the family had no record of a service to commemorate his life. The family was committed to providing Mr Swann with a commemoration befitting his heroic status. It was fitting that on the occasion of the Gallipoli centenary Mr Swann's nephew, Bob Kilby, arranged a wonderful memorial to mark Frank Murray Swann's death, 100 years to the day he died.

Port of Hastings

Mr BURGESS — I am very disappointed that \$80 million of \$110 million for planning allocated by the previous coalition government in the 2013 budget for the expansion of the Port of Hastings has been cynically siphoned off by this underhanded —

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

Country Fire Authority Ocean Grove brigade

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water) — On Sunday, 19 April, I had the pleasure of assisting the Minister for Emergency Services hand over a new fire tanker to the Ocean Grove Country Fire Authority (CFA). The tanker provides the brigade with a state-of-the-art vehicle that importantly includes modern crew protection systems. The minister and I enjoyed riding in this new tanker. The tanker cost \$380 000, with \$50 000 raised through the hard work and dedication of the Ocean Grove members and a range of donations from key Ocean Grove organisations. I take this opportunity to

congratulate all members of the Ocean Grove CFA, including officer in charge Ian Beswicke and 1st Lieutenant Steve Gibbs. I very much feel part of their family at Ocean Grove. Be assured that the Andrews government values and respects the work of all CFA firefighters, both career and volunteer.

Leopold Community Hub

Ms NEVILLE — On another matter, this Saturday I am looking forward to opening stage 1 of the Leopold Community Hub. The hub is a brand new facility that brings together a number of important family services, including parenting programs, a kinder childcare service, maternal and child health and open space for other activities and future programs. With all these services now under one roof, young local families will be able to access the help and support they need.

Stage 1 was funded by all tiers of government, and I acknowledge the former state government for contributing \$2 million. I am pleased to note that in this week's state budget the Andrews government has already allocated a further \$3 million for stage 2, which will include a library, youth facilities and improved community open space. I congratulate all those involved within the Leopold community and look forward to watching the hub develop over the coming years.

Lowan electorate road funding

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — It is an absolute disgrace that the Melbourne-centric Labor government has slashed road asset management funding by 10 per cent and scrapped the \$160 million country roads and bridges program. I invite the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to visit the Lowan electorate so he can see firsthand how this government has failed the families and businesses of our region and to show him the Henty Highway from Brim, Warracknabeal, Horsham, Cavendish, Hamilton, through to Portland; the Wimmera Highway from Horsham through to Natimuk and Edenhope; and the roads around the Casterton, Merino and Dartmoor communities that are heavily impacted by logging trucks.

Pharmaceutical drug dependence

Ms KEALY — ScriptWise is a non-profit organisation that was formed to raise public awareness of prescription medication addiction. It provides education and support, and it advocates for a national real-time prescription drug monitoring system.

Pharmaceutical drug dependence is a hidden public health epidemic in Australia. It is shocking that in 2012 more people died from prescription drug overdoses than were killed in vehicle accidents and that four out of every five deaths from overdose in Victoria are related to prescription drugs.

I was privileged to attend the launch of the documentary *Accidental Addicts* last night. It is a credit to the Millington family and 'Rustie' Lassam for publicly speaking about their own stories of how addiction to prescription medications has impacted on their lives and the loved ones around them, helping to give confidence to others in our community battling addiction to seek the support they need.

Kate Maddern

Ms KEALY — I congratulate Kate Maddern, a Kaniva College graduate, on being awarded a prestigious Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation scholarship. This foundation is a great supporter of rural Victoria, providing vital funding to support outstanding rural Victorian youth to study at the tertiary level. Kate is an outstanding individual and an inspiration to young rural women.

Willmott Park Primary School

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — Congratulations to Willmott Park Primary School on its excellent cultural diversity week initiative from 20 to 24 April. Students and teachers did a terrific job in bringing this project together, and the whole school community took pride in celebrating their shared diversity. This is particularly important in my electorate of Yuroke, where nearly 35 per cent of residents were born somewhere other than Australia. I am incredibly grateful that I represent such a diverse and inclusive community.

Such an event plays an important role at a school like Willmott Park Primary School, where 46 different cultures are represented. The week was packed full of various activities that were enjoyed by all. These included an international sports day, where children were encouraged to take part in sporting events from across the world, including soccer, basketball and karate. The students also went to Craigieburn Central to treat local shoppers to a display of their talents, including the Auslan choir and Sri Lankan dancers.

I was pleased to present the arts awards and watch some diverse performances at the conclusion of the week. The beaming students, who took pride in their school and what it had achieved, showed me that, quite frankly, the value of this initiative cannot be overstated.

Congratulations to principal Evan Hughes, and special thanks to Luci Scamarcio and her team for making this important event happen. I look forward to hearing about this annual event and its successes over the coming years.

Ceres memorial gates

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — On 19 April I attended the reopening of the reconstructed memorial gates at Ceres. The gates were initially constructed in 1937 and dedicated to honour those who fought in World War I along with the pioneers of the Ceres district, but they were stolen in the mid-1970s. I wish to congratulate the Ceres community, in particular David Jirik and Bernd Hollander.

Anzac Day

Mr KATOS — On Saturday, 25 April, I had the pleasure and honour of attending the Torquay RSL sub-branch Anzac Day dawn service and gunfire breakfast at Point Danger, Torquay. The Torquay RSL's dawn service is the second largest in Victoria and attracts thousands of people, young and old, to the surf coast. Reports stated that over 15 000 people attended the special centenary of Anzac service.

The Anzac Day speech by Air Commodore James Hood, OAM, of the Royal Australian Air Force, was a moving presentation that acknowledged the sacrifices of our servicemen and women who served in all wars and conflicts. I commend the Torquay RSL sub-branch president, Ian Gilbank, and its members on the success of the dawn service, together with the businesses and volunteers who assisted in its organisation.

Following the dawn service at Torquay I attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the cenotaph at the Geelong RSL in Belmont. This was another moving ceremony, with many wreaths laid on behalf of service and community organisations. Later in the morning the Geelong RSL held its street march, which attracted record attendance from community members taking the opportunity to pay their respects to both current and returned servicemen and women. A service was also held at Johnstone Park, Geelong. I then laid another wreath, at the pre-match ceremony before the South Barwon versus St Joseph's game. Unfortunately South Barwon did not triumph.

Anzac Day

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — Last weekend as we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli I attended two very special Anzac services put

on by the Seaford sub-branch of the RSL to remember and honour our servicemen and servicewomen. I congratulate the Seaford RSL and in particular Geoff Andrews, Peter Gill, John Beslee and the rest of the Seaford RSL community for putting on both services. While each service was distinct, they were both very community focused and extremely moving.

The first, on Friday, was a schools service attended by 15 local schools from the Carrum electorate. Students from Kananook Primary School's choir sang, primary school students read poems and the principal of Patterson River Secondary College, Maree Vinocuroff, gave a wonderful speech about the role of students during the war and the ways in which students contributed to the war movement. The flag-bearers were schoolchildren from Seaford North, and students from each school laid a wreath in remembrance.

On Anzac Day several thousand people from the local community lined Station Street, Seaford, to watch the march and then attended the local service at the Seaford RSL. One of the highlights of the service was a speech by two year 7 students from Patterson River Secondary College — year 7 captain Vicky Nikolaidis and boys vice-captain Adam Ford. They both spoke about what the spirit of Anzac meant to them. Their confidence, insight and empathy well exceeded their 13 years. Scouts from the 1st Seaford Scout Group put on a sausage sizzle in the car park of Seaford railway station. While the queue to buy a sausage in bread snaked and weaved for about 20 metres, befittingly people used this opportunity to strike up a conversation with strangers and to make new friends.

The Seaford RSL services were beautiful. I felt extremely proud to be an Australian and immensely honoured to represent this wonderful community. Well done to all involved.

Anzac Day

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — In this highly significant year of the centenary of the landings at Gallipoli many people have done extraordinary things to ensure that current and future generations are aware of the sacrifices made by so many, resulting in the free and prosperous Australia we all now enjoy. For example, take the tireless Gerry Robinson. A former teacher, deputy principal and history buff, Gerry instigated the Anzac concert at Heathmont Uniting Church, complete with expertly researched songbooks for all attendees so that we could sing along. It was a fabulous event which left us all uplifted. On behalf of our community and all those who relived happy

memories I say thank you to Gerry. He is a selfless and extraordinary person.

I also want to make special mention of the efforts of the federal member for Aston, Alan Tudge, Bayswater RSL president Noel McLean and his wife Beth for organising the gifting of genuine Lone Pine descendant trees, knitted poppies and a commemorative book for every school in the Knox area. What a fantastic way to help perpetuate the Anzac spirit.

There was also a record turnout for the dawn service at Boronia RSL of at least 6000 men, women and children. Rod Canobie, Carl Sorensen and the team at Boronia held a beautiful ceremony, followed by a community breakfast of what seemed like thousands of sausages in bread and hundreds of cups of warm soup. It was a wonderful morning, with many first-time attendees vowing to return again next year. Three cheers to everyone who helped make this huge event seem so effortless.

To the staff and students at Heathmont College who conducted a heartfelt and moving assembly, I say congratulations. It was both enjoyable and respectful — very well done.

Country Fire Authority memorial service

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — It was humbling to attend the Country Fire Authority's annual memorial service for fallen firefighters along with the Minister for Emergency Services and the member for Thomastown. The service was held at St Patrick's Cathedral in Ballarat on Sunday and was attended by hundreds of people from all over the state. The service was beautifully read by master of ceremonies Reverend Graeme Scorrige, Country Fire Authority's chaplain coordinator.

It was a beautiful and moving memorial service. The names of 67 fallen firefighters were read out, and following each name the sound of a solitary bell rang out. I acknowledge the Minister for Emergency Services for laying a wreath on behalf of the state government. I also acknowledge Jackie Crow, who rang the bell after each name; Malcolm Bruce, the piper; Len Trawn, James Dullard, Vickie Linaker and Stefanie McGeehan, the colour party; all the speakers and readers; and everyone who laid a wreath. The ushers were junior members and leaders of Ballan Junior Fire Brigade, and they did a great job. I must also thank Caitlin Crosbie, who sang throughout the service with such feeling and such a gorgeous voice. Most importantly I express my deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the 67 fallen firefighters, one of

the fallen being Stanley Bertram Bridges of Wendouree.

I believe next year's service will be held in Wodonga. I encourage any member who can attend to go along and pay their respects to the fallen firefighters.

Anzac Day

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — On 25 April every year we pay tribute to those who have lost their lives in the tragedy of war and remember the Anzac legacy of courage, mateship and sacrifice. This Anzac day was of special significance for Australians as it marked the Anzac centenary — 100 years since the landing at Gallipoli in World War I. From a local perspective I pay tribute to my local RSL clubs for their ongoing efforts in educating our younger generations in particular on what the Anzac spirit means, along with hosting local Anzac Day services.

Along with thousands of local residents I was able to attend a number of services during the day. I wish to commend Traralgon RSL president Maurie Harrison, Morwell RSL president Bruce Jeffrey, Yallourn Newborough RSL president Troy Hutson and their respective committees for conducting such moving ceremonies. In addition I congratulate Brett Roberts from Tyers, Roz Carstairs from Boolarra and their respective organising committees for their hosting of wonderful Anzac Day services.

Jessi McEwan

Mr NORTHE — I also wish to commend Jessi McEwan of Morwell for her recent success at the Young Achiever Awards in recognition of her culinary skills. Jessi, at just 21 years of age, recently received the Academy Graphics Regional Achiever Award at Etihad Stadium. She has previously been selected to be Australia's first young chef ambassador and has represented Australia at the 2014 World Chefs Forum in Norway. Jessi recently started working at Century Inn in Traralgon after she completed her apprenticeship at Wild Dog Winery in Warragul. I wish to commend Jessi on her culinary achievements, and I wish her well in her future endeavours.

Anzac Day

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — On the days leading up to Anzac Day, on Anzac Day itself and on the days following Anzac Day, I had the privilege of attending many events commemorating the Anzac centenary, all of which were moving, poignant and respectful. Individual schools, such as Hurstbridge Primary

School, which planted an oak; Yarrambat Primary School, which planted an avenue of honour; St Joseph's Primary School in Mernda; and many others, had their own individual ceremonies. Hurstbridge RSL, as is usual on the Saturday prior to Anzac Day, conducted a very crowded service. Whittlesea RSL held a march around the town, which featured great involvement from school students to attract its largest crowd ever.

In the time allowed me, however, I want to give the most credit to the combined service at Community Bank Stadium in Diamond Creek, which was attended by the Deputy Premier. It was a word perfect, student-led effort that included representatives from Diamond Valley College, Diamond Creek East Primary School, Diamond Creek Primary School, Wattle Glen Primary School, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and St Thomas the Apostle Primary School. It was fabulous to see every student in Diamond Creek together to commemorate this moving event.

Doreen had the first dawn service at a community-built cenotaph at Laurimar Primary School, which is the only cenotaph in Australia based at a school. The beautiful voices of the Hazel Glen College choir brought tears to match the rain when they sang *I Am Australian* and *In Flanders Fields*. At the end of the day I sat beside an empty chair — I missed George Crouch, a great friend who passed away before Anzac Day.

Michael Wilson

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — The sports oval at Norwood Secondary College has been named Wilson Oval after Michael Wilson, who has contributed 40 years of service as a teacher to the college. Michael is an unsung hero. He is a teacher who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help his students be the best sportspeople they can be. Mike pioneered and coached girls sports teams with a focus on cricket and football. These teams were hugely successful and popular, and judging by the quotes about Mick on my Facebook page, it is clear that many current and former female students view their time playing cricket and football as some of their best years at Norwood. Congratulations. Thank you Mick for your fabulous work.

Australian Fuzhou Business Association

Ms RYALL — It was a pleasure to join the Australian Fuzhou Business Association at the official opening of its new centre in Nunawading. The Fuzhou people have a long history as a truly enterprising people. It was wonderful to see the association established to support its Chinese business members in

our great state of Victoria. I welcome the association to our local community and wish it every success in providing a great service to its members.

Anzac centenary

Ms RYALL — I thank Ringwood RSL for the wonderful Anzac centenary dawn service conducted at the Ringwood cenotaph. The rainy weather could not keep thousands of people from the local community from paying their respects to the men and women who served our country, so many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we hold so dear today. The Ringwood RSL did a huge and splendid job of putting on breakfast for the many who attended. I thank all those who were involved for their dedication to serving our community.

John Kidd

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I rise today to honour the life of John Maxwell Kidd, who passed away on 20 April. Max, as he was known to his friends, was a pillar of the Altona community and a much-loved member of our local Labor family. He will be sorely missed. Max was a teacher, a keen golfer and a passionate advocate for his beloved sport of rugby. Max lived a strong, big life dedicated to community service. With his passing, Altona has certainly lost one of its champions. In 1999 Max was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia. This award recognised both his dedication to the young people of Melbourne's west — he had a particular commitment to supporting the multicultural communities in Melbourne west — and his advocacy for the sport of Rugby Union, which incredibly he continued to play until the age of 82.

Max was also a genuine renaissance man. He loved red wine and telling stories, and he continued to learn. He believed in lifelong learning. Max was funny and intelligent. He was wry. He had a big heart and a big mind. He was a great friend and source of support and advice to me for many years. I will miss his wit and his big smile. He was a true believer in the Labor cause, being a member of the Labor Party for 46 years. Max's loss will be felt acutely by his wife, Margaret. I send the entire family my deepest condolences.

Community On Ground Assistance program

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — There are some wonderful stories from the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires. A number of those stem from the Community On Ground Assistance (COGA) program. COGA is a partnership between the community and a number of agencies. Its aim is to provide families and

individuals with much-needed on-ground assistance to help rectify damage to their properties following the disaster. Agencies such as EACH, CatholicCare, the Red Cross, the Uniting Church, the Salvation Army, Rotary, Lions, Firefoxes, Kildonan UnitingCare, Nexus Primary Health and Regional Development Victoria's fire recovery unit were on board. The team certainly got their hands dirty and at times very cold as they went about cleaning up properties, removing trees and regrowth, repairing houses and landscapes and doing other odd jobs to assist those who were so much in need.

Janeden River, Matt Falla and Mike Bainbridge started COGA and still run it. They pulled together a team of wonderful skilled workers from a variety of trades. Their work is to be admired and their hearts to be cherished. I know many people who were grateful for assistance from the remarkable COGA team — Marie Edmonds, Dorothy Barber and Lyn Mullens, to name a few. Over the past five years COGA put in over 57 000 on-site hours on some 500 jobs, providing assistance to those in need. I thank the team for the wonderful work, dedication, passion and, most of all, care and empathy shown to my communities. I felt privileged to be part of their farewell celebration in Kinglake recently, where I was presented with a hardback book outlining their work and the appreciation of the community. I also acknowledge the role of Jess Freame and Bec Nicoll of the fire recovery unit and their continued support for COGA and the community.

Frankston electorate community support

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — Over the last few weeks I was lucky enough to visit some of Frankston's most vital organisations that provide services for our most needy. On Friday, 27 March, it was my pleasure to spend an evening working with Lizzie Hornby and the Life-Gate street outreach food van volunteers at the Frankston train station precinct. Life-Gate is fully dedicated to providing ongoing, long-term support, practical life skills, training and help to individuals and families in crisis. Its mission is to equip and empower individuals and families to overcome crises, such as drug and alcohol addictions, other life-controlling problems, suicidal tendencies, abuse, broken relationships and depression, and ultimately to reach their full potential in life. Through professional counselling, support groups, 'Wisdom for life' life skills training and outreach services, Life-Gate works to support the whole person. Established in 1992 in the heart of Frankston, on the Mornington Peninsula, Life-Gate has helped thousands of individuals and

families to experience restoration, inner healing and purpose in life.

I was also invited to witness the services provided by Community Support Frankston, which does amazing work in Frankston. Steven Phillips, manager of Community Support Frankston, leads an amazing group of people that Frankston could not do without. Community Support Frankston provides advice and options for people experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, abuse, stalking, family violence or separation or who require counselling, legal assistance or emergency accommodation. Both these organisations do a fantastic job.

Anzac centenary

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — On Sunday, 19 April, I had the pleasure of attending the Blackburn RSL sub-branch Anzac Day march and commemorative service. I also attended the dawn service on Anzac Day at the Blackburn cenotaph and gunfire breakfast afterwards at the clubrooms. The crowd at the dawn service was the largest I had ever seen there, which was a fitting tribute to remember 100 years since the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915. I congratulate and thank all those involved in organising these events, including the Blackburn sub-branch president, Athol Wells, and various branch and committee members, including Jim Marshall and Barry Kilmartin.

Last month I had the pleasure of representing the residents of the electorate of Forest Hill in laying wreaths on their behalf at various other Anzac Day commemorations, including the Rotary Club of Monash annual Monash schools Anzac service and the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central annual Whitehorse schools Anzac service. It was wonderful to see very large numbers of local schoolchildren present at both these important remembrance services. I congratulate and thank those involved for organising these important events.

I was very pleased to attend the Bible Society launch of the Their Sacrifice campaign, commemorating 100 years since Gallipoli. This campaign shares some of the remarkable stories of courage, camaraderie and faith in conflict and is a multimedia campaign to help educate the younger generation about Gallipoli during the centenary year of that conflict. It comprises a national touring exhibition, a book, a documentary and educational resources. At the launch we heard from various guest speakers, including the Honourable Ted Baillieu, Mr Kevin Sheedy and the Bible Society CEO, Dr Greg Clarke. I congratulate the Bible Society on this exhibition and wish it well for the future.

Combined Probus Club of Whitehorse

Mr ANGUS — Earlier this week I had the great pleasure of attending the Combined Probus Club of Whitehorse's 20th anniversary celebrations. A DVD of photographs from club events and outings over the last 20 years was shown, which provided many laughs and happy memories. I congratulate the club.

Anzac Day

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) — On Anzac Day I had the privilege of attending the Caroline Springs RSL dawn service in Caroline Springs, where hundreds of people stood silently in the drizzle under the rising sun. I was honoured to attend this dawn service on the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. It was a moving experience in which we remembered the lives lost and sacrifices made not only in that battle but also in conflicts over the past 100 years.

The service at Caroline Springs commemorated the Anzac spirit and the hard work, loyalty and bravery of our service men and women. I thank the Caroline Springs RSL for the excellent work it does in keeping the Anzac spirit alive and congratulate the president, Mr Peter Burquest, for all the time and effort he put into the 100th anniversary of Anzac Day. I congratulate the students who took part in remembering the undying role of our soldiers in our nation's history.

Sikh community

Ms KAIROUZ — Last weekend I was excited to attend the Plumpton Sikh Temple's first Gurmat and sports event. It was wonderful to gather with over 1000 visitors from all over Victoria. It was a lovely day out for families, with events on offer for all ages. Attendees participated in cultural and sporting activities, including a tug of war, Kabbadi and a Chatti race. Delicious Indian food was also on offer.

I was happy to see how the temple, the sportsground and the cultural centre are coming together to service the needs of the Sikh community in my electorate. I look forward to witnessing the success of their future cultural and sporting events.

Anzac Day

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — On Anzac Day this year it was my honour and privilege to pay my respects to the Australian and New Zealand troops who landed on the shores of Gallipoli 100 years ago to the day. I also reflected on the Australian service men and women who are currently participating in Australian Defence Force operations around the world. I paid tribute to my

great-uncle Martin Augustin Barry at the Pakenham dawn service. He left Australia on 22 December 1914 and landed with the 7th Battalion in the second wave at Anzac Cove. He later fought in the trenches on the Western Front, returning home some 1402 days after leaving Australian shores.

It was an honour to attend services at both Pakenham and Phillip Island and to have my staff, Ann Selby and Catherine Brosnan of the famous Brosnan clan, represent me at Koo Wee Rup, Inverloch and Wonthaggi. I would like to thank the RSLs and historical societies in my electorate of Bass for keeping the memory of the Anzacs alive. I would also like to thank Marion Bjorksten and Barbara Owen, who contributed to the hundreds of knitted poppies for the cenotaph at Inverloch.

United Nations Global Road Safety Week

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — More than 500 children around the world lose their lives every day as a result of road trauma. In Victoria 14 of the 249 people who lost their lives on the roads last year were young people. This week marks the third United Nations Global Road Safety Week, which aims to highlight the plight of children on the world's roads and generate action to better ensure their safety.

As members would be aware, along with a number of iconic Melbourne landmarks Parliament House has this week been illuminated in yellow to raise awareness of road trauma and support those who are affected by it. I make special mention of the work the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) has done through its Strings role model campaign, which members of this house and the public might have seen advertised on TV. This campaign focuses on saving young drivers' lives through changing the behaviour of parents driving, which can change the behaviour of kids when they get behind the wheel for the first time in years to come.

Appointing the first Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Andrews government is committed to providing training, education and better road infrastructure to make young Victorian road users as safe as they can be. To arm young Victorians with the skills and support they need to become safe drivers, \$146 million is being invested in the government's Road Safety Starts Early initiative.

I thank the TAC, VicRoads and Victoria Police for their work in promoting the importance of road safety, and I urge Victorian motorists to look out for others on our roads. I would also like to thank the road trauma

support services and those behind the yellow ribbon campaign for their work.

Greater Geelong City Council

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — The resignation of Gill Miles from the City of Greater Geelong is a disaster. She is the second CEO to leave council within 12 months, which exposes the turmoil and chaos plaguing city hall all because of mayor Darryn Lyons. If Mr Lyons put as much effort into standing up for the people of Geelong as he does promoting himself, our city would be much better off. Instead city hall has become a shambles because of his self-indulgent and erratic behaviour.

Under Darryn Lyons funding to Meals on Wheels has been cut, yet thousands of dollars have been spent on plastering his image on billboards. He trades on being outspoken, yet he remained silent when his Liberal mates in Canberra cut Geelong loose with the worst budget ever handed down. He says he stands up for the people of Geelong, yet he cannot even muster 140 characters to call on his Liberal mates to help workers at Alcoa.

Now another CEO is leaving council because of the chaos he has caused. All the while serious allegations of bullying continue to hang over city hall like a bad smell, but we hear nothing from Darryn Lyons. The people of Geelong deserve better than a one-trick pony who cares more about selfies than he does about jobs and services.

Anzac Day

Ms WARD (Eltham) — I rise today to commend the work of the Montmorency-Eltham RSL and my local schools and councils for organising and participating in exceptional local commemoration ceremonies held across the electorate for the centenary of the landing of Anzac troops at Gallipoli.

I want to pay respect to the Honourable Jenny Macklin, MP, federal member for Jagajaga, the Montmorency-Eltham RSL and Banyule City Council for their outstanding work in organising the Jaga Jaga schools ceremony on 24 April. All of our local schools that participated in that ceremony were just fantastic. I thank the RSL and the Rotary Club of Eltham for the outstanding and moving dawn service that was attended by thousands of locals at the Eltham war memorial on Anzac Day. The march and service in Montmorency were also thoughtful and considered.

I congratulate Bill McKenna, Montmorency-Eltham RSL president, on his vision in creating a women's

memorial at the Eltham war memorial site, which honours the service of women during these times of conflict. It was a very moving experience to stand with the Honourable Jenny Macklin, MP and Nillumbik Shire Council mayor Helen Coleman to lay wreaths for the first time at this important memorial and to see so many others pay their respects to these women after the service.

I also say a huge thankyou to the wonderful Robert Winther, veteran liaison officer at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, for the outstanding work he did organising the Austin Health Anzac Day service on 23 April. We are very fortunate in my area to have people who are so committed to our community and to working to preserve the memory of those who have fought and died in the service of this country. Lest we forget.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA AMENDMENT (JOBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE) BILL 2015

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 6 May; motion of
Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).**

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — I will make my concluding remarks, having begun my contribution to the debate on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015 last night. I was speaking about how we leveraged the Regional Growth Fund from \$500 million to nearly \$2 billion worth of projects, which were terrific outcomes for regional families and our communities. We will hold Labor to account to ensure that it delivers as we did. There is a list of projects we funded in our four years in government, and it is clear that in those four years we outperformed Labor in its previous 11 years. There is no doubt about it: we will keep our eyes on the government. Putting locals first is not just a slogan; it is what we do. We want to make sure the Labor government does not forget the regions. Time will tell whether or not it delivers for country Victoria.

I want to remind the government that when we talk about the regions it does not just mean Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo but all of country Victoria. Sometimes I think the government gets blindsided by those few major cities. Country Victoria is much bigger than those three regional areas. With these comments, I commend the bill to the house.

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water) — It is my pleasure to rise to make

a brief contribution to debate on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. It was interesting yesterday and today to listen to the contributions of those opposite about regional Victoria. We heard the last speaker say that the Liberal Party and The Nationals have always put local people first. That is an extraordinary comment, particularly coming from a member of a party that actually went backwards in the last election. That party did so well that local people actually did not vote for it!

I want to speak about my own community of Geelong. When you talk about putting locals first and caring about regional Victoria, those opposite were certainly nowhere to be seen in relation to Geelong. Under their watch the Alcoa plant at Point Henry closed. What a devastating outcome for our community. What about the car industry closures during the coalition's time in government? Ford is about to go. What about the job losses at Target? What about the job losses at Qantas, at Avalon? What about the fact that coalition members did a short-term deal with Jetstar to get them over the line in the election before last? The coalition did no long-term planning, it made no long-term deals and it provided no long-term security for jobs in our community. It made a short-term deal that was very costly for taxpayers, and that deal did not secure Jetstar at Avalon.

What about the cuts the coalition made to TAFE and schools, which are fundamental to building a trained and skilled workforce for the future? What about the fact that after the announcement of the closure of the Alcoa plant, I stood up in this house week after week saying, 'Where is the support? Where is the additional investment in the Geelong economy to assist us in the transition following the closure of the plant of a major employer like Alcoa, a company that provided major economic benefits throughout our community?'. There was nothing. There was no strategic intervention from those opposite.

As we watched unemployment grow, particularly in Geelong and across regional Victoria, we saw no strategic intervention by or any indication of care from those opposite. So when opposition members stand up in this house and claim that they are all about putting locals first and that they all really care about regional Victoria, I can say that was not the experience of my community, and I am sure it was not the experience of the community in Shepparton and other parts of Victoria either. Last week I was with the Premier in Morwell. That community was let down and completely abandoned by the previous government. It was abandoned at the worst time possible. We now

need to rebuild that community's confidence in government, and that is what we are about doing.

What about the fact that the coalition put basically nothing into the Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund? What about that? At a most critical time, when Alcoa and the car industry were leaving, the coalition provided a minuscule amount of money to the region. That is why I am really pleased that in this budget the government is investing an additional \$7.5 million into that fund. That fund is all about making a strategic investment in new manufacturing going forward for Geelong. Hardly a dollar was spent out of that fund by the coalition government. Again the coalition abandoned regional Victoria and abandoned the community of Geelong.

What about infrastructure? There was none. Let me just think about it. A little bit went into the library, which is coming to fruition. It is a strange-looking building, but money went into that. There was nothing substantial in road investment, and there was nothing substantial in schools investment. I do not think anything was invested in schools in the Bellarine area during the term of the last government.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Ms NEVILLE — There was an aged-care facility — the last remaining publicly owned aged-care facility in Portarlington on the Bellarine Peninsula. The coalition not only stood back from the closure of that facility but also facilitated it. There was the closure of services on the Bellarine Peninsula, including the winding back of ambulance services. There was the closure of police stations. Hypocritically members opposite went out last week saying, 'Why isn't Lisa Neville opening those police stations?'. The only reason we need to put more funding into them is because coalition members closed them; they stood by and let that happen. The list goes on. Community renewal was defunded. If we look at the community of Whittington, we see that it is really suffering as a result of that.

This bill is not doing the same old thing. We are not redoing the Regional Growth Fund, as those opposite have claimed — a supposed billion-dollar fund which was worth only \$500 million. We are not doing what coalition members did. We are about driving jobs and investment through the use of infrastructure and the levers that government can provide through the funding it can provide. This is about a strategic investment right across regional Victoria; not just in Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, but right across communities. In terms of water infrastructure, for example, water authorities have

benefited from this week's budget. They are big contributors to jobs and infrastructure development, and there will be further investment in the Murray-Darling Basin, for example. We are growing and protecting significant jobs, and we are building better infrastructure and services in those communities.

I am sure that in the coming weeks I will have the chance to talk more specifically about the budget in terms of its investment in regional Victoria, but I want now to touch very briefly on how to use the levers of government to grow jobs and investment in regional Victoria. That is what this government and this bill are all about. Investments in things like the Drysdale bypass, the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Simonds Stadium and the Portarlington safe harbour are not only significant investments that will drive jobs in their own right, but they will also have local procurement and local content components which will drive other jobs and other investments and assist small and medium businesses in communities like Geelong.

That is what we mean when we say the government cares about regional Victoria. We have the record, we have the fund, we have the commitment in this bill and we have the commitment in the budget that is now before the house. This bill is about jobs, infrastructure and investment. It is about strategically using the levers we have as a government to drive growth and get unemployment rates down again. We will not abandon regional Victoria.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — I rise to speak on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. As a relatively new member of this Parliament, it has been very interesting to hear all the contributions to the debate on this bill and in particular on the history of the bill. It seems that the provision of funding to regional Victoria in the long distant past was very fragmented. Further, it seems that as a result of the 1999 election when Mr Kennett was swept from power, largely because of the neglect of regional areas, some attention was given to putting in place a specific fund for regional Victoria.

My understanding is that while it was in 1999 that the Regional Growth Fund was first established, it was in 2002 that the legislation was passed to put in place an organisation to look after and see to the proper funding of that fund. I will refer to the second-reading speech of Mr Brumby, a former Minister for State and Regional Development in this Parliament in 2002. He is recorded in *Hansard* as having said:

... the government is proposing legislation to establish Regional Development Victoria — the very first time in history that country Victoria will have a dedicated body with

the specific role to facilitate the coordinated delivery of government programs, services and resources in rural and regional Victoria.

Regional Development Victoria will be a practical, no-nonsense body that gets on with the job, working alongside local councils to put projects on the ground and create local jobs.

Then later, talking about the nature of Regional Development Victoria, he said:

The bill creates a new statutory body that will work in partnership with regional Victorian communities, business and all levels of government to attract new investment and generate jobs.

Regional Development Victoria will ensure there is a strong and coordinated focus on regional Victoria across all state government programs, services and resources.

That seems to have been the case. After listening to all the speeches that have been given in this debate, it appears that numerous programs that have been outlined have benefited rural Victoria. I certainly did not have that framework in my mind before I came to Parliament. As a member of the Shepparton community, and having been there for 35 years, I could see that things were happening in certain local areas, that occasionally there was funding for this and funding for that, and similarly that things were happening across the state, but it is interesting to hear the detail of the many programs that have obviously taken place across the state since that fund was put in place. It is a truly dedicated fund to benefit regional Victoria.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and many others have spoken highly of many of the programs that have been rolled out in their particular areas. I reviewed a lot of the projects from the period 2002 to 2014, and it has clearly been a very successful program. There does not seem to be a lot of bureaucracy involved in it. The people who work for Regional Development Victoria are located in our regions, we can contact them directly and we have a sense of accessibility that I believe regional people often do not feel. So that has been a terrific thing from the local point of view. During the last decade, during the worst drought we have ever suffered, this fund also provided lifelines in regional Victoria by providing funding for programs that stimulated and gave some sort of hope to communities that were going through really difficult times.

As we proceed to pass this legislation it is important that we keep in mind how funds are distributed. There is a lot of discussion in this Parliament about inequity that has occurred at various times since this fund was introduced. In relation to rural Victoria, the distribution of funds should be about equity and fairness. Figures

show that some areas have been favoured over others, and I am sure that is not the way in which it was intended that this fund should operate. It is so important the funding across the state is distributed on an equitable basis and does not favour marginal seats, does not favour Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat, and does not favour government seats. The good intentions shown at the establishment of this fund should be reflected in a sense of fairness and equity. On that basis I support the bill.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — It gives me great pleasure to speak in the debate on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. We have heard many contributions from both sides. Unfortunately those opposite have sought to rewrite history on many fronts with respect to investment in regional Victoria, and so much so that it defies logic.

I remind the house of the time when the previous Labor government constituted its Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. When that fund ceased, it was found that the money that government stated it had expended through that program was not there. There was a significant shortfall. When the coalition came to government, it established the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund over eight years. I can say to those opposite who have sought to rewrite history on the basis that the fund did not create jobs, that that is simply not true. I will give many examples of that during my contribution. I also refer to comments made by the member for Melbourne. Her comments about investment in regional Victoria show that she lives in a fairyland — a dreamland. It seems to me she does not understand what is contained in the bill and what it seeks to do.

I am really proud of what the coalition government was able to achieve in the Morwell electorate through the Regional Growth Fund. I could give example after example of practical outcomes. Other members on this side have spoken not only about the job creation component of the fund but also about the delivery of community assets through community-driven projects. These are community-driven projects with local community organisations — with the local council on many occasions — and I can direct people to a litany of examples of where we made investments.

The Morwell Centenary Rose Garden is a beautiful part of Morwell. I digress slightly to commend the volunteers who do such a marvellous job with that rose garden. The coalition government helped with an investment of \$28 600, which has been used for garden beautification works. Through the Regional Growth

Fund \$250 000 was committed to the Morwell Town Common project. There has been a magnificent upgrade and beautification of the park, including the installation of new playground equipment. People from both Morwell and across the whole region visit that very impressive town common. The coalition government also assisted with an upgrade of infrastructure at Railway Park, Boolarra, with a commitment of \$140 000.

Given your recent visit to our region, Acting Speaker, you may be aware that ReActivate: Latrobe Valley is doing work to the tune of \$113 000 through the Regional Growth Fund. We know that some of our communities are doing it tough, and there is some really good work being undertaken by ReActivate Latrobe Valley and our local business groups. We have had an upgrade to the Tyers public hall, and Victory Park in Traralgon has received significant investment. There is a \$680 000 project to reinvigorate the Yallourn North town hall. There is also Crinigan Bushland Reserve in Morwell and the Gippsland heritage walk around Kernot Lake in Morwell. The list goes on and on.

In terms of support for businesses and job creation, I want to refer to an initiative under the Regional Growth Fund that we had in place in the Latrobe Valley, which was called the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund. Initially this was a \$10 million program. We increased the funding to the tune of \$15 million, with the sole purpose of making sure we could support local businesses which sought an opportunity to grow, expand and, most critically important, create new jobs.

Overall that fund has delivered, and it has delivered well. In excess of 40 businesses were successful through that program. Around 1100 jobs were created, and — this must not be forgotten — the companies' own investments in these projects leveraged about \$93 million worth of additional investment in the region. Unfortunately the new government has not seen fit to adopt a similar program. Maybe it will — and I hope it will, because it has been a great outcome for our local community. Our local business community certainly wants to see a program such as that continue into the future.

I will give some quick examples of that type of investment. Steeline Gippsland, which set up a new plant in Traralgon, received \$250 000 towards that project from the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund. This was a \$4.5 million project, so the company itself invested substantially, and this created around 15 new jobs. I visited the premises

recently, and it is doing very well. I know the company was very thankful for the opportunity to access funding through the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund.

Victorian American Imports is a unique business that is based in Traralgon. The company imports vehicles from the US and converts them to Australian and Victorian standards. It has grown and expanded substantially, and we were able to help that company with around \$173 000 to grow and expand its business onto additional premises, creating around 10 jobs.

Morwell Shopfitters is a well-recognised local business in Morwell. It received \$150 000 towards a \$450 000 project, which meant it was able to buy new, modern equipment to ensure that it continues to be unique in its field. Again, this also created employment.

In the quarry industry, we were able to help Latrobe Valley Sands and KR & G Matthews Quarries with funding through the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund. Matthews Quarries has a project at the back of Tyers. Whilst we committed \$100 000 for that project, the company itself — —

Mr Donnellan interjected.

Mr NORTHE — Yes. Build a bridge, and the company will be able to get its trucks across it.

Matthews Quarries contributed \$1.5 million to that project, which is a very significant project. The Minister for Roads and Road Safety is sitting at the table, and importantly Matthews Quarries uses its material for road upgrades and road surfacing. We would like to see more investment in road maintenance in Gippsland so that companies like Matthews Quarries can use its materials for that purpose.

There is a range of other initiatives that we have across a whole range of sectors. That is the important part for the Latrobe Valley and wider Gippsland region. Over time there has been a significant focus on the importance of the energy industry. This fund has sought to diversify our local economy. There has been a lot of investment in agriculture and the timber industry. I just mentioned the quarry industry and the vehicle industry. We want to make sure we are providing opportunities across a diverse range of sectors through that fund.

Latrobe Valley Bus Lines was another company we were able to provide some support to. Whilst it received a \$50 000 grant through the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund, this was a \$1.2 million project it was investing in. People and businesses are prepared to invest where the government provides support and

shows confidence in the local business community. This particular fund has been very important to our region. We hope that the government in its wisdom will look at continuing that program — or at least something similar — to be able to support our local business community.

I want to conclude by saying that it was really pleasing for me over those four years — and hopefully it will continue — to deal with the staff, particularly in the Gippsland region of Regional Development Victoria, because they are fantastic people. In many cases they are long-term locals who have been there for a long time. They understand the local lie of the land, and they did a great job in supporting the programs that we initiated at the time. So whilst we have some reservations with what is being proposed under this bill, we certainly do not deny the fact that we require further programs and investment in regional Victoria. From my perspective I look forward to the Latrobe Valley and the Morwell electorate continuing to receive support from the government under these types of programs.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — I rise to speak on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. I am proud to speak on this bill because of what it brings to regional Victoria, and Geelong in particular. Geelong has a proud history of being known as a manufacturing city in Victoria. Geelong has traditionally provided thousands of jobs that have given workers the opportunity to put food on the table, educate their children and deal with health and community service issues. Geelong has traditionally offered good educational opportunities through our state schools, our TAFE and our university. However, under the four years of the coalition government we saw Geelong abandoned. The catchcry of the Liberal government was ‘Manufacturing is dead’.

I point out that Geelong’s manufacturing industry contributes something like 42 per cent, or \$10 billion, of Geelong’s \$25 billion economic output. By contrast, the next biggest contributor is the construction industry. It is true that manufacturing has been hit hard, with a devastating impact on Geelong workers, their families and many businesses.

We watched, as did the coalition government, as workers lost their jobs and businesses downsized and closed. Workers lost their jobs at Ford, Alcoa and Target and many other organisations while the coalition stood back and watched Geelong haemorrhage jobs.

When Ford announced its closure and imminent job losses, who was the first to respond? The federal member for Corio and the local state ALP members.

They called a round table of the community. The community leaders got together to try to work out what they were going to do to address job losses in Geelong. A task force was established. However, the previous government did not support that task force or its recommendations.

The Geelong Trades Hall, along with its manufacturing affiliates, got together with the Geelong Manufacturing Council and commissioned a study into the future of manufacturing in Geelong. The study clearly identified that manufacturing in Geelong is still very viable. It also identified that job losses would have a significant impact in Geelong over the four-to-five year period; however, that study still sits gathering dust.

As jobs were lost, the stress and hardship on families created many issues, putting increased pressure on our community and welfare services in Geelong. Financial counselling services were reporting an increase in demand, housing services were under the pump, families were being evicted because they could not afford to pay rent and material aid and food services were also under the pump.

We saw our TAFE gutted by the coalition government and unemployment grow to unprecedented levels in Geelong, with youth unemployment exceeding more than 20 per cent.

The Andrews Labor government has made a significant commitment to jobs in Geelong. The announcement of a plan to save Avalon Airport, involving a 10-year deal with Jetstar has saved hundreds of jobs. I was there a couple of weeks ago for the announcement, and I watched those workers. It was absolutely incredible. They were on the brink of losing their jobs. The Andrews Labor government has saved their jobs for the next 10 years.

We have a major investment in 21 V/Locity V/Line carriages, with \$115 million for new train stabling and maintenance yard in Waurn Ponds. This will create construction jobs and, once completed, 30 ongoing jobs. We have committed \$70 million for Skilled Stadium. This will generate construction jobs and also ongoing jobs once completed. We have local school upgrades, with the Geelong High School and Whittington Primary School upgrades also creating construction jobs. These upgrades will also provide the first-rate education that our children deserve. We have more police committed to Geelong. TAFE funding has been restored; again, this will mean more jobs in Geelong. The people of Geelong deserve this attention and commitment to jobs after 10 years of an uncaring coalition government.

There is more. The Regional Jobs Fund will deliver more jobs. There is the Geelong Performing Arts Centre upgrade. The project will enhance the Ryrie Street entrance to turn the historic steeple church into a cabaret theatre, add two more dance studios and improve disability access. This is a \$30 million investment in jobs.

There will be a manufacturing hub in Geelong to support the development of new manufacturing in partnership with Deakin University. This will mean a \$3 million investment in jobs. The Andrews Labor government has delivered on its promise to the workers of Geelong. It is a great privilege to represent the Geelong electorate and to deliver on our election commitments to provide Geelong workers with jobs. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — It is my pleasure to speak on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. There seems to be a consensus around the house that country Victoria and regional and rural Victoria are so important to the overall strength and wellbeing of the state of Victoria. It is important to note that the coalition will not be opposing this bill.

As you, Acting Speaker, and the house well know, the coalition has a longstanding dedication to country Victoria, and very proudly so. It is a concern that the government has scrapped the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund that was hugely successful. It has also scrapped the \$160 million Country Roads and Bridges Fund. The scrapping of those two funds is of great concern to me, as the shire of Bass benefited greatly from them. In fact, the Regional Growth Fund was hugely successful, despite the Minister for Employment arguing otherwise. If you look at the facts relating to the fund — and the facts are what we need to look at — you see there were 1426 targeted funding decisions over four years.

There was total government investment of \$500 million, which supported almost 1800 projects and leveraged more than \$2 billion worth of investment. Those facts, which are beyond dispute, show the success of the Regional Growth Fund. Projects secured \$3 for every \$1 contributed, which meant the fund was hugely successful. Most importantly the Regional Growth Fund created 23 000 jobs across regional and rural Victoria, including 6000 direct full-time jobs, 11 700 indirect jobs, and nearly 5000 construction jobs.

But the fund was about more than just the jobs; it built strong communities. There are very good examples of

that in the electorate of Bass. Projects that benefited from the Regional Growth Fund included \$1.2 million to Phillip Island Nature Parks Australia for the Nobbies and Summerland Peninsula tourism expansion project; \$120 000 for the heritage centre at Cowes; \$140 000 for the Inverloch foreshore public toilets program; \$1.1 million for the Wonthaggi town entrance; \$300 000 for the Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve; and \$115 000 for the Cowes Yacht Club access ramp and improvements, all of which were very important projects. I was there the day the Cowes ramp and improvements were opened to the public, and what a difference the improvements make, particularly for members of the community who are confined to wheelchairs. The ramp provides wheelchair access into the yacht club, which occupies a beautiful building overlooking the entrance to Western Port Bay. For the very first time, people in wheelchairs were able to gain access to the yacht club.

This is the reason I say the Regional Growth Fund is so important. It builds communities. It is sometimes the small projects, such as that one, that are most important. Another such project is the Wallace Avenue Community Park development at Inverloch. That small park at the end of Wallace Avenue was refurbished and revamped so that children and their parents could enjoy community amenities. It is important that we continue to fund such projects.

I noted that yesterday the Minister for Employment spoke about looking forward, which is referred to in the second-reading speech. It states:

Looking forward, this bill ensures rural and regional Victorians remain a focus for the Andrews government for the next four years.

That was a complete surprise to me, because the budget introduced on Tuesday would suggest anything but support for regional and rural Victoria. In fact, my seat of Bass got nothing — not a single dollar — from this year's budget. That is extremely disappointing, given that I had spoken to the relevant ministers about the importance of the Wonthaggi education precinct, the Wonthaggi hospital and the Pakenham and Koo Wee Rup secondary colleges. I had spoken to the ministers about the projects and how important they are to the people in Bass, yet nothing was provided in the budget for any of those projects. In fact, if you look at the budget papers and at a map of Victoria to see where the funding has been allocated, you see that it is clearly not for regional and rural Victoria. I suggest that if you drew a line on the map indicating the area that is within about an hour's drive from the heart of the CBD, you would see that 95 per cent of the projects with funding

allocations are in that area. That is extremely disappointing.

An honourable member — It is very scientific.

Mr PAYNTER — It is not scientific at all. In fact, this map was provided by the government. It is very clear; it is there for anyone to see. From what I can see there is certainly no support in the budget for rural and regional Victoria, yet supporting rural and regional Victoria is so important. The opposition will not be opposing the bill, because any bill handing support to rural and regional Victoria is a good bill. However, my concern is about where the money is allocated. Clearly there are no funds for the Bass electorate at this stage, and I look forward to that changing. The former Labor government established the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. It was a particularly poor fund which did not meet its targets. It was targeted to spend a measly \$585 million over 10 years, but it spent less than half that amount.

It is a concern of mine that the government will not be able to allocate the funds available through the new fund to worthwhile projects. The other concern is about where money may be spent. I note that already there is an allocation of \$200 million out of the fund. I would argue that the projects are not designed to create jobs and growth and in fact they are not the types of projects that satisfy the purpose for which the fund has been set up, albeit they are worthwhile projects. It is on the record that I love my golf, but I do not think the Victorian open golf tournament at Barwon Heads should be paid for out of the equivalent of the Regional Growth Fund. I thought there was a further fund set aside for keeping and attracting major events. I am not quite sure how the Victorian open golf tournament or the Stawell Gift fit the purpose of the fund I am talking about. For the record, I have run in the Stawell Gift, but not particularly successfully. I did not make the final, but had a go at it.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PAYNTER — It may be a surprise to members of the house, but I did run in the Stawell Gift. I love the Stawell Gift. It is a fantastic event for country Victoria, but for it to be funded out of the \$500 million was a complete surprise to me. I thought this was about supporting jobs and employment growth in our regional areas and supporting those projects that might not be funded otherwise, so while I was pleasantly surprised to see funding for the Stawell Gift I do not think the government has it in the right fund.

In saying that, I have probably surprised a few members in the house today. I see that the member for Broadmeadows, who has a long history in the sporting field and quite possibly could have been one of my competitors at the Stawell Gift at some stage, is in the house. I say proudly that the opposition will not be opposing the bill. I hope it gets through the house, but what I really hope is that the funds are spent for the right purpose. Let us get on with building a strong regional and rural Victoria.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — It is a pleasure to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. The bill is a key pillar in the government's budget and in its election commitments, and it is also a key pillar in its back to work plan.

I want to acknowledge the elephant in the room. We have heard some wonderful contributions from members on this side of the house and those opposite about the importance of rural and regional Victoria, but actions speak louder than words and the sentiments put forward by coalition members are in stark contrast to the previous government's actions and antics. The coalition cannot say it is for regional and rural Victoria when it decimated the TAFE system over the course of four years. It cannot be for regional and rural Victoria when it let massive youth unemployment fester for a number of years and did nothing about it, it had no jobs plan and it sat on the fence.

Victoria faces so many challenges. Given that rural and regional Victorians make up 25 per cent of our population, you have to wonder about the decisions made by the former Premier and former Treasurer. They made some poor decisions, such as the decimation of TAFE and investment in projects that did not have business cases that stacked up, that meant less funding was available in regional areas, and that led to a poor outcome for our community.

The member for Malvern, the former Treasurer, in particular needs to be held to account for his some of the descriptions he used in his speech. He runs around like Wile E. Coyote chasing the Road Runner. He is trying to come up with the next way of conning the Victorian people. Firstly, there was the side letter of doom. He went to the Acme Enterprises and said, 'I have one of these poison pills to put forward' — that seemed to be the coalition's job plan. That failed spectacularly and blew up in his face. The next outrageous proposition he tried to put to the Victorian people was a dud project worth 45 cents in the dollar. This investment in Acme Enterprises was another one

of his job plans, but the project failed and the plan blew up in his face again.

The latest con he has gone with is absolutely relevant to regional and rural Victoria. He and his great mate the Leader of the Opposition were interviewed yesterday. What did they talk about? They did not mention rural and regional Victoria once. They talked about their good mate Prime Minister Tony Abbott. The member for Malvern looked sweaty and was a bit red in the face. He looked like he was wondering how long he has in this role as he begged and pleaded for the Prime Minister to hold Victorians to ransom for \$1.5 billion. That is an indictment of him.

If the member for Malvern gets up and makes similar comments in the budget debate today, he should be held to account. The Leader of the Opposition should throw him on the scrapheap and bring in the member for Hawthorn, who is standing in the wings waiting to jump in. If the \$1.5 billion were taken out, that money would no longer be there for regional and rural Victoria and he will be held to account. The member for Malvern, who is like the chief advocate of Acme Enterprises — that is the limit of his job plans and his policies, which have failed over and over again — should be held to account.

The bill looks to address some of the key challenges Victoria faces. The \$500 million fund will greatly support our regional communities. As I said, 25 per cent of Victorians live in rural and regional areas. Look at the policies across the board. This fund will invest in key infrastructure and job-creating projects, really prioritising those regions. Look at what we have done and the work the Minister for Training and Skills has done to urgently repair the damage that was done to TAFE. We know these cutbacks exacerbate the challenges that people face. If it is felt by a factor of one in the Mordialloc electorate, it is going to be five times worse in regional areas, where social isolation and being further away from the CBD only exacerbates those challenges.

I heard members on the other side talk about regional and rural Victoria. That seems to be completely forgotten in their rhetoric. There has been no apology and no recourse in relation to those actions. They will be held to account by their communities. It is why The Nationals have really struggled and why they had the seat of Shepparton taken from them at the last election.

In conclusion, I strongly support the bill. It is a key pillar in our election commitments. It builds on the work that the Bracks and Brumby governments undertook. They established a great fund. They had the

narrative. They knew where we were coming from in terms of a policy standpoint. They had the vision to look longer term. The Andrews government is looking to the longer term with policies that are underpinned by strong, sound research. I am happy to commend the bill to the house.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I rise to speak on the Regional Development Victoria Amendment (Jobs and Infrastructure) Bill 2015. At the outset I say that the opposition will not be opposing the bill because it firmly believes it is absolutely important that we support the regions and rural communities in Victoria — the hub that continues to provide jobs, opportunities and growth into the various regions throughout Victoria.

However, this is nothing more than a Mickey Mouse change in terms of what this particular growth fund was intended to do. The previous government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund provided some 23 000 jobs in the region through some great projects, which other members on this side have spoken about. This change is, ironically, taking the word 'growth' out of the title. You would suggest that this was done deliberately, because from what we have already seen this fund is no longer about supporting both rural communities and regional communities. This fund in headline talks about supporting the regions, but if you dig down, you will see it is an opportunity for the government to siphon money out of the regions and funnel it into other portfolios. We have seen this already with the \$600 000 sponsorship of the Stawell Gift — traditionally that money comes from the sport portfolio, but it is now coming out of this regional development fund.

Similarly, \$19 million to build a Grampians trail was to come out of the environment portfolio, \$1 million for the denture laboratory in the Latrobe Valley was to come out of the health portfolio and the \$30 million sporting precinct in Ballarat was to be funded by the sport portfolio, but all of that money has now been earmarked to come out of this fund. What we are seeing under this government is hundreds of great local projects — projects that are supporting the regions and their communities by creating jobs — being used to provide money to portfolios that have been shafted by the budget.

As the shadow Minister for Energy and Resources I will direct the focus of my contribution on the Energy for the Regions program, which was a program set up by the former government. It is an important project, and we were very proud to provide \$100 million for Energy for the Regions during our term of government. For the many small towns for which a lack of access to

energy meant local industries could not survive or thrive, this program provided the opportunity to keep their communities competitive by giving them access to gas. This was particularly important for communities without gas that neighboured towns that did have a gas supply, because they faced the very real issue of people and industries moving away and switching off the lights on those townships without those resources. There are number of examples of this fund working for the regions, including \$4.5 million for Huntley, \$8.3 million for Avoca, \$5.2 million for Koo Wee Rup, \$7.8 million for Warburton and \$10.1 million for Mildura for the capacity upgrade, amongst others. There have been some great projects to get Energy for the Regions up and running, and we worked alongside industry to ensure that the program delivered.

You would think that if the government were serious about supporting this, it would continue to roll it out without any changes whatsoever, but in a statement reported by the *Weekly Times* of 5 March the Minister for Regional Development, Jaala Pulford, described this particular fund as a white elephant, which suggests it is not something Labor supports because it is not something it thinks that rural and regional areas need. The government has since said it will continue with this program, and I hope that it does so. This is a very important program, and the government must honour the commitments made by the coalition to ensure that any towns that do not have gas are provided with the opportunity to be connected to energy and remain competitive.

However, the fact that one of the government's ministers is already calling the program a white elephant shows it is not serious about supporting jobs in the regions, because this program is a very important element in doing that. It is not just important for regional industries but it is also important for regional hospitals. Hospitals are in desperate need of gas connections to keep the cost of energy low, which is really important. If the government were serious about supporting the regions, it would support the sorts of projects we committed to when we were in government. If it were serious, it would ensure that projects like Energy for the Regions are maintained and developed to ensure that there is a level playing field when it comes to activity and growth in the regions.

We have heard a lot of talk from the government about jobs, but we have heard nothing about when we will see these sorts of projects commence. Actions speak louder than words, and we set up and rolled out projects like the \$100 million Energy for the Regions program when we were in government. To see the current government question these projects, about-turn and then remain

undecided about what it is going to do is a real slap in the face for those regions that are reliant on having natural gas in their communities. This change to the legislation is of real concern. We are not opposing the bill, because we support any investment activity for the regions and because we support rural communities, which are paramount to the success of Victoria. We know that this government is all about supporting the cities rather than looking after regional and rural Victoria. We have seen the former government's commitments to the regions, and we now look forward to seeing what the current government does in the coming months and years to support regional and rural Victoria.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms SPENCE (Yuroke).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

BRAIN CANCER

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind members that this week has been identified as Brain Cancer Awareness Week. While today is usually known as silly Thursday, I am pleased to note that members on both sides are championing good causes such as this one. Not only is brain cancer the leading cancer killer of young people under the age of 39 and children under 10, it carries the highest financial burden of all cancers. In its malignant form it is almost 100 per cent fatal. It is the least studied of all cancers. Around 1600 people a year will be diagnosed with brain cancer in Australia, of whom approximately 1200 will pass away. In Australia one person is diagnosed with brain cancer every 6 hours, and every 8 hours one person will pass away. Wearing a beanie during Brain Cancer Awareness Week is a way to highlight brain cancer, raise awareness, highlight the need for research and support those who have been affected by brain cancer.

I draw member's attention to the work of the Robert Connor Dawes Fund, which was established in June 2013 after 18-year-old Connor passed away from brain cancer. The Robert Connor Dawes Fund is involved in battling brain cancer and supporting paediatric brain matters in the areas of research, care and development. In just under two years it has raised \$450 000. Its signature event, Connor's Run, is now the largest event for paediatric brain cancer in Australia.

I know there are members in this house who have lost someone special to them to brain cancer. Let us take this time to remember and support them in their work to

raise awareness about brain cancer. On behalf of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I am confident that we will continue to raise awareness, conduct research, and provide funding and support for those who have been affected by brain cancer. However, in accordance with the rule regarding inappropriate material being in the house, I request that members now remove their beanies.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Montmorency Secondary College

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Speaker, I am glad you asked for beanies to be removed. My question is to the Treasurer, and I could not stand him with that Bulldogs beanie looking at me in the face.

The SPEAKER — Order! That was absolutely in order.

Mr GUY — Thank you for your ruling, Speaker.

I ask the Treasurer to inform the house why at the election Labor promised \$14 million to Montmorency Secondary College, my old school, to upgrade classrooms, a hospitality centre and a new administration building but has allocated just \$1.4 million in this budget, with no guarantees of future funding. Is it another broken promise? Is the Treasurer going to claim the money is just in contingencies?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It goes without saying that when this government says something it goes through and delivers it in total, in full. I draw to the attention of this house the outstanding performance this government has been able to display. Ninety-six per cent of our commitments have been delivered.

I draw the member's attention to budget paper 4, where there is \$1.4 million. I also draw his attention to budget paper 5, which contains considerable funds in contingencies allocated to departments to implement the government's decisions.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The opposition will come to order.

Mr PALLAS — I also direct his attention to, by contrast, the absolutely appalling record of the previous government, and I seek to table in this house a list of commitments made by the previous government to

education facilities that were not provided in its first budget.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will make the document available to the house. If any members wish to have access to the document, copies will be made available to members through the Clerk.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — It has only taken six months. I wonder if Labor, after the Treasurer's answer and breaking his promise to the people of Montmorency Secondary College after just six months — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr GUY — I ask the Treasurer: will he now come and join me and visit that school, my old school, Montmorency Secondary College, to explain to teachers, parents and students why — —

Mr Merlino interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

Mr GUY — I didn't think you'd pipe up.

Will the Treasurer come with me to explain to teachers, parents and students why he has given just one-tenth of the money that he promised at the election six months ago?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Really! Those who cannot honour their commitments have the audacity to attack this government. Let me once again reaffirm my commitment that those opposite can have lessons in how to read budget papers. Let me take them to page 30 of budget paper 4, and let me read footnote (b), which says:

Balance of funds will be delivered in future budgets.

Ministers statements: level crossings

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am very pleased to rise to update the house on the important work that the Level Crossing Removal Authority has done. It has done an analysis of the amount of time that boom gates are closed at deadly and dangerous — —

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer to sessional order 7, which talks about new initiatives,

projects and achievements. I refer specifically to the fact that the Premier has just said he is updating the house. I would put it to you that an update is certainly not a new initiative, project or achievement, and I would ask you to rule this ministers statement — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The member for Burwood is fully aware that there is no point of order and will not make frivolous points of order.

Mr ANDREWS — The removal of 17 deadly, congested level crossings by this government is most definitely new and most definitely welcome by the community of Victoria. The Level Crossing Removal Authority has done some very important analysis, and that data shows that the boom gates are down for a combined 16 hours every single day during the 2-hour morning peak at the 17 level crossings funded to be removed in this year's budget.

On the Cranbourne-Pakenham line boom gates are down for more than an hour between 7.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. every weekday morning. At Clayton Road, next to the Monash Medical Centre, cars and ambulances are held at those level crossing boom gates for a total of 82 minutes across the 120-minute or 2-hour peak. Eighty-two minutes! At Koornang Road the boom gates are down for 87 minutes during every morning peak period. Three level crossings on the Frankston line — at North Road, Centre Road and McKinnon Road — are down for nearly 2 hours every morning. Two level crossings on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines — at Blackburn Road and Heatherdale Road — are also down for up to 2 hours every morning.

These level crossings have got to go, and this government is getting on with doing just that — \$2.4 billion is the most significant down payment on level crossing removal this state has ever seen. We said we would get rid of them, and that is exactly what we are getting on with doing.

Orygen Youth Health

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — My question is to the Treasurer. During the election period Labor promised \$60 million for new facilities at the Orygen youth mental health facility in Parkville but has provided just \$1 million in funding. Did the Treasurer deliberately deceive Orygen, or is he going to claim the money is also in contingencies?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — This is going to be a fun day to demonstrate how this government honours its commitments — unlike those opposite, who when they got into government, every promise they made to Victorians they tried to find ways of renegeing on, breaching the faith of the people of Victoria.

Once again we first of all need to go to budget paper 4, which outlines the funds that are put to Orygen youth mental health planning and development. Those opposite clearly think you just allocate funds without knowing exactly what it is you are building. More importantly those opposite should spend a little bit of time reading those sections of budget paper 5 that deal with general government output contingencies not allocated to departments. On both output and asset they should bear in mind that it says:

Decisions made but not yet allocated.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte is warned.

Mr PALLAS — Why would we do that? Why would the government make a decision, put hundreds of millions — indeed billions — of dollars into this large fund of money but not allocate it specifically to a project? I will tell the house why: because we are going to plan properly and provide properly. We are also going to honour each and every commitment we made to the Victorian people, fully funded and fully allocated.

We are going to make sure we get value for money from the private sector — unlike those opposite, who would be foolish enough to put a number around something and totally destroy their capacity to get a negotiated outcome. Do members want to know what the physical embodiment of incompetence is? That would be it, and it sits opposite.

Supplementary question

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — My supplementary question is to the Treasurer. Last year the Premier said that Orygen 'work hard to get young people back on track, and I want to honour them'. I ask: how is short-changing them \$59 million on the figure the Treasurer provided pre-election honouring their work?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for his supplementary question. For four years Pat

McGorry waited for those opposite to show some concern for the provision of adequate mental health services, and they did nothing. They did nothing for four years of their tenure. This government has stumped up with real money and allocated that money appropriately to where we will get the right outcomes. No more crocodile tears from those opposite — they did nothing when they had the chance; now they should get out of the way and let a competent government get on with the job.

Ministers statements: budget

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to update the house on the impact of the budget on Victoria's credit rating and the reaction of key business groups and the ratings agencies. The 2015–16 budget restores funding to services. It also invests in productivity-enhancing infrastructure, and it secures our AAA credit rating. It is the budget that we were elected to deliver, and we are going about doing it. It is a budget that Victoria needs. Victorians wanted it, they voted for it and they got it. Almost everyone agrees — almost everyone, except those opposite.

Victoria's AAA credit rating is safe. Standard and Poor's recently applauded our budget as reinvesting in services while expecting that the 'government will remain fiscally disciplined' and said that Victoria's debt levels are 'consistent with the AAA rating on the state'. Moody's applauded the actions of the government, saying our government's budget shows a 'solidly balanced position envisioned'. The Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) applauded the budget.

Ms Green interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Yan Yean. I have already cautioned the member for Burwood to make points of order that are relevant.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker — and I am more than happy to make a relevant point of order — I would ask that the Treasurer be brought back into line with the sessional orders in advising the house of an initiative, project or achievement rather than providing third-party commentary on the budget he announced a couple of days ago. There is clearly no room in the sessional orders for providing the commentary of a third party on the budget. I ask you to bring him back in line with the sessional orders.

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

Mr PALLAS — VECCI said the budget is 'an economically responsible budget that makes a significant investment in productivity-enhancing, job-creating infrastructure'. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia said the government has 'delivered a solid infrastructure budget that begins restoring certainty to the long-term pipeline of major projects', and Professionals Australia said it is 'an investment in Victoria's ... future'. That is a clear sign that this government has not wasted a minute and is getting on with the job of delivering the services and the infrastructure that Victorians require and that the key stakeholders have endorsed.

Glen Eira College

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My question is to the Treasurer. During the election Labor promised \$9.5 million to redevelop Glen Eira College, yet it has only budgeted a tenth of this — just \$950 000. I ask the Treasurer: will the school ever get the rest of the money? Has it been lost or reprioritised? Or is the Treasurer going to say 'Trust me, it's in contingencies', given that the definition of contingency is an event that may occur but is not likely or intended?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — This is a recurrent but somewhat predictable approach. Let me start by reading out a list of schools that did not get any funding: Ashwood College, Aspendale Primary School, Auburn Primary School, Bairnsdale Secondary College, Beaumaris Primary School, Birralee Primary School, Blackburn Primary School, Castlemaine Secondary College — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The opposition will allow the member for Caulfield to raise a point of order in silence.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was deliberately about Glen Eira College and what funding it is not getting. I ask you to bring the Treasurer back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer is entitled to provide a context. I am confident that the Treasurer — —

Mr R. Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Warrandyte. I am confident that the Treasurer will be responsive to the question.

Mr PALLAS — I have only got 30 more to get through, Speaker. The list continues: Blackburn Primary School, Castlemaine Secondary College, Dingley Primary School — —

Mr R. Smith interjected.

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

Mr R. Smith interjected.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Warrandyte

The SPEAKER — Order! I asked the member for Warrandyte to resume his seat. Under standing order 124, I ask the member to withdraw from this chamber for the period of 1 hour for reflecting on the Chair on his way out. The member will withdraw himself from this chamber.

Honourable member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Glen Eira College

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Going through the broken promises to the community that the previous government identified, the list continues: Koo Wee Rup Secondary College, Mirboo North Secondary College, Montmorency Primary School, Mountain Gate Primary School — —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer is now clearly at the point of debating this question, as he indicated when he resumed his answer. I ask you to give effect to your previous ruling and instruct him to be responsive to the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I uphold the point of order. The Treasurer will begin to be responsive to the question.

Mr PALLAS — I will do better than that. I will make this very obvious and telling point: the coalition made 36 broken promises in its first budget that did not get funded — zero were funded. That is a clear sign of those opposite and the tawdry way they treated the

Victorian community. We have provided funding in this budget. I will not labour the point by taking the member back to the same item in the capital allocations in this budget. What I will do is demonstrate once again that we have made decisions, and we have provided appropriate funding in contingency. There is a very substantial amount of money there, as members would know, cranking up to something like \$2.5 billion of assets.

Let us stop this nonsense. This is nothing but puerile political posturing from those opposite. The people of Victoria can be absolutely assured that the relevant decisions have been made, the planning is underway, allocations have been made and we will deliver because this is a government that will not break its promise to Victorians. This is a government that recognises that when it put together some \$688 million in capital for schools, it did it with a very clear and deliberate intention.

We were never going to replicate the ridiculous, offensive behaviour of those opposite, who so cynically dispatched budget after budget and disgracefully refused to make allocations to the people and the communities they promised they would. You will not see that sort of tawdry behaviour from those on this side of the chamber. Those opposite should be ashamed of their behaviour. Here they are: 36 broken promises in their first budget. That is a clear sign that those opposite will not do what they promise to do.

But those of us on this side of the chamber — make no mistake — understand our commitments to the community. We are building the biggest education budget in the state's history. We are proud of it, and of course it is a major boost to school capital.

Supplementary question

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — With the Minister for Education having said in this chamber on 10 February, 'Labor will invest \$9.5 million, and that will build a new library and new science, sport and technology classrooms', I ask the Treasurer: given Labor has broken a promise to this school after just six months, will he now commit to coming with me to Glen Eira College next week to explain to the parents, teachers and students of this school where the rest of this promised money is and when it will come?

Ms Thomson — On a point of order, Speaker, I believe that questions asked at question time need to be factual themselves. To indicate there was a broken promise over a commitment that a government has made, which suggestion is not substantiated, makes the

question as asked invalid. The member should be asked to rephrase the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order made by the member for Footscray.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — The member is wrong. He is part of a tawdry and dishonest approach by those opposite. The funding has been allocated. It has been appropriately provided in contingencies. The people of Victoria can be assured that while those opposite do not value their own word, those on this side of the house put great truck in theirs. We will deliver for the people of Victoria each and every promise, and the capital allocations are appropriately in our contingency line.

Ministers statements: community safety

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Police) — I am very pleased to inform the house of new government initiatives contained within the 2015–16 budget to boost community safety. The headline investment is Labor’s commitment to recruit 400 new custody officers to guard prisoners in police stations across Victoria. This \$148 million investment will mean that 400 more police will be freed up to return to the front line, catching crooks and patrolling our streets. Victoria Police will initially deploy custody officers to Sunshine, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Geelong and Broadmeadows before rolling them out across Melbourne and country Victoria.

Not surprisingly, Police Association Victoria has warmly embraced this initiative. In its budget day media release, the association stated:

For decades, we’ve been saying that police officers should be freed from ‘babysitting’ prisoners in police cells ... We’re delighted that this ‘chestnut’ issue will soon be fixed.

The opposition left country police with an obsolete, second-rate communication network that criminals can easily intercept. Labor will fix this by investing \$11.5 million to switch the police radio system from an analogue to a secure digital network. This is a great outcome for country police delivered by a Labor government. As too is the \$15 million allocated to build a new police station in Mernda. The budget also provides \$7.8 million for more police officers to be stationed in the growing areas of Geelong and Bellarine. There is \$15 million for drug and booze buses, and there is \$4.5 million to assist in the tracking down of drug labs.

This is a budget that delivers on every single one of Labor’s pre-election policing commitments. It will help keep Victorian families safer.

Casey Hospital

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — My question is to the Treasurer. Given Labor promised to begin construction of the \$160 million Casey Hospital expansion in 2015, can the Treasurer advise the house what part of the hospital expansion he expects to get done for the \$2.4 million allocated in this budget over the next two years?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for his question. Can I make this point: it is a really good idea when one goes through the process of building stuff that you plan for it first. It is a really good idea that you get the engineering right and that you deliver it.

Be assured that we are delivering on 96 per cent of our election commitments in this budget year. Let me take members on a tour de force of this budget, because it is a wonderful read. It keeps me up with happiness; it will keep those opposite awake with fear. On page 40 of budget paper 5 you will see the line item ‘Decisions made but not yet allocated’: \$478 million in 2015–16, \$1.5 billion in 2016–17, \$2.1 billion in 2017–18 and \$2.46 billion in 2018–19.

Where do those opposite think the money comes from? I’ll tell you what, we will not play spot the dollars; they are there. They are there for every Victorian to see. There is a very clear and emphatic and a very substantial commitment to meeting our election commitments and not going down the foolhardy path that those opposite did, trying firstly to take the Victorian people for fools and failing to deliver on their election commitments but, more importantly, then breaking their word. They failed to deliver on the skills they promised in their first budget. That is not us. We are about delivering substantially for the people of Victoria on each and every election commitment. They are there writ large, and the money is very clearly allocated.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Forest Hill is warned. In fact Hansard will make sure that it records that the member is warned.

Supplementary question

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — Given Labor had a commitment to complete construction of the promised \$106 million Casey Hospital by 2018, can the Treasurer confirm that his budget papers show the project will not be completed until 2020, ripping off the Casey residents again?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The members for Benambra, Ripon, Gippsland South, Bendigo West and indeed the member for Carrum will be invited to my office because of their good parliamentary behaviour. As for others, they are not on the list. I ask everybody to remain silent.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Only Labor built Casey Hospital and only Labor will expand it. Those opposite will not see any plaques with their names on it out that way. On page 76 of budget paper 3, in table 1.13, under ‘Casey Hospital expansion’, there it is: the total estimated investment (TEI) is \$106 million, and the note says ‘TEI includes funding held in contingency pending completion of business planning and development’. It could not be clearer. I do not know what more those guys need. They should take up my offer to do a course on how to read budget papers. It will set them free. It will put their minds at rest. But more importantly, let me put the minds of the Victorian people to rest. This hospital is fully funded.

Ministers statements: roads and bridges

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — It is a pleasure to rise to update the house on new road projects and road safety initiatives in the Andrews Labor government’s first budget. According to the RACV:

... this is a strong transport budget and addresses congestion on roads and public transport in Melbourne and commits to a number regional projects ...

I noticed that the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) was also complimentary and said:

The budget’s strong focus on jobs and infrastructure will be well received by business. It is likely to spur business and consumer confidence ...

What more could we ask for?

Members might wonder why the RACV and VECCI have labelled this a strong transport budget. They only need to simply go through the budget to get the sense of it. They can look at the \$86.7 million in funding for road resurfacing, which is a great contribution because we know that after many years of neglect by the previous government, which reduced road resurfacing in regions by 60 per cent and in metropolitan Melbourne by 50 per cent, our roads were falling apart. That is why we need this road resurfacing.

They can also look at the \$35.8 million in our Stronger Country Bridges program and our Safer Country Crossings program. These are great initiatives, and I know the member for Morwell, the member for Lowan and the member for Swan Hill would all be overjoyed that we are spending the money where it is needed to ensure that we can get our products to market quicker. We are doing a great job.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw the minister’s attention to the fact that there is no seat of Swan Hill anymore. It was redistributed away.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am sure the minister will correct the record and will continue with making his ministers statement.

Mr DONNELLAN — Yes, I will correct the record, but it is great to see money spent in Swan Hill. It is a great initiative. You only have to look at the \$110 million which we have put together for the Chandler Highway bridge. We know how many years the Liberal Party promised it would get on with the job there and simply failed. Those opposite can look at the Yan Yean Road duplication, the Drysdale bypass, Thompsons Road down in the city of Casey — and we know what neglect has gone on while they have been around — Napier Street in Bendigo and Bolton Street in Eltham. We know we need to get on with the job to drive construction and not sit still for four years.

Wimmera cancer centre

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — My question is to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer to the Wimmera cancer centre project, which has been developed to help deliver oncology services to people living in the Wimmera. Why is there no funding for this vital facility in the budget, or is it with all of the other projects the Treasurer refused to fund — in the contingencies?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for her question. I do make the point that this budget has a \$2.2 billion injection to look after Victorians’ health, making sure that all Victorians are well catered for. Might I say that there is a boost in this budget to the provision of improved hospital and health services in regional Victoria.

In the interests of answering a serious question that has been put by the member and recognising that the issue of cancer is not something that I seek to make any political mileage over, I make it clear to the member that we will look at the issue in due course subject to budget capacity but recognising that this is a genuine issue that has been raised by the member.

Supplementary question

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I note the Treasurer's response. Given that the federal government has put forward \$1 million which is contingent on state government funding, will he now offer to match the \$1 million in funding from the federal government — yes or no?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — We have seen the federal government strip billions of dollars out of the Victorian health system. This is not a game we are playing here; this is about people's lives. I will not be pushed into a position where the state of Victoria will be answering ultimatums from members of the opposition, who had four years to fund these things and failed to do so. Now they hide behind a contingent offer from the federal government, a government that stripped the life out of future growth funding for health in this state.

I go back to my original answer and I say: if this question was asked seriously, with genuine intent about the wellbeing of her constituents, then the member should rest assured that, subject to future capacity, we see these as issues of importance and we will deal with them seriously.

Ministers statements: apprentices

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I rise to inform the house about another Andrews government new initiative in the budget to ease the financial burden on trade apprentices who rely on their cars for work. The budget cements our commitment to make Victoria the education state. We know that education is not just about time at school; it is about gaining skills that lead to employment opportunities. The previous government made life tougher for apprentices by cutting the apprentice trade bonus, the completion bonus and the accommodation allowance and by increasing the cost of vehicle registration.

In 2014 the number of apprenticeship and traineeship government-subsidised enrolments declined by 39 per cent from 2012. At a time of massive youth unemployment, the number of apprenticeship enrolments by young people aged 15 to 19 has declined by 25 per cent since 2010. Unlike the former coalition government, which slashed support for apprentices, the Andrews government will support them. Thousands of trade apprentices who rely on their cars to do their job every day will be better off to the tune of an \$8.8 million discount registration scheme. The extra support will boost the job prospects of apprentices by

putting more money back into the pockets of thousands of tradies who rely on their cars for work each day.

In metropolitan Melbourne this will result in a saving of nearly \$380 per year for around 13 000 eligible trade apprentices, and in regional Victoria a saving of a minimum \$320 for nearly 5000 trade apprentices. The financial support will enable them to afford more tools and training to further their skills. Through these initiatives and many others the Andrews Labor government is supporting young people, and supporting the skills of the next generation of Victorian workers.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Gembrook electorate

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — (Question 192) My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister provide a guarantee to the residents of the Cardinia Shire Council that they will not have a rate increase from the next council budget of 2016–17 higher than that of the CPI? I ask this question in the context of Cardinia shire as a rapidly growing community that has many infrastructure and service requirements. At the recent state election the Labor government committed to a rate capping, a decision that many councils did not support. Cardinia shire requires new services and infrastructure for the continuing growth. The Cardinia council needs confirmation of the capping or advice on how it will fund this growth in the future. Labor stated that the cap was set with conditions to allow some higher increases. Cardinia residents want the minister to guarantee there will be no increase above the CPI and at the same time no cut to their vital services.

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (Question 193) My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. I wish to draw the minister's attention to the significant damage and disruption caused by the European wasp in my electorate. Restaurateurs and tourism operators have struggled throughout late summer and autumn as wasps have made outdoor dining impossible. Meanwhile grapegrowers have reported that crops have been badly damaged and in some cases destroyed. This issue has been raised with me at tourism and agribusiness forums across my electorate, and I have experienced firsthand, at home, at community events and while eating out, how prevalent and aggressive the wasps are. I ask the minister to investigate actions that can be taken, either by government or by communities, to tackle this problem and minimise the damage inflicted by this imported pest.

Mildura electorate

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — (Question 194) My question, on behalf of Mr Alan Ciechanowicz, is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Would the minister be open to investigating options for VicRoads programs such as the Safe Driving program to be more readily available to Victorian residents based in rural areas? At present, Mildura residents have to travel 4 hours to Bendigo to attend this program, which travel can be cost and time prohibitive.

Mordialloc electorate

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — (Question 195) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport. It is with regard to access to the toilet facilities at Chelsea train station. We need to encourage more people onto our local train and bus services in the city of Kingston to manage the effects of population growth. To do this we need to improve the reliability and effectiveness of the service offered to the community. My electorate has an ageing population. The demographic of Chelsea in particular is made up of many senior citizens, but the suburb is experiencing significant gentrification, with more young families moving into the region.

A local barrier to public transport use that has been mentioned by local residents is the lack of toilet facilities at Chelsea train station. Furthermore there is already a toilet block at the station that could be accessed by commuters and the wider community, but it remains defunct and inactive. The nearest public toilets from the station are located well over 500 metres away, in the Chelsea Woolworths premises, and using those facilities is simply not an option for residents using the train service. I ask the minister to investigate whether the amenities at Chelsea train station could be recommissioned for the betterment of the Chelsea community.

South Barwon electorate

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — (Question 196) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. The 2015–16 state budget has no new capital funding allocated to schools that service the Geelong suburb of Highton. The only school in Highton having capital works done is Montpelier Primary School, and those works were funded by the coalition government. Highton has experienced growth and generational change. Highton Primary School, Bellaire Primary School and Belmont High School, which all service Highton, are bursting at the seams and have outdated facilities. These schools all received election

commitments from the coalition totalling \$11.95 million. I ask: if the Andrews government is truly going to make Victoria the education state, when will these schools receive the capital funding they desperately need?

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (Question 197) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. My question concerns the future of the Ballerit Mooroop site in Hilton Street, Glenroy. This site is currently owned by the Department of Education and Training. The Ballerit Mooroop site holds significant cultural and historical value for the local Indigenous community. It is home to a spiritual healing tree and sacred ceremonial grounds. Prior to the site’s closure in December 2012, it was home to the Ballerit Mooroop College. Previously the site also accommodated the Glenroy Technical School and kindergarten.

After being closed in 2012 the 13-acre site was subdivided and approximately 7 acres of the site was allocated to construct the Glenroy Specialist School. It is my understanding that the Department of Education and Training is seeking to sell the remaining 6 acres of the land from the site. I also understand that the Moreland City Council has expressed an interest in leasing the site with the intention of establishing a multipurpose community hub there. It is vitally important that, regardless of the plans made for the site, we ensure that measures are put in place to protect and preserve our Indigenous heritage and history.

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — (Question 198) The constituency matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The coalition government took plans to the last state election to address rail system capacity in the south-east. Construction of the fully funded Melbourne rail link was due to begin in 2016, and construction of the Cranbourne-Pakenham upgrade was due to begin this year, with completion due in 2019. Quite irresponsibly the Andrews Labor government has now scrapped a key component of a critical precursor project for a future Rowville rail: the coalition’s proposed modern, high-speed signalling upgrade on the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail line, which would have allowed increased capacity on the metropolitan rail network.

The information I seek from the minister is exactly what the Andrews government is going to do about

public transport in the south-east now that it has sabotaged such a critical component of the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail line project, thereby placing a future Rowville rail line in grave doubt?

Bentleigh electorate

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — (Question 199) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I thank the minister for working with me and the Bentleigh West Primary School community to introduce a 40-kilometre-per-hour speed zone at the Centre Road school crossing. This has been welcomed by residents of my electorate, who are delighted that works will be completed by June this year. They spent four years pleading with the former member for Bentleigh to take action, but those pleas fell on deaf ears. We are getting the job done. This budget includes \$300 000 for a signalised pedestrian crossing, further improving safety for children in Bentleigh west families getting to and from school. We need to make sure that Centre Road is as safe as possible. This upgrade will do just that. I ask the minister to advise on when works will be completed.

Ringwood electorate

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — (Question 200) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Can the minister provide me with the number of vehicles per day that pass through the level crossing at Bedford Road, Ringwood?

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — (Question 201) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. Flemington is home to Debney Meadows Primary School as well as Mount Alexander College. Many members of these school communities live on the Flemington public housing estate and live in households where the average income is \$400 a week or less. Can the minister advise what opportunities will exist for these school communities to access the school breakfast club program announced in this week's state budget?

APPROPRIATION (2015–2016) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from 5 May; motion of Mr PALLAS (Treasurer).

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) — Victorians deserve better. They deserve better than this budget because this was not the budget they voted for. Before the election

the then Leader of the Opposition moved around Victoria on a roadshow, with a new haircut, new glasses, new clothes and a series of slick promises. It was almost reminiscent of a 1950s Elvis. All that was missing was a swivel of the hips. He was going to boost infrastructure, he was going to boost jobs, he was going to protect the finances and he certainly was not going to increase taxes.

But come the first budget of the Andrews Labor government, and it is all too clear: the Premier may have campaigned like a 1950s Elvis, but he is governing like Elvis in Vegas. Just like those Elvis shows, a few rhinestones cannot hide the fact that this budget is a disappointing, bloated effort — one that only makes people remember what was once promised and how the reality is so very different today. Because this is a budget of broken promises.

This is a budget that weakens our great state and reduces the economic security of Victorian families. This is a budget that slashes the surplus, trashes infrastructure and smashes Victorian families with higher taxes and charges. This is a budget that lays bare this government's financial incompetence and, in some cases, dishonesty.

For a budget that Labor trumpets as being for families, it is clear that Labor's union brothers are the only family that counts. This is a budget handed down by a former union official for the benefit of current union officials. I suppose that is the Treasurer's definition of intergenerational equity.

Budgeting is supposed to be about laying out a plan for the future, but spending more of other people's money is not a financial plan, paying to not build roads is not a transport plan, imposing new property taxes is not a housing affordability plan and cutting funding to police is not a community safety plan.

Every budget has ups and downs. In Labor's first budget debt is up, taxes are up, inflation is up, expenditure growth is up, the fire services property levy is up and unemployment is up. But some things are down. The surplus is down, economic growth is down and infrastructure spending is down. Labor has done something remarkable. In just over 20 weeks of government it has brought down a budget where on practically every single financial and economic indicator Victoria is in a far worse position than under the coalition.

We have heard so much rhetoric from Labor this week about keeping its promises. So how do those claims stuck up? Let us start with the budget surplus. When the

coalition was elected in 2010, Victoria's budget faced a structural deficit after a decade of expenditure increases that had outstripped revenue increases. The coalition worked hard to restore Victoria's finances and warned that Labor could not be trusted with money. But the then opposition was very quick to assure Victorians that this leopard really had changed its spots. This is what the now Premier was quoted in the *Herald Sun* of 19 November 2014 as saying:

... we have got no intention of changing the surplus profile outlined in the pre-election budget update.

This is what the now Treasurer said on ABC 774 *Drive* on 27 November 2014:

... our commitments will have no impact on the projected budget surplus throughout the four years of the forward estimates.

The surplus profile outlined in the pre-election budget update — this was released independently by the Department of Treasury and Finance during the election campaign — stated that Victoria was set for surpluses each and every year, totalling \$9.1 billion out to 2017–18. These surpluses protect Victoria and Victorian families not just from external shocks but also from having to go into debt to pay for necessary infrastructure. But did Labor keep those clear promises to maintain those surpluses? Of course it did not.

Under Labor the surplus profile and the budget over that same period is not \$9.1 billion; it is now just \$4.9 billion — a loss of \$4.2 billion. Losing over \$4 billion in less than six months has to be a new record for budget destruction, even for the Labor Party. Premier and Treasurer: you made a solemn promise to Victorians, and you broke that promise.

Now the budget surplus for the next financial year is just \$1.2 billion. But what is worse is that that surplus relies on an extraordinary proposition, which is this: Labor's surplus relies entirely on the hope that \$1.9 billion in east–west link funding from the federal government will not have to be paid back. Labor's surplus strategy depends on taking money from the federal government for the east–west link, dumping the project and then not handing the money back. If you tried that on eBay, they would call in the cops. But Daniel Andrews calls it 'a modern Labor government'. This is a phony surplus from a phony Treasurer.

Let us look at debt. In the pre-election budget update, the last year of the forward estimates was 2017–18 and the ratio of state debt to gross state product (GSP) was 4.5 per cent. In Labor's budget, debt to GSP in that year is now 4.6 per cent. What Labor has buried in the budget papers is that it has made a policy decision to

change Victoria's debt strategy. Under the coalition the strategy used to be 'General government net debt reduced as a percentage of GSP over the decade to 2022'. This was under the coalition, and it was similar to the policy of the Bracks and Brumby governments.

In this budget we see a new debt strategy: 'General government net debt as a percentage of GSP to be maintained at a sustainable level over the medium term'. Do you notice what is missing, Speaker? There is no longer any commitment to reduce net debt under this Labor government. When Labor trotted out its financial statement before the election, there was nothing in that document about abandoning the commitment to reduce Victoria's net debt — another Labor lie.

Let us look at unemployment. Victorians remember all the claims Labor made about jobs before the election. Labor said it had a jobs plan. We know it is really only a jobs brochure. In this budget we see Treasury's assessment of Labor's jobs plan, which is that under Labor unemployment will be higher for longer than it was under the coalition. Forecast unemployment is 25 basis points higher in 2016–17 and 50 basis points higher in 2017–18. These are not just statistics; these are real Victorian families who will not have a job because of Labor's economic mismanagement.

Why should we be surprised that unemployment will be higher for longer under Labor, when we see everything this government has done since coming to office just six months ago? That includes the introduction of two new public holidays, the abolition of the construction code compliance unit and the scrapping of 3700 jobs on the shovel-ready east–west link.

Let us go to economic growth. That is something we should all agree is objectively a good thing for this state. Under Labor, Victoria's economy is growing slower than it was growing under the coalition. GSP growth is down by 25 points in this year and down by 25 points in 2015–16. While growth is down, inflation is forecast to increase, hitting Victorians with the triple whammy of a higher cost of living, higher unemployment and lower economic growth.

Now to taxes, which is Labor's favourite topic, as we know. There is nothing that Labor likes more than taxing Victorians. Treasurer Pallas has secured a place in history. He is now the highest taxing Treasurer in the state's history. Congratulations, Tim. There is more than \$1.1 billion in extra Victorian taxes in this budget alone.

Victorians were made promises by the then Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer that Labor

would not introduce any new taxes, charges, fees or levies or increase any of them beyond inflation. This is what the now Treasurer said on ABC 774 *Drive* on 27 November 2014:

Our election commitments will not lead to an increase in debt. Our commitments will have no impact on the projected budget surplus throughout the four years of the forward estimates and we will introduce no new taxes.

In his first budget Treasurer Pallas has introduced not one but two new property taxes. There is an extra land transfer duty and an extra land tax — two new taxes and two broken promises. Then the Treasurer has the hide to say he wants to promote housing affordability. The former coalition government knows a thing or two about housing affordability. We released land to meet demand. That is how you help to address housing affordability. The former coalition government halved stamp duty for first home buyers. That is how you help promote housing affordability. You do not do it by introducing new property taxes, which is the only thing this Treasurer knows.

Going to infrastructure, we are a growing city and a growing state; we are one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. There are more than 100 000 extra people every year. Under this government infrastructure investment is down by \$6.4 billion. That is \$6.4 billion worth of work that Labor has ended and \$6.4 billion worth of jobs that Labor has destroyed. Labor has cancelled projects, including east–west link stage 1, east–west link stage 2, the Melbourne rail link and the airport rail link. Labor will leave Victorians stuck in traffic for longer, hurting productivity and damaging the quality of life of our citizens.

Labor is now so desperate for projects that it is trying to claim credit for the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway widening project, a project signed for by the coalition government. Maybe Labor thinks that any contract of the former government that it does not rip up counts as one of its own projects. Of the road projects Labor did take to the election, most are unfunded in this budget. Thompsons Road, Yan Yean Road and Napier Street — the money is not there to get those projects built.

Of course there was one what I will call not a major project but a semi-major road project that Labor did take to the election and seek a mandate for — the West Gate distributor. That project has been junked in Labor's first six months in office. However, somebody needs to tell the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, because the Premier has been saying that the West Gate distributor is finished but the roads minister seems to

think it is still alive. Nobody over there seems to really know what is happening.

An honourable member — Did you talk to the roads minister?

Mr M. O'BRIEN — That is true. That brings me to another road project that hangs like a shadow over this budget. Here is what Daniel Andrews said in the *Australian Financial Review* of 10 November 2014:

It's a project without a business case, it's a project without a mandate.

Speaker, do you remember those days when Labor said that business cases were essential and mandates were indispensable? Like some member of the Kardashian clan, this Premier has simply decided that mandates are out of fashion and business cases are so 2014 — they just do not matter anymore.

Having ditched the east–west link and with no major shovel-ready road projects, the Premier has now embraced a secret proposal by Transurban to build a pale imitation of the second stage of the east–west link. He now wants to sign Victorians up to a project he never mentioned before the election at a cost of \$5.5 billion, with no business case. That is not what the Premier promised Victorians. This Premier's broken promise condemns him as a hypocrite of the absolute highest order.

What is worse is that the Premier wants everybody else to pay for this toll road except for him. He is busy sending invoices to the Prime Minister saying, 'Please pay for this toll road'. Not only does the Premier demand that motorists of Melbourne's east and south-east pay for a western suburbs trucking tunnel they will not use, but by extending CityLink tolls out to 2050 he wants the kids of those motorists to pay as well. But he is not prepared to put in one red cent of his own. What a fraud.

When it comes to rail projects, we now know that when the Premier says he has no respect for Greens he is actually referring to the member for Yan Yean. Why else would he not only exclude her from the ministry but also turn her promise to build the Mernda rail extension during 2015 into a fraud? How does Labor expect to build a train line costing \$600 million to \$700 million for just \$9 million? Who is going to tender for that contract? Will it be Tonka or Lego? The people of Yan Yean and the city of Whittlesea have been conned by this Labor government, and they will not forget the Mernda rail betrayal.

Of Labor's promise to remove 50 level crossings, the only thing that can be said is that Labor has delayed removing the crossings that were funded by the previous government. There were eight fully funded level crossings — four on the Cranbourne-Pakenham corridor and four announced in last year's budget — but despite the fact that those contracts were out to tender, this government has dragged its feet to delay getting them done. The money is there; the projects need to be done. Why is this government dragging its feet on delivering the coalition government's fully funded level crossing removals?

In this budget we see no real funding for this government's own level crossing removals. The government has hitched the entire funding for this to a transaction which has not yet occurred. The Treasurer has again brought up the magic pudding of contingencies. You have to actually have money in the budget before you can have a contingency — and at the moment the Treasurer does not have even that.

On education, the Treasurer claimed in his speech that this is 'the biggest education budget in Victoria's history'. We know that is the sort of cheap rhetoric this government likes to put on numberplates, but let us look at the facts. With this budget the Andrews government is patting itself on the back because it has announced funding for 10 new schools. But do members know how many new schools the former coalition government funded last year? Thirteen.

Even though the coalition delivered funding last year to build a much-needed new school such as the Prahran secondary college, Labor has now completely dropped the ball and has failed to get the school up and running in the interests of local families. Labor has also let down the community in South Melbourne by failing to progress the investment and work undertaken for the new primary school at Ferrars Street. And of those schools that will receive an upgrade with this budget, it is telling that around two-thirds of them are in Labor-held electorates despite Labor holding only 53 per cent of the seats in this chamber. Yet again under a Labor government an electoral margin counts for more than educational merit.

Victorian state schools well remember the \$420 million maintenance backlog that Labor left last time it was in office. This budget sends the message that Labor's neglect of school basics will be repeated, with underinvestment in maintenance and less than half of the promised funding for asbestos removal being delivered.

But it is not only state schools that have cause for concern with this budget. Of the \$120 million committed to infrastructure for Catholic and independent schools over four years, a paltry \$10 million, or only 8.3 per cent, has been funded in 2015–16. While Labor ducks and weaves on whether it will honour the final two years of Victoria's commitment to the Gonski initiative, no school can be confident that its future funding will be secure.

When it comes to technical schools, Labor is the party that closed down technical schools in the 1980s, and in this budget it has provided peanuts, ensuring that Victoria remains many years away from any new tech school opening its doors.

In relation to the budget being for families, community safety is absolutely essential. Under the coalition more than 1900 additional Victoria Police officers were recruited, together with 950 protective services officers (PSOs) — the same PSOs Labor disparages; the same PSOs the current Deputy Premier of this state insulted by calling them 'plastic police'; the same PSOs who protect this very Parliament and keep us safe from harm. Labor's budget offers no additional police and no additional PSOs — not one.

I do not think I have ever seen a government come to power and not promise to deliver any new police at all. What an appalling action. That is completely inadequate for a state growing by around 100 000 people each year. Worse still, Labor's financial mismanagement is cutting \$23.8 million from the police operational budget to pay for a black hole in Labor's poorly costed country police radio policy. This government cannot talk with any credibility about Victorian families while at the same time failing to recruit additional police and ripping off the police budget to fix its own financial blunders.

No action of the Andrews Labor government could better demonstrate its determination to put politics ahead of people than its disgraceful attack on the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. To cause the loss of \$20 million in philanthropic funding, to cause the loss of 42 cancer beds and to undermine the financial security of one of our most important cancer treatment centres is outrageous. To do so in the pursuit of outdated socialist ideology — a hatred of private medical practice co-locating with public health — is nothing less than a disgrace. But given this Premier's track record when he was Minister for Health in the Brumby government, perhaps we should not be surprised.

This budget has serious failures when it comes to health. It completely fails to fund the Maroondah breast cancer centre or the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery; it provides only 10 per cent of funding for the Victorian Heart Hospital that the government promised to have open by 2018; as we heard in question time today, it funds less than 2.5 per cent of the cost of the expansion of the Casey Hospital; and it cuts 20 per cent from dental concessions. How can a Labor government that claims to care for families cut 20 per cent from dental concessions for impoverished families in this state? In addition, 94 per cent of the hospital beds identified as needed by this government's Travis review remain unfunded.

True to form, in this budget Labor ignores most of Victoria which is beyond the tram tracks. If you do not live near a graffiti-covered inner city laneway, this government thinks you are just camping out. It has shown its lack of concern in the traditional Labor way — through budget cuts to funding for agriculture, regional tourism and country roads, including through cuts to the country roads and bridges program, as well as by short-changing country Victoria by abolishing the coalition's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund and replacing it with a pale imitation.

When it comes to public transport Labor made big promises, but what we see in the budget is just a big black hole. All we see is \$1.5 billion for the Melbourne Metro rail project, which has an \$11 billion-plus price tag. The Treasurer and the Premier can never tell us where the money will come from. They will try to put \$3 billion into a high-priced credit card as a result of walking away from the east–west link. They say the private sector will invest, but since when did the private sector invest in public transport infrastructure? It does not happen. It might invest in services, but it does not invest in the building of the infrastructure. The federal government has said it is not its business and that it has money available for other projects. The Treasurer cannot tell us how he will fund the \$11 billion cost of the Melbourne Metro rail project.

What happened to Infrastructure Victoria? The body was supposed to be set up to give the government a tick on all these big-ticket items. The government has committed to building the Melbourne Metro rail project and to spending \$5.5 billion on taking Transurban's ideas off the shelf without going through Infrastructure Victoria, with no mandate and no business cases. What happened to all of that? Again it is last season's fashion.

When it comes to train and tram procurement, those opposite should pay copyright fees to the member for Polwarth and the member for South-West Coast. Labor

never conceived of having a 10-year procurement program for trains and trams, let alone announcing it, until the coalition government announced it during the election campaign. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery — and it is probably the only form of flattery the Minister for Public Transport is capable of when it comes to this side of the house — the former Premier and former Minister for Public Transport have been flattered indeed. All Labor has done is take the coalition's ideas off the shelf because it has none of its own.

I have spoken a lot about economic issues but social issues are also at the heart of this budget. I need to mention only one to demonstrate how all the rhetoric, slogans and political spin about the budget being for families and about putting people first is an absolute hoax. In this budget the government has cut funding for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, not just in real terms by not indexing it to inflation but even in nominal terms. What a mean and indefensible budget measure that is. It is one that affects some of the most vulnerable members of our community. This is from a Premier who as opposition leader could not stop telling us in his advertisements how he was all about putting people first. What people benefit from cuts to problem gambling funding?

This is a government that has its priorities wrong. In just six months it has weakened Victoria on every economic indicator and has hurt Victorian families. This Treasurer is like somebody who has been thrown the keys to a sports car and has crashed it on the way out of the dealership. He has turned the strongest finances in the country into a ruin. He has a phoney surplus propped up by east–west link money. He has higher unemployment, higher debt and lower infrastructure spending. This is a bad-news budget. It is not a budget for families. It is a budget of broken promises. For Victorians looking for work it is bad news. For Victorians stuck in traffic it is bad news. For Victorians worried about the cost of living, the budget does not help; it hurts. This is a bad budget from a Labor government that has demonstrated that, true to form, it cannot manage money and cannot manage major projects. Victorians deserve better than this budget. The only positive thing about it is that we are one budget closer to the return of coalition government to Victoria.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — It is amusing to hear from the former Treasurer, who is nothing more than the Helen Demidenko of Victorian politics. Helen Demidenko wrote *The Hand That Signed the Paper*, and it was his hand that signed the side deal letter that cost Victorians hundreds of millions of dollars, because

he wanted to punish them for their decision to kick out the former minority Napthine government. The coalition had nothing to show for four years in office. It was desperate to sign a dodgy contract at the last moment before the election because there was no other major project it could talk about. Apart from cutting ribbons on Labor projects like the Royal Children's Hospital, coalition members spent most of their time in office cutting services, so the Victorian people cut them loose at the last election.

This is a shadow Treasurer who refuses even to serve on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee because he sees himself as the Treasurer in exile. He could not bear the idea of sitting in an estimates hearing and holding the government to account because he still thinks he is the Treasurer in exile. The coalition had to get out the old hits and memories — the member for Scoresby — to speak in yesterday's matter of public importance debate because no-one on the opposition front bench wants to stump up to defend the opposition and the way in which it wants to hold the government to account for the budget.

I will touch on a range of matters that relate to the Ivanhoe electorate in relation to the budget, but first I will touch on the record of the previous government in relation to education funding in the electorate. It took four budgets — it was on the death knell as we headed to the last election — before it allocated \$5.6 million for Rosanna Golf Links Primary School.

What we know is that in budget paper 4, on page 33, it is made very clear that the estimated expenditure to 30 June for Rosanna Golf Links Primary School is expected to be \$209 000. What that says is that under the previous minority Baillieu and Napthine governments only \$209 000 was spent on infrastructure capital for schools in the Ivanhoe electorate during the four years of its reign. It is an absolute disgrace, and it shows very clearly the contempt in which the previous government held the Ivanhoe electorate.

It is no wonder the Ivanhoe community rejected the former government at the ballot box last year and endorsed the proposals Labor took to the election. Those commitments have been fully funded in this budget. We can touch on a number of them. One that is particularly close to my heart and one that the local community has been campaigning on for a long time is Viewbank College. A \$11.5 million allocation has been in this year's budget for that school. I quote from the *Heidelberg Leader* of Tuesday, 5 May —

Mr Wakeling — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr CARBINES — I also draw the attention of the house to infrastructure investment by the previous government. One of the previous government's greatest achievements was a \$1 million grant to a private aero club by the former minister for aviation. I quote from the *Age* of 8 October 2014:

Victorian aviation industry minister Gordon Rich-Phillips is a member of the Peninsula Aero Club, which received the \$1 million grant from the government's regional aviation fund.

In the past four years the Ivanhoe electorate received nothing like \$1 million from the previous government; it received nothing for four years. We were treated with absolute contempt. It is no wonder that the Ivanhoe electorate rejected the previous government at the ballot box last year.

I enjoy listening to the member for Malvern when he starts to talk about calibrated race cars, because you need only go back to an *Age* article of 19 March headed 'Liberals are not better economic managers' to see that:

... in the case of the east-west link, the coalition was behind the wheel of the finely calibrated race car that has now crashed spectacularly.

That goes back to this statement in the same article:

... 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.

It is no wonder that the member for Malvern refuses to serve on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee as shadow Treasurer of this state. He perceives himself as the Treasurer in exile. He refuses, and he sees it as beneath him, to hold the government to account, even though that is the key task he has as shadow Treasurer. He has sent his job off to other minions from the Liberal Party backbench. It shows absolute contempt. It is not surprising that when the opposition raised a matter of public importance yesterday to try to hold the government to account it had to go back to the old hits and memories and people from Scoresby to speak on it because no shadow minister wanted to do it.

It is a relief for Victorians to know and understand that the Labor Party commitments they supported at the election will be delivered. I will touch on a range of commitments made to the Ivanhoe electorate. In particular La Trobe University welcomed funding for a shuttle bus, which was a key commitment to the Bundoora and Ivanhoe electorates during the last

election. I quote from a La Trobe University media release of Wednesday, 6 May:

La Trobe University has today welcomed the state government's delivery of its election commitment to co-fund with the university the trial of a high frequency express shuttle bus service.

The initiative was funded in the government's 2015–16 state budget and will improve university public transport connections.

La Trobe University vice-chancellor Professor John Dewar said he was delighted that, after a three year campaign by the university —

read three years of being ignored by the previous Baillieu and Napthine governments — —

the state government had provided a solution to the inadequate public transport options currently faced by students and staff travelling to the Melbourne campus at Bundoora.

'For far too long, students and staff have faced poor and confusing public transport options and longer travel times compared to those travelling to other metropolitan Melbourne universities', Professor Dewar said.

'The announcement by the state government that it will provide \$525 000 to trial a high frequency express shuttle bus service between Reservoir train station and our Bundoora campus is great news and will go a long way to addressing years of neglect in public transport in Melbourne's north.

Labor's decision to extend zone 1 services on the Hurstbridge train line is another benefit for local university students across the northern suburbs. My colleagues in the northern suburbs, including the members for Thomastown, Mill Park, Bundoora, Preston and Eltham, work really hard to build our relationships with La Trobe University, and this is a collaborative project funded by the budget that shows how we can work together in the best interests of the university and our students.

I was very pleased, as I touched on earlier, that we delivered the full \$11.5 million for the redevelopment and construction of a new performing arts centre, music classrooms and administration area for Viewbank College and its 1200 students. Viewbank is my former college; it is the place that gave me a great start in life. It is great to have the opportunity to represent that community in the Parliament and to give something back as part of an Andrews Labor government. This year's budget is the very first opportunity we have to deliver the \$11.5 million commitment in full for the electorate of Ivanhoe, and we are delivering. We will be getting that fully funded project underway very shortly. According to the *Heidelberg Leader* of Tuesday, 5 May:

Principal Judith Craze said she was elated by the announcement.

'In this climate where money is tight, it is very exciting to be in the first round of the government honouring its promises', Ms Craze said.

'To get the promise in the first budget is amazing and to know how hard Anthony Carbines worked to make that happen, as well as James Merlino'.

Ms Craze said the work would start immediately, and while it would be intense, the outcome would be monumental.

This is great news for the Viewbank community. This is a critical project. The previous, unelected Premier and coalition candidates buzzed through the electorate close to election day, throwing a few cash promises around and sought to ingratiate themselves to try to match some of the commitments that were made. However, I do not think they were clear about whether they were in the Ivanhoe electorate or the Eltham electorate, because the coalition candidate for Eltham attended the Viewbank college announcement at the last minute.

This budget shows that if you work hard in opposition, year in, year out, and are true to your local community, then they will know what to expect, they will work with you and they will provide you with the opportunity to be in government. In a political sense, quite frankly, it is a win for the Viewbank area. This is a reflection of the fact that Labor in opposition understood what local communities wanted, and that resonated with local communities. We worked hard on that, and this is a commitment I am looking forward to helping the college deliver on now that it has the funding to proceed.

There are a range of other commitments. The July start date for the trial of a truck curfew on Rosanna Road is on track. We have released more information in relation to that. There is not a lot of detail in the budget about it; it is mostly signage and enforcement that will have cost impacts. Rosanna Road is a great trouble for most people down there, and the trial of a truck curfew will go a long way to relieving the evening amenity issues for the people of Rosanna and those from across my electorate who use that road. It will not solve everyone's problems, but it is a starting point. It shows the government's genuine commitment to finding solutions to that matter.

The Rosanna Golf Links Primary School project will continue. That \$5.6 million project is outlined in the budget. Up to \$100 000 has been provided to remove empty, old, light-timber classrooms at Rosanna Primary School. For four years under the previous government these dilapidated and unused facilities — they were

built under the Building the Education Revolution project — sat empty, taking up valuable playground space. The previous government refused to allocate up to \$100 000 so that the buildings could be demolished and the land could be returned to playground space. In December I got a letter from the Department of Education and Training confirming, after our campaigning on the issue, that during the July school holidays the buildings will be removed. The \$100 000 has been provided, and it will provide an opportunity for playground space to be reclaimed for the local community. It was not a big ask. Over four years I would have thought the previous government could have made a commitment to provide the money for the demolition of those vacant and dangerous classrooms that are a blight on the school. I am pleased those matters have been addressed in the budget.

Doug Travis's review of hospital beds has been accepted in full by the government. Six extra beds will be provided at Austin Hospital, which will allow some 750 extra patients a year to be treated at the great Austin Hospital. Back in the Kennett days, the hospital was up for privatisation. It is no wonder a cabinet minister in the Kennett government lost his seat trying to defend the commitment to privatise the Austin Hospital back in the 1990s. It was a Labor government that rebuilt the Austin Hospital; in fact, there are two hospitals on one site — the Austin and the Mercy hospitals. The Werribee campus of Mercy Health is also getting significant funding from the Andrews government in this budget. Mercy Health provides great service in Heidelberg. It is important for the Ivanhoe electorate that the Austin has got those extra beds as a result of the work of Doug Travis, who was appointed by the government to do that work, which has been accepted in full.

There are a range of other matters in the budget, big and small. The East Ivanhoe Village shopping centre will receive up to \$150 000 for the implementation of variable speed limits of 40 kilometres per hour in the area. It is a critical project at a great shopping village. There are people who hurtle down Lower Heidelberg Road, and to address that issue we ran many petitions. We did not get anywhere with VicRoads or the previous government, but we are delivering on that project. It is an area where there are a lot of schools, including East Ivanhoe Primary School, Mother of God Primary School, Ivanhoe Grammar School and others, and it is important that we have variable speed limits in that precinct. I look forward to delivering on that commitment, which is funded in this budget, with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

The Chandler Highway bridge duplication project, which is just outside my electorate, resonates strongly with people in Ivanhoe East, Ivanhoe and Heidelberg, and those who travel to Heidelberg West on Grange Road also use the Chandler Highway bridge. It is a congested area. It has been great to work with the member for Northcote, who spearheaded our campaign, to show that these things can be delivered. It is being delivered by an Andrews Labor government, and the community backed us in to do that. We have it fully funded in this budget, and we will get on with delivering that project for the people of the northern suburbs. There are many other commitments for the Ivanhoe electorate in this budget. I again commit to holding the government to account in delivering on those commitments. As the Premier said, they will be delivered in full over the four years of our term in government.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I listened with interest to the contribution of the member for Ivanhoe. For four years he banged on about the Heidelberg West police station, but today he made not one comment about it. From my recollection it is not funded in the budget. Obviously he is a lion in opposition and a pussycat in government, because he is not sticking up for his community when it comes to the Heidelberg West police station. He should hang his head in shame.

Looking at the budget information papers, a picture tells a thousand words. Given that I have only 15 minutes to speak, it is good that a picture tells a thousand words. The *Rural and Regional Budget Information Paper* has a map on pages 2 and 3, and it is fairly bare when it comes to regional Victoria. The Melbourne Labor government would hate the fact that we in government introduced these information papers and maps, because it means the Labor government has to continue them, but they show up just how little it has done for regional Victoria. As the member for Gippsland East has said, Gippsland East is just the index. There is nothing else there. That is how much the government thinks about the eastern part of Victoria.

There has been a lot of publicity about all the trains being bought for regional Victoria, but according to the budget information papers they are only running between Geelong and Melbourne. There will not be trains to Shepparton, Echuca, Swan Hill or Traralgon; they will run up and down the Geelong to Melbourne line. They will not service all of regional Victoria. That picture in the *Rural and Regional Budget Information Paper* tells a thousand words.

Looking at the map on pages 12 and 13 of the *Putting People First Budget Information Paper* — a good title — there are obviously no families in country Victoria because they do not rate on the map. The government does not care about families in country Victoria.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr WALSH — The member for Melton can groan all he likes — —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr WALSH — Don Do-Nothing, the member for Melton, is what everyone calls him out there.

There is nothing for country Victoria on that map. Shepparton is not on the map. Going through the budget papers, you see that the major funding for Shepparton is the ongoing funding for the courthouse, which we committed to in a previous budget and started building. The biggest issue in Shepparton, which is the hospital, receives only \$1 million for planning. It must be in the contingency — that mythical bucket that is off to one side that may or may not ever happen. The editorial in the Shepparton newspaper today talks about the possibility of an arts centre with funding from Labor's pale imitation of our Regional Growth Fund, but it does not mention the hospital when it comes to those particular issues. It was the key issue in Shepparton, as I understand it, but there is absolute silence when it comes to hospital funding. My understanding is that the \$1 million for planning also involves the Rushworth hospital, so it is shared around. There is very little for country Victoria in the budget.

We have had the Premier doing his press clips, and I will do mine as well. In an opinion piece for *Stock & Land*, Peter Tuohey, the president of the Victorian Farmers Federation, said:

This week's state budget was overwhelmingly disappointing for farmers and regional Victorians.

...

But overwhelmingly — it is a budget that fails to deliver for regional Victoria.

...

And on water infrastructure it was a dry run.

There were no pipelines for Wedderburn or Mitiamo and no Werribee irrigation district upgrade. Again, the Victorian Farmers Federation has condemned this budget for doing nothing for country Victoria.

Budget paper 3 outlines the service delivery of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. I note that the government is too ashamed to put the word agriculture in that department title because it is not committed to agriculture at all. If members look at this budget paper, they will see that there is 11.9 per cent in the output funding for the agriculture part of that department. There is a 61.4 per cent reduction in the trade funding. Agriculture is the single biggest exporter from this state, with \$11.4 billion worth of exports going out of the state last financial year. There has been a reduction in output funding for the department that helps drive all that and a major reduction in the trade part of that department's portfolio which helps develop those markets and does that extra work. If members go to budget paper 5 and look across the forward estimates, they will see a reduction for the agriculture department all the way through there. Members opposite should hang their heads in shame. Quite rightly they do not have the name agriculture in that department title because as far as I can understand they are phasing it out.

If members go to the specifics, they will see a lot of talk about helping farmers and health issues for farmers. One of the key things that helps farmers, particularly through adverse periods involving drought, flood or industry downturn, is the Rural Financial Counselling Service. That service has been in place for some 25 or 30 years. There is only one year's funding for it in the budget. There is no commitment into the future. There is no asterisk or contingency for it; there is just one year of funding.

One of the very successful programs run by our government was the fox bounty program. There is only one year of funding and no contingencies for that program in the budget. There is no funding for the wild dog bounty program and no funding for an aerial baiting program. There is no real commitment to helping the farmers of north-eastern Victoria and Gippsland to control wild dogs. As everyone knows, wild dogs have a major impact on our small native marsupials. There is no commitment to making sure we deliver a good environmental outcome there.

If members go to the budget paper 4, which deals with state capital programs, they will see there is effectively no capital for the agriculture portfolio. There is no money for the Grains Innovation Park at Horsham and no money for the almond centre of excellence in Mildura. The horticulture centre of excellence at Tatura does not even seem to rate anymore.

Even worse, if members go to budget paper 5, they will see that the fire services levy is going up. Peter Marshall will be rubbing his hands together with glee because he knows the money will be there for his big payoff for the wage increases firefighters will get as a result of the election outcome. Do not talk about the Treasurer being a good negotiator; he has already signalled to Peter Marshall that the money is in the budget to fund those big pay rises in the future. It will come at the expense of farmers in Victoria.

When it comes to the water portfolio, for which I am the shadow minister, page 211 of budget paper 3 shows that all the water efficiency programs are being wound up. There is no money for water efficiency into the future. The cynic in me says that this government does not want to have water efficiency because it wants an excuse to turn the desalination plant on. It does not want people to be efficient with water because it wants the desalination plant to be turned on to justify its existence into the future.

The ironic part of this debate was the comment made by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water when she sacked all the water authorities in Victoria. She said they did not focus enough on climate change. Water efficiency is something that should be in everyone's mind, but there is no funding for it into the future. In that particular press conference she talked about taking water from the desalination plant to put in lakes in northern Victoria. I have never heard anything so ridiculous in my whole life. To, in effect, build a south–north pipeline to take desalination water to the north defies logic. An important question is: who would pay desalination prices for that water? Would it be the people in northern Victoria who would start paying for the desalination plant? I am sure they would not be very happy about that. Would it be Melbourne water customers who would pay for it so that the water could go to northern Victoria? I do not think the minister thought through that particular strategy very well.

The funding in the environment and water portfolio shows that sustainable water projects are only funded for one year. The Gippsland Lakes project is funded for one year. Riparian land management is funded for only one year. I read with interest the press release about the budget from Environment Victoria CEO Mark Wakeham. He praises the budget. He is obviously happy with only one year of funding for these particular projects. That is not the line he took with us when we were in government in terms of what he wanted to see by way of an election commitment. Environment Victoria is obviously a pussycat. It is a bit like the member for Ivanhoe — loud in opposition but a pussycat when his mates are in government.

Environment Victoria is rolling over and praising what is a very poor budget decision for land management in Victoria.

Also interesting is that while all these things are only being funded for one year, the government is increasing dividends out of the water authorities. It is cutting environmental programs for water but increasing dividends out of the water authorities across the forward estimates — —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr WALSH — The member for Melton should look at the facts. The government claims to care about the environment, but it is reducing programs and short-term funding them while increasing revenue out of the water authorities through dividends. I do not understand how that adds up.

When I go to budget paper 4 on the state capital program, I am reminded of a 1982 classic movie called *We of the Never Never*. It was nominated for five Australian Film Institute awards and won one. I think the Treasurer will probably win an Academy Award with his classic *It's All in Contingencies*. It will be a great movie because everything is in the never-never. It is all out there somewhere in the future. The Murray Basin rail project is a classic of that particular never-never funding. There was \$220 million in last year's budget, funded by a coalition government. It is now going to be stretched out, and it will be a long time before it will ever happen. That is something the Victorian Farmers Federation has been very concerned about.

In the couple of minutes I have left, I will talk about my own electorate of Murray Plains. I know the Minister for Roads and Road Safety does not necessarily know what the electorates are named here in Victoria. The minister should have a very good idea of the map of Victoria, but he obviously does not. Again, if we are talking about the never-never, we can talk about the Echuca bridge — something that we put into forward estimates and which has received only \$500 000 in this budget because the rest is 'TBC' — that is, to be confirmed.

Mr Nardella — We're funding it. You had four years.

Mr WALSH — I hope one day the member for Melton will make sure that happens, because I think that will be a long time into the future.

If we look at that map of country Victoria again, we see there are two schools in my electorate that desperately

need funding. They are the Kyabram P–12 College — there is no mention of Kyabram P–12 in the budget — and the project, started by Labor, of the merger of Echuca West Primary School, Echuca South Primary School and Echuca Specialist School. It is something we gave money for the detailed planning of, but there is no mention of capital and no little dot for that school that says it is in contingencies. It is something that desperately needs to be funded in my electorate.

The Premier made much of Victoria being the education state. Obviously a fair bit of Victoria is not in Victoria, according to the Premier, because there is not much funding for education in the future once you get outside Melbourne. Looking at the supposedly new Regional Infrastructure Development Fund in the legislation we are currently debating, I feel sad that once the projects that we funded — the drag strip in Swan Hill, the pioneer settlement heartbeat of the Murray project and the Koondrook wharf — are finished there will be no more funding. Our regional development in Victoria will effectively go north of the Divide because the focus of this particular government is very much on Melbourne, and its view of the world is that regional Victoria is actually Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong. It does not even mention the Latrobe Valley as being part of regional Victoria. That is the sad part of its definition of regional Victoria. There is very little in this budget for country Victoria and there is a reduction in funding for agriculture and water.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — It is an absolute pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015, because this is a true Labor budget. It is a true Labor budget that makes every one of us on this side of the house proud to be a member of the Andrews Labor government. Being a Labor budget, it is a budget about fairness, and you will never hear that word used to describe a budget from the other side of the house. It is absolutely a budget about fairness.

It is a budget that delivers the services and infrastructure that families depend on their state government to provide. It is a budget in surplus, one that will grow the economy and support the creation of 100 000 jobs. Jobs are something that the former government, in its miserable one and only term, forgot all about. More importantly for my electorate of Bentleigh, it is a budget where this government delivers on every commitment that Labor made to my electorate at the last election, addressing four years of inaction by the former government and indeed the former member for Bentleigh.

An honourable member — Who?

Mr STAIKOS — Exactly! Who? We are making Victoria the education state. This budget includes the biggest school budget ever. Part of that is the \$2.9 billion commitment to Gonski. We are funding Gonski and making sure that our schools are properly resourced to deliver the best possible education and the best possible start in life to every Victorian child. We, unlike those on the other side of the house, are calling on the federal government to make good on its promise for the final two years of Gonski funding. That is what we are doing; that is our commitment to education in Victoria.

We heard a lot in question time today from the opposition, including ‘Adjunct Professor’ Southwick, about Glen Eira College and other schools asking, ‘Where is the rest of the money for Glen Eira College?’. You know what? It is \$900 000 more than the former government ever delivered to the Glen Eira College in any of its four budgets. We have \$730 million in this budget to rebuild, upgrade and maintain school buildings. In my electorate of Bentleigh, that includes \$9 million for McKinnon Secondary College, a school with 2000 students and a highly valued school in my electorate that only Labor has ever invested in.

Do you know who the last Liberal Premier to have invested anything in McKinnon Secondary College was? Was it Napthine? No. Was it Baillieu — remember Baillieu? No. Was it Kennett? No. Was it Thompson? No. Was it Hamer? No. It was Henry Bolte. It was in 1965, and the school community matched Henry Bolte pound for pound to build the assembly hall. As I understand it, that took a lot of persuasion. That says it all.

What else was happening back then? Television was black and white.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr STAIKOS — The member for Melton is absolutely right. At McKinnon Secondary College, 2000 students are going to benefit from a \$9 million upgrade. They need that upgrade because they still have 34 portables on-site and two of the original asbestos-ridden buildings. We are taking action at that school.

We are also taking action at Bentleigh Secondary College, where we are providing \$9.6 million. This is another school that has received no love or attention from any Liberal government in the past. In addition to the new classrooms for the school’s 1000 students, we are going to provide an extra two basketball courts for

the McKinnon Basketball Association, which is based at the school. That association has now reached 2500 members. We are taking action to rebuild our schools, unlike those opposite, who on average spent half of what the former Labor government spent on rebuilding schools year by year.

I would have to say that one of the most cruel and callous cuts the former government made was to the education maintenance allowance (EMA). That was an absolute stab in the back for the vulnerable and needy families of this state. What I would say to members opposite is that poverty is everywhere, even in an electorate like mine. The median house price in McKinnon is \$1.25 million, but in 2013 a total of 203 students at McKinnon Secondary College accessed the education maintenance allowance and in 2014 a total of 176 students accessed it.

When I talk about the EMA I am always reminded of a telephone conversation I had last year with a single mother named Jane. She was on a Newstart allowance. She had been saving for six months to send her 10-year-old son to a school camp, and she was not able to do that. We are taking action on that, because it is only ever Labor governments that support families like Jane's. We are investing \$178 million in funding for uniforms, textbooks, free breakfasts and free eyeglasses. We have created a \$148 million Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, which will help over 200 000 disadvantaged families.

This kind of funding is something we absolutely need to provide for these families. All of this is about helping these families and these students to fit in. There is nothing worse for these students than to be in the wrong uniform or be unable to go to camp because their family simply cannot afford it. As the Auditor-General stated in his report of earlier this year entitled *Additional School Costs for Families*:

Welfare agencies have in recent years publicly expressed concerns about the effect of exclusion on a child's wellbeing — reporting that such exclusion can lead to low self-esteem, behavioural issues, refusal to attend school and poor academic performance.

We are going to support those families, unlike those opposite, who stabbed them in the back.

Then there is TAFE. How can we forget the major atrocities inflicted by those opposite on our TAFE sector? In the face of a jobs crisis, the Baillieu and Napthine governments' response was to rip the heart out of TAFE. The former government did not leave anything for TAFE, and this had a devastating effect on Holmesglen, which has a campus in Moorabbin in my

electorate. At that TAFE 100 staff members lost their jobs. In addition course fees doubled and in some cases tripled. Holmesglen lost a third of its government funding, but we are taking action on that as well. We have a \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, and that is good news for Holmesglen because it means there will be an \$8 million student hub for the Moorabbin campus. That is something we are very proud of.

The government will provide \$50 million for kindergarten infrastructure, and that includes the Bentleigh West Kindergarten, which will receive \$225 000 for an expansion. Bentleigh West is the first choice for many families in my electorate, but unfortunately, given the limited space it has, families often do not get that first choice. This funding will assist as many families as possible to get their first choice. Glen Eira City Council applied for funding for this project from the former government, and that application was rejected, but here is the funding in the first budget of the Andrews Labor government.

While we are talking about kindergartens, I want to commend Jenny Mikakos, the Minister for Families and Children, for shaming the federal Abbott government into funding 15 hours a week of kindergarten. I thank Jenny Mikakos. Labor is committed to making Victoria the education state.

On transport, there is the issue of level crossings. We have a commitment to remove 50 level crossings. We have allocated \$2.4 billion for the first phase of the project, which will remove 20 level crossings. In my electorate that includes North Road, McKinnon Road and Centre Road. I saw some interesting statistics about how long boom gates are down during the peak period. At North Road the boom gates are down 25 per cent of the time, at McKinnon Road it is 40 per cent of the time and at Centre Road it is 31.6 per cent of the time. We are absolutely taking action on this.

The Cranbourne-Pakenham line is also very important to my electorate because it is the north-south crossing for the people of Bentleigh. We are removing nine level crossings on that line. Every level crossing from Caulfield to Dandenong will be removed as a result of this government's investment — that is, Grange Road, where the boom gates are down 45.8 per cent of peak-hour time; Koornang Road, where they are down 72.5 per cent of that time; Murrumbeena Road, where they are down 62.5 per cent of that time; Poath Road, where they are down 60 per cent of that time; and Clayton Road, next to the Monash Medical Centre, where they are down 68.3 per cent of that time.

I know that for many members Clayton Road is a particularly important crossing. We know there have been ambulances that have driven around the boom gates of the level crossing on that road in absolute desperation. That is an unacceptable situation. It was no. 8 on the priority list, but the former government went straight to no. 223 on that list and upgraded the New Street, Brighton, level crossing. We are doing this properly. We are allocating funding on the basis of need.

Then there is the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. The government is investing \$1.5 billion to kickstart a city-changing second rail tunnel for Melbourne. This is an absolutely fantastic initiative. There will be five new train stations in the city, and this project will mean that 20 000 extra passengers will be accommodated during peak hour.

There was an alternative to the project on the table last year. Do members remember that? It was the coalition's Melbourne rail link project. Let me refresh members' memories of that project.

Ms Thomas interjected.

Mr STAIKOS — I say to the member for Macedon that it went through Melbourne's main sewer. It went up to South Yarra, then it diverted through the sewer and over to a place called Fishermans Bend. I cannot say how many people from Bentleigh are falling over themselves to get to Fishermans Bend! The worst thing about the project of the former government was that it did not take passengers from Bentleigh to Flinders Street or Richmond stations; it removed Flinders Street and Richmond from the Frankston line.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STAIKOS — Absolutely. Every day 150 000 people travel to Parkville. They go to the university and hospital precinct, but the former government wanted to take everyone to Fishermans Bend. We are going to build the right rail tunnel — one that will decongest the city loop and get people to where they want to go.

Then we have the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail corridor upgrade. This is a fantastic upgrade. It will include the nine level crossing removals I just referred to, but it will also include the purchase of 37 X'trapolis trains, which will be built here, not in Korea. This is not the 25 trains those opposite wanted to build overseas to create jobs overseas. These 37 X'trapolis trains will create jobs for Victorians because we recognise that in the state of Victoria the government is the biggest purchaser of goods and services. That is why we will pull every

economic lever at our disposal to ensure that we create jobs for Victorians by boosting local content. That is exactly what we have done. Investing in rail rolling stock creates jobs.

The government will provide \$2.1 billion in extra funding for health. For that we congratulate the Minister for Health, who has worked extremely hard. Do members remember the 800 hospital beds that were promised and not delivered by the former government? We are going to make a real investment in health.

Ms Thomson interjected.

Mr STAIKOS — The member for Footscray is right. We will invest \$60 million to cut elective surgery waiting lists, and we are providing an extra \$99 million for ambulances. We are also investing in hospitals in and around my electorate. I will briefly touch on one of those projects — that is, Moorabbin Hospital, where I was born back when it had a maternity ward. The hospital now includes a campus of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. This is an area of bipartisanship. We wore the beanies during question time today, and I thank the member for Bendigo West for organising that. I know this is an issue close to her heart.

I am proud that this government is investing \$16.2 million to expand Moorabbin Hospital, with the addition of the 11 new outpatient specialist consulting suites and magnetic resonance imaging and computerised tomography machines. This is something that will significantly improve the care of patients and will ensure that they get the treatment they need closer to home and in a timely manner. Five days before election day I lost my grandmother to cancer. She had battled it for 14 years. The cancer was diagnosed late, but I know that investments like this will make an absolute difference.

On that good news I wrap up my contribution. I thank the Premier and the Treasurer for delivering a Labor budget, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — I thank the people of Melbourne and Victoria because, by electing Greens to this house, for the very first time they have given us not only an opportunity to respond to Labor's first budget but also an opportunity to outline an alternative vision for this state. When Labor took office last November I welcomed the change of government. For too long we had seen a wholesale attack on our climate, our environment, our public services and our health and education systems by the Liberal and The Nationals coalition government. That absolutely needed to stop.

But a change of government is only good if it also signals a change of course. This government has the opportunity to rewrite the future of this state to make Victoria a better and fairer place for everyone.

Labor has taken the reins from a government that set the bar very low on the environment, on public services and on caring for the community, but it is not good enough just to get the bar back to the previous level by undoing some of the damage that has been done. The Andrews Labor government must meet a higher standard. It must show real ambition and vision for our state, and it must make the bold decisions we need to create the sustainable future we all need and want. The people of Victoria demand this of the government. They demand more. They have made their expectations clear by electing a record seven Greens to this Parliament. With five representatives in the other place and two in this place for the very first time, there is absolutely no doubt now that Victorians believe that the values and principles championed by the Greens have a strong place here.

I commend the government for delivering on many of the promises it made during the election campaign. But making a small amount of promises and then delivering on them is not the mark of a bold, visionary government. We must set a higher standard for ourselves. I am disappointed that this budget does not reach for greater things. It paints no bold vision of the future. It takes no courageous steps towards addressing most of the really important challenges we face. In effect the government has made itself a small target. It has delivered small, easily achievable initiatives in order to keep promises without making any real move to address the systemic and long-term problems of our state or attempting to build a truly sustainable economy.

Unfortunately even many of the bigger tickets items are mostly smoke and mirrors, with funding off in the never-never to come sometime far into the future. It is an injection of enthusiasm perhaps, which is welcome, but we need more than that; we need an injection of real support. We must hold governments to higher standards than this. It would be a pretty sad state of affairs if we measured the greatness of governments against a checklist of promises, no matter how minimal, rather than against the depth of their response to society's greatest needs and their courage both in the face of opportunity and in the face of risk. We must measure them by the ambition of their plans to lead the community towards its absolute greatest potential. We must measure the greatness of governments against the actions they take to address the challenges we face now, but also the challenges that are coming down the line.

We must ask ourselves what our governments are doing to meet the needs of a growing city under pressure. What are they doing to ensure that every Victorian has access to the essential services they need? What are they doing to address the housing affordability crisis and the chronic shortage of public housing? And perhaps most importantly, what are they doing to address the fundamental and indeed existential threat of climate change? Most seriously and something very dear to my heart is that I feel that this government has failed its first test on climate change. It made virtually no promises before the election, so it has been able to live up to them. It is consistent with the government's ongoing lack of leadership on this issue; it has delivered very little of substance.

Yes, it may have delivered \$12 million for our poorly defined package of disparate projects, which is not just disappointing but actually quite dangerously irresponsible. Yes, there is some money for new energy projects, but it is unclear what the money is for. There is money for clean coal, there is money to pay the mining industry to better consult with the community and there is \$30 million to clean up the mess of the Hazelwood mine fire, despite the fact that all of these costs should be borne by the mining and coal companies that created the problems in the first place, not by Victorian taxpayers. And once again there is no money to replace our dirtiest coal power stations — Hazelwood, Anglesea and the rest of them.

Climate change is indeed the single greatest moral, ethical and in fact practical challenge of this day and age. Any attempts our country was making towards meaningful action have been maliciously derailed by a calculated ideological crusade carried out by the current federal Abbott government, ably aided and abetted, I might say, by the Baillieu and Napthine governments. Australia has been internationally censured in the strongest term for its national failure to act on climate change. In the lead-up to the Paris negotiations, the global community is turning up the heat. We know that Victoria could be different. We could show that in this state at least we are taking climate change seriously and we are doing our fair share.

Lack of leadership and an anti-environment agenda at the federal level make the case even more compelling for bold action at the state level. We must lead the way on emissions reduction, on investment in renewable energy and on ending our horrible addiction to fossil fuels. It means replacing our dirtiest power stations and creating strong regulation that forces outdated degraded coal assets to close in the short term. It means ruling out once and for all the idea of exporting brown coal or expanding coalmines, which is something the Labor

Party has not yet committed to. It means a permanent ban on coal seam gas and unconventional gas, which is another thing the Labor Party refuses to do.

We have never ever had a better time to act, and this is the opportunity. The national grid has a surplus of energy — it is oversupplied. Energy consumption is dropping while electricity and gas prices are set to rise, but renewable technology is rapidly developing and the costs are coming down, so we need immediate steps to phase out our dirtiest power stations. We must also come up with government-supported transitions for the communities affected by the closure of coal-fired power stations.

There is a clear choice to be made: either the government can decide on having a proactive, well-planned, properly resourced transition to clean energy that will empower local communities, or take the other option, which is business as usual, where we shut our eyes, block our ears, hope climate change will go away and hope the coal industry will last forever, which will be followed by an inevitable point of crisis. When a multinational corporation decides to pull the plug on an unprofitable asset, the community will be left in limbo without any support.

I am disappointed that there is no allocation in this budget specifically to support the development of a transition plan for the Latrobe Valley. I ask the government to strongly consider allocating money from the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, to create this transition plan in partnership with the local community and to commit to closing Hazelwood power station, as it promised to do in 2010. In this budget the government has funded the recommendations of the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry and recognises the scale of the disaster that took place in 2014 and the failure of the government of the time to respond adequately. This funding provides the community with some relief after the horrible nature of the things its members have been through. However, the fact that this budget has to dedicate so much money to recommendations designed to avoid a repeat of this industrial catastrophe makes it clearer than ever that we must end our dependence on coal-fired power. Hazelwood must close. The transition to renewable energy must begin now.

Mr Battin — Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Ms SANDELL — Before I was interrupted I was talking about the need to transition away from coal and towards renewable energy. The government's

prioritising of investment in coal is wrong, and we must do better.

It is true that deep cuts to emissions will require a big effort on the part of the government, but I reckon we are up to the challenges. Big changes can bring big opportunities to many communities across Victoria. Make no mistake: the transition is not going to be easy, but it is necessary and can create incredible opportunities. It is accepted wisdom in the community and among experts that renewable energy is the way of the future. The government has the opportunity to catalyse immense growth in our renewable energy industry and position our state as a leader in the field. When national and global economies are powered by renewable energy, don't we want to be out in front? We want to be the ones with decades of experience in top-class manufacturing expertise in infrastructure and renewable energy right here in Victoria.

I commend the government's announcement in this budget of \$20 million for the wind industry, for renewable energy projects at Newstead and Woodend and for a new jobs fund. Some of that money may be spent on renewables, but I am left to wonder why this is all I can applaud the government for on renewable energy in this budget when it is such a huge challenge. We must seriously transform our energy generation. It requires big investment and systematic reform, and unfortunately very little of this is forthcoming in this budget. Labor asks us to trust it and to expect more in future budgets. That is fine, but I worry that tinkering around the edges will not protect us from the worst impacts of climate change. What does it say about Labor's priorities that the Treasurer did not even mention climate change once in his speech? This is not a small niche issue that can wait for years and years for some action down the line. The science is clear; this is an emergency.

I will move on from climate change to talk about our most important natural resource, our environment. We depend on a healthy environment for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, where we go to work and where we go to play, yet our natural environment has been treated by successive governments as worthless, sold for the lowest price and given away free to huge corporations to turn into private profit, pillaged in the name of short-term gain. The consequences for our health have been completely ignored. Ignorance is no longer a credible excuse. For more than 40 years we have had a huge body of scientific expertise telling us the way we are living is simply not sustainable, yet the single biggest achievement of the previous Nationals-Liberal government — almost the only promise its members

made and actually delivered — was to wind back years of hard-fought-for environmental protection in Victoria.

In this budget I am pleased to see funding for improvement to riparian land, especially funding restored to help manage our national parks. Thankfully some of the destruction wreaked by the previous government is finally starting to be undone, but simply bringing our environmental protection back to just square one is not enough. If we do not do more, our natural environment will continue the downward spiral.

A case in point is the Leadbeater's possum, our state's faunal emblem, which is now critically endangered. Species like the Leadbeater's possum would be much more likely to survive if we created the Great Forest National Park. Logging our native forests currently costs Victorians taxpayers money, which has never made sense to me, so it is simply a no-brainer to create the Great Forest National Park to bring tourism dollars to the Central Highlands and protect our biggest and oldest trees and the Leadbeater's possum. I want to see our country looking after our natural spaces, not selling them off for private profit.

This brings me to transport. The Greens have always known that to keep our communities livable we need sustainable, active and public transport. Melburnians are sick of congestion and long commutes on gridlocked freeways. But what is more is that we know from expertise around the world that building more roads simply does not solve this problem, as much as we wish it would. More Melburnians than ever are using public transport to go home, to get to work, to get to school or just to get out and about. Our public transport network is part of the very fibre of Melbourne, and we are proud of it because it makes our city so livable. It is a wonderful asset, but the system has a pretty long way to go until we can confidently call it a world-class system. I congratulate the government on its decision to fund the Melbourne Metro rail project, as it first promised to do in 2008. The new train stations and rail tunnel will be great assets to the city and will help more people get where they need to go faster. I only wish it had been started when it was first promised and that it was not still three years away, without the money to back it up.

The government's investment in this budget for public transport has been lauded, but we really need to look at the numbers to get to the truth of it. The reality is that patronage of public transport is increasing at a greater rate than capacity, even with the funds committed in this budget. The unfortunate fact is that, although the government is investing some money in public transport, which is a big improvement on the last mob,

it is not enough to keep up with growing demand. We cannot just applaud the government for investing something because we are coming from such a low base; that is not the mark of a good government. The mark is whether we are investing enough to meet demand. Why just order 10 trams to be delivered in this parliamentary term when we know that many tram routes are already at 150 per cent of capacity? We need many more trams.

I am glad that 24-hour public transport is coming to Melbourne, even if only for a trial on weekends. The new train carriages are a welcome addition, especially for our manufacturing sector, which Labor claims to care so much about. However, unfortunately they are the bare minimum of what is required to open the regional rail link. That is what the experts are saying — that is, that it will still be standing room on day one.

Where is the bigger vision here? Where is the vision for Doncaster rail? Where is the vision for Rowville rail? Where is the vision for high-speed rail or airport rail? It is not enough just to add 10 trams and a few train carriages and hope that will mop up the excess capacity. Why do we not at least try to bring us up to the standard of European, Japanese and Canadian cities, which have high-speed rail and a proper public transport network?

I also speak for many people in my electorate of Melbourne who have contacted me to express how disappointed they are that there is no substantial investment for bikes in this budget. The government is simply missing a wonderful opportunity to make Melbourne a world-class cycling city and to keep Melbourne's thousands of cyclists safe.

With this budget, I am pleased to see that the public service can start to recover from the vicious cuts that were made under the coalition. What we need now is for this repair to actually turn into proper reform. We are in an affordable housing crisis. We consistently rank down the bottom of international housing affordability rankings. People on Newstart, which Labor so often talks about, are pretty much unable to afford rent anywhere in our great city. Making sure that people have a safe place to live, somewhere to shelter, is one of the base principles that government should be required to cover.

I want to share one success story from this budget with the house — something that I have been proud to be involved in. Earlier this year I was contacted by the Housing for the Aged Action Group. It provides services for older people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. Its key program,

Home at Last, is prevention; in fact it is early intervention so that people do not become homeless. After several audits and reviews it was found to be very good bang for the buck. It had been a very effective program, but it was about to lose all its funding earlier this year. The Housing for the Aged Action Group was unable to even get a meeting with the Labor Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. I was pleased to be able to support this group through raising the issue in the media, advocating to the minister and helping with its public campaign. I was extremely pleased to see that this government has reinstated its funding, and I am proud of my part in that.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Ms SANDELL — The member for Melton should take a compliment. It is a great thing that these projects have been funded.

The government has also funded similar programs in innovation action projects — projects which are about early intervention. This is the kind of thing we need — preventive measures. They are often ignored or underresourced. Perhaps they are not as sexy as some other measures, but I think they are great things to fund. They are the most effective. But I hope this signals more investment in affordable housing for the future, because for now this budget does very little on public housing. In fact Victoria has the lowest investment per head of public housing of any state in the entire country, and that is not something to be proud of.

Where is the big investment in public housing stock that we need to reduce that waiting list from 34 000 people down to something that is a lot more reasonable? Where are the bold funding decisions by government to strengthen support services, expand emergency housing and make housing more affordable across the board? Our public housing system is broken, and I will be working tirelessly over the next three years to make sure this government does something to fix it.

On education, this government is out there saying it wants to make Victoria the education state. That is great, but unfortunately the budget does not quite live up to the rhetoric.

Mr Nardella — Doesn't it?

Ms SANDELL — I think everyone would agree that everyone should be able to send their kids to school, regardless of whether they are rich or poor. What does the member for Melton think? Does he agree? Everyone should be able to send their kids to school, whether they are rich or poor, but the Labor

government has just made this harder and hoodwinked the public, and the Liberal-Nationals coalition is in cahoots with it. In the first few sitting weeks of this government Labor introduced and passed a bill that means every time we invest \$100 in public education, by law, Victoria must invest \$25 in private schools, regardless of whether they need the money or not. It is a disgrace. It completely flies in the face of the Gonski reforms, which were supposed to fund schools based on need, regardless of whether they were public, private or Catholic. Surely we can all agree as a base principle that we should fund schools based on need. That is a fundamental principle that I would have thought we would have all been able to agree to, but instead the government has caved in to the private school lobby and guaranteed it a high level of public funding, regardless of whether it needs it or not. This results in less funds available for our public education system.

To add insult to injury, Labor has refused to promise funds for the final two years of the Gonski arrangements. To the Labor government, I say, you are backing away from Gonski; have the guts to stand up and just say it. It wants to be seen as the education government, but instead it is simply lying to the Victorian people. We will do everything we can to expose that and get our education budget back on track. Only the Greens were principled enough to stand up against this terrible policy. This so-called education budget even falls short of some of the specifics. I ask the government: why has it delivered a mere 10 per cent of the \$10 million promised to the community during the election campaign to upgrade Carlton Primary School and build a Richmond high school? It did not even take six months for Labor to abandon schools in the inner city. It is no wonder people are voting for the Greens. There is only \$1 million over the forward estimates — it is a disgrace.

This government also ran strongly in the election campaign on TAFE, which had \$1.2 billion slashed from it by the Liberal-Nationals government. However, Labor only put back less than a third of that. If we want to be seen as being good on TAFE, we actually need to deliver.

On social services, of course it is good news that the government is finally focusing on family violence, although services are still stretched and need more resources. On health we need to move away from a single focus on hospital beds and focus on prevention and community health to keep people healthy and out of hospital. My colleagues will cover these and other matters in further speeches, but I would say that unfortunately this budget does not stray away from the traditional Labor and Liberal policy of funding projects

based on marginal electorates rather than need. We really need to move away from this practice. I note that the member for Bentleigh got up and said that Labor has delivered all the promises to people in his marginal seat of Bentleigh, but we are not all lucky enough to live in Bentleigh. We should fund projects in health, education and recreation based on need rather than on whether you are lucky enough to live in a marginal seat.

In conclusion I congratulate this government on delivering on some of its promises, but I ask it to dream bigger, think larger and have a stronger ambition for this state. We could be the state that has a world-class public transport system — one that you could actually rely on to get you to work in the morning and home at night. We could be like Hong Kong or Berlin. We could be the state with a connected network of bike paths that are safe to ride around our cities, just like in Copenhagen. We could be the state that powers itself 100 per cent with renewable energy, like Hawaii or Vancouver. We could be the state that eliminates homelessness completely, like Utah, and invests in affordable housing. All of these aims are very possible. Other places have done them — —

Mr Nardella — What would you cut?

Ms SANDELL — I would cut the fossil fuel subsidies for a start. All of these aims are very possible. Other places have done them and we can too, but it will require a lot more vision and leadership than this budget provides. That is why the Greens are in here — to hold the government to a higher standard.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — We have a chance to turn adversity into opportunity, to develop industries for the future and create new jobs for generations, and to replace anxiety and fear with hope. Achieving this result relies on the will, wit and nous of our three tiers of government, as well as business, unions and civil society, to coordinate above partisanship and collaborate beyond news bulletins and election cycles.

Delivering such a result is vital and urgent because next year marks the end of an era, a dangerous time for our manufacturing communities and Motowns. The Ford Motor Company will cease manufacturing cars in Broadmeadows and Geelong. Holden and Toyota will fall like dominos the following year, and Australia's proud automotive industry, which once manufactured more cars than Japan, will not produce another passenger vehicle.

Australian families are crying out for the politics of responsibility, not ideology. Remaining a bystander to

this slow-burning social disaster is perilous and ultimately fails us all. My call is to make Broadmeadows a showcase for a coordinated, creative response to defining national concerns: globalisation and the demise of local manufacturing, population growth and multiculturalism, new jobs and the future of a fair go.

As a nation and as a state, we have the opportunity to create a new vision and a new plan for jobs and growth in our old Motowns. When the Ford Motor Company ends production in Broadmeadows next year, a prime industrial site will become available for new industries and jobs. Less than 20 kilometres from the heart of the world's most livable city, it has Sydney Road at its front, a railway line and a curfew-free airport at its back. It should not be subdivided for housing. Out of adversity we have a bigger opportunity to create and attract new industries and jobs.

Put simply, I want Broadmeadows to be remembered for the rise of CSL, not the demise of Ford. Australia needs as many companies as possible like CSL, producing life-saving blood products and exporting them internationally while creating new jobs locally.

Victoria's Treasurer has accepted my invitation to be a keynote speaker at an economic and cultural development summit in Broadmeadows to address these matters. His budget sets up the opportunity to create the vision and plan required. Business owners, who appreciate that while they compete internationally they live locally, support this cause because they understand enlightened self-interest.

Lifelong learning is required to skill future generations. Education will be represented from pre-school to the post-graduate level. The union movement supported my proposal at the recent ALP state conference to establish a task force to coordinate such a strategy along with civil society.

The only power structure which has refused to attend is the Australian government, even though I have offered Prime Minister Tony Abbott the opportunity to make history as Australia's first Liberal Prime Minister with his name engraved on a plaque for opening of a coalition-funded project in Broadmeadows, a community whose muscle, sweat and know-how has underwritten prosperity for generations.

I call on the Prime Minister to lift investment in strategies for new industries, alternative jobs and re-skilling. After wooing blue-collar voters to seize power, the difference between the Prime Minister's rhetoric and reality has been ruthless. Vulnerable

families in the Broadmeadows electorate were the hardest hit by the first Abbott budget, according to the University of Canberra's analysis, while Sydney seats held by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer feature among the Liberal electorates suffering least.

Adversity has forged resilience and innovation in Broadmeadows. While Ford will end its manufacturing, it will maintain its innovation centre because the breakthroughs that help deliver its highest sales globally do not come from Detroit, they come from Broadmeadows. Yet the Australian Treasurer, Joe Hockey, has refused my invitation to attend the economic and cultural development summit. Say it ain't so, Joe. Just tell me that somebody in his office misunderstood the implications of this opportunity and that somehow he did not realise what it means, because this is emblematic of our issues of globalisation, future industries, fairness and how you take care of communities. It is no use just smoking a cigar; you need to actually come to Broadmeadows and meet the heavy lifters. There is no use using the class war rhetoric of lifters and leaners. We need to remove that from the debate and the political language and look to see what needs to be done.

Had Australian Treasurer Joe Hockey accepted my invitation to come to Broadmeadows, he would have met the people and families who had the imagination to dream of a better future and the courage to cross the world to pursue it — the wave upon wave of post-war migrants who have played a major role in building our nation.

As long as politics remains a winner-takes-all game under coalition governments, these families struggle to see where they belong in so-called Team Australia. The complexity of this issue is critical in Broadmeadows, which has evolved into a United Nations in one neighbourhood, with families from more than 160 countries now calling Australia home.

Unemployment in Broadmeadows is at more than 26 per cent, higher than Spain and equal to Greece, countries which are suffering the worst jobless rate among developed nations. Recent employment department figures disclose this social disaster but do not reveal youth unemployment, which is perilously high. It is likely to be more than 40 per cent.

Also hidden is how many 14 to 16-year-olds there are who are disengaged, neither working nor learning. This is dangerous for social cohesion.

Broadmeadows matters because it symbolises hope. In Broadmeadows twice as many Muslim families than in

any other Victorian electorate live side by side with Christian refugees from Syria and Iraq, seeking a better life beyond the burden of history. This has always been one of Australia's greatest gifts to the world: you can come here, have a second chance at life, reach beyond the burden of history and give the next generation a better opportunity.

Connecting the disconnected is critical for social cohesion. Close ties to communities is vital for security. The best deradicalisation strategy may well be a job. Economic growth is the best way back to surplus. These are propositions that are known and should be understood. We need a coordinated and collaborative approach to deliver them.

Victoria's Treasurer has delivered an acclaimed budget, because it increases funding for services, increases productivity-enhancing, job-creating infrastructure, reduces debt and secures Victoria's AAA rating. This is a quality result which also delivers on 96 per cent of Labor's election promises. The Treasurer has made the commitment to help Victoria get back to work and help create 100 000 jobs throughout the state. This is vital to my community.

The Treasurer has also committed \$273 million to widen CityLink and the Tullamarine Freeway. Widening and upgrading the Tullamarine Freeway will help increase jobs and productivity in Melbourne's north and is an initiative that I have pursued since the last Parliament.

Victoria's single biggest funding boost for education, along with the Labor government's commitment to especially help students in low-income families and honouring commitments to the Gonski strategy, will also benefit families in Broadmeadows. The summit will address how the Labor government's commitment to the \$508 million Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel, which is designed to create more high-skilled, higher wage jobs, can be accessed by people in Broadmeadows, along with the \$200 million Future Industries Fund, which includes investment in medical research. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, this is an issue that is close to my heart, and I look forward to working with the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Health to help create the new businesses and jobs in this world-class sector of the Victorian economy.

Either we take it for granted or it is not widely known and understood how important this sector is. If you look at the sector internationally, you see that in Boston there is Harvard University and MIT; in London there is the Imperial College and Cambridge University; and

in Melbourne there is the University of Melbourne and Monash University, which has the CSIRO next door. Melbourne and Monash are among the top three institutes for medical research in the world, and we need to communicate this beyond the cognoscenti so that ordinary people know and understand how significant this is. If we put it in sporting terms, it is better than grand slam tennis — there are four grand slams but we are in the top three cities internationally in medical research.

There has been an enormous response from the sector to the leadership of the Premier in appointing a parliamentary secretary to help deal directly with the community. There is a strong response from members of the community, who see that we need to better coordinate and collaborate. The health minister confirmed as well that Victoria receives about 42 per cent of National Health and Medical Research Council funding in this area. Victoria receives the lion's share of this funding, but that will not be enough in the future. As things develop we will need to establish more markets throughout China, the rest of Asia and internationally. Our leadership globally will be significant. I am delighted with the investment made by the Treasurer, the Premier and the Minister for Health in this first Andrews government budget to help deliver on this vision and plan because it will promote the new industries and the new jobs that Victoria needs.

Another issue I want to go to is that when we have the Economic and Cultural Development Summit in Broadmeadows, one of the propositions will be to see how the residents can benefit from the new \$50 million Interface Councils Infrastructure Fund, which will support councils and communities on the edge of Melbourne. This fund could provide for multipurpose facilities, community centres, playgrounds and other community spaces. This fund is the first of its kind. It supports the suburbs that will host the highest proportion of Victoria's population growth during the coming decades. This is another issue that is faced by communities in the north. The city of Hume and its neighbour the city of Whittlesea are two of the fastest growing areas in the country, and it is this level of complexity that I am calling for this coordinated strategy to address. This is an added proposition that we need to be on top of before Ford closes and the supply chain jobs are gone. The widely reported estimate is that up to 50 000 jobs will be lost. This is the need, and this is why it is urgent.

On this point, I wrote to the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, more than a year ago asking for his government to become a partner in this strategy. We want to build resilient communities. I received no response while he

was overseas, and I only got a response from the then Premier, the member for South-West Coast, on the day that I published my letter in the *Herald Sun*. I waited for a month and did not hear back, and then I got the Dear Frank letter. It is not enough to continue with this style of politics that leaves behind the people in communities who may not have voted for the coalition. We cannot have them left as the truly forgotten people, and that is the reality. This is an issue that I put on the agenda in my inaugural speech in this Parliament, and it is something that we have to address before it becomes too late.

Economic growth is the best way back to prosperity and surplus. We need the critical blueprint for economic and cultural development to be addressed urgently, and this is the least we should be doing. My plea is for the politics of responsibility — not simply of ultimate ends. This issue is too important for partisanship. If the Prime Minister is fair dinkum about fairness, he is duty bound to attend. The Victorian Treasurer has delivered a budget with fairness at its heart and families in its reach. I look forward to the Australian government matching those commitments for the people of Broadmeadows, as a benchmark of the values of Australia. I call on the Prime Minister to address this issue as a matter of urgency and for it not to be left until it is too late.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. Budget week is a week of tradition in this house, as we all wait to see if our advocacy has resulted in funding for the issues that are important to our electorates. This great democracy of ours is based on an institution that has been going for 400 years — the Westminster system. We are the beacon of light in a very troubling world.

One of the institutions that we have is the practice of this house when every morning the Speaker enters the house preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms. The Speaker stands, bows to the government, bows to the opposition and bows to the Clerk of the table, and each respective area of the house acknowledges the Speaker and bows back. There is an important reason for this tradition. It shows that we respect the authority of the Speaker to administer the rules that are decided by this house, and the Speaker is acknowledging that he is the servant of the house. Because of that, I am really disappointed in the two members of the Greens who every sitting day have come into this house after everybody else has acknowledged the authority of the Speaker. They come in deliberately late each day.

We are servants of the people. We are here to uphold democracy and the Westminster tradition. I personally find it extremely disappointing that two elected members would go against a 400-year-old tradition that keeps our democracy strong. Everyone in this house has a right to speak, and the Speaker enforces that right. We respect the Speaker. We might mumble about him or grumble about him, as we do about anyone in authority, but we respect his authority. To have the Greens members come in late every sitting day is not only disappointing, it is disrespectful to this house and to the role of the Speaker.

Now, to the budget. The budget — wow! It is a bit of a flop, really. It is more about politics than people. It lacks vision. There are no shovel-ready projects at all. We are even behind Darwin. I cannot believe the government has let Victoria fall behind Darwin. The budget contains cuts to roads, agriculture and tourism. In typical Labor style, its first budget is about splashing cash as a payment for services rendered by union mates during the election campaign. I am beginning to feel quite old because I think I am just hearing again and again what happened during the Cain and Kirner years. I was not a member of this place, but I was a very strong advocate out in the community against a lot of the cuts. Mine was one of the businesses that suffered during that time, and I just feel as though I am repeating myself.

There is a \$1.5 billion blowout in public sector wages. In his maiden budget speech the Treasurer said every child deserves the best possible start, yet some notable omissions from the list of 67 schools to be renovated across the state include Bimbadeen Heights Primary School and Rolling Hills Primary School. These are schools that are in desperate need and are deserving of upgrades. Bimbadeen is going to receive some initial funding for planning, but that is merely a teaser and stops well short of the commitment needed.

The Minister for Education knows this school well. He has visited the school and met with the principal, the parents and the teachers. He knows exceedingly well what the school needs, and he knows how exceedingly patient the school has been as it has fought for funding against the rest of the state. How many grade 6 students will come and go before this promise is honoured? The coalition had previously promised \$5.2 million for Bimbadeen and \$1.2 million for Rolling Hills. It boggles my mind that a government that finds \$4 million for international student welfare grants cannot find \$1.2 million to give to Rolling Hills Primary School. A lack of funding for these schools is going to hamper their plans for future growth and may limit options for other school activities.

This modern Labor government — as self-proclaimed by the Treasurer, who dubbed Victoria the education state — has also failed to provide dedicated funding for the reopening of the Lilydale campus of Swinburne University. This is a centrepiece that was promised by Labor in the 2014 state election campaign. Instead we have a general commitment of funds to a TAFE Rescue Fund. Labor is being notably quiet on a date for the reopening of Swinburne, despite the educational precinct group being verbally promised that it would be in three months.

I understand that an announcement of an expression of interest (EOI) process may be forthcoming, but I am disappointed that the government is going to restrict the type of institutions that can be part of this EOI process to TAFE and dual sector institutions. It is excluding traditional universities. Now that Box Hill Institute has opened at Lilydale and is doing extremely well in reaching out to find out exactly what training the community wants, the EOI process should have been opened up to universities. Yarra Ranges students could then have the range of options that students in other areas of the state have. That is what a flexible and contemporary government would do, and clearly that is not what we currently have.

A competent education strategy would also recognise that a diversity of educational opportunities supports better employment opportunities down the track. Speaking of employment, it did not go unnoticed that the Andrews Labor government has secretly revised up the unemployment rate by 0.25 per cent for 2016–17, going from 6 per cent to 6.25 per cent, and by 0.5 per cent for 2017–18, going from 5.5 per cent to 6 per cent — compared to the pre-election budget update. This is the most embarrassing signal from a government that is already floundering in the first six months of its four-year term in office that it does not have confidence in its own programs and what it is capable of achieving.

I am sure the Minister for Employment will be sitting on level 20 of 1 Spring Street biting her nails to the quick with worry about the unemployment figures. The stakes are extremely high for the Andrews government. It has gone in hard, promising the world to Victorians but knowing full well it cannot deliver. Victorians will be buying for its blood at the next election.

Then there is the other problem that already has the government running scared — that is, the economy. I know the Treasurer would have been quivering in his boots trying to live up to the impeccable economic standards of the former Treasurer, the member for Malvern. He has good reason to be scared. Just six

months in he has sat idly by while \$4 million has been knocked off the surplus. The coalition left Labor with more than \$9 billion in surpluses, and — to use the Treasurer's favourite saying, 'Let me be clear' — it appears that the Treasurer has not been able to stand up to the bullying of his colleagues and is timidly giving in, spending on frivolous initiatives that do not stack up.

Other omissions in the budget include funding for the removal of the Mooroolbark and Lilydale level crossings and the reinstatement of a second pedestrian crossing at Lilydale station. We are told Labor will be removing 17 level crossings by 2018, yet there are no guaranteed funds or start dates for level crossing removals besides the ones previously funded by the coalition. What a joke. This is the one promise, aside from stopping the construction of east–west link, on which this government staked its name. Now we do not even have certainty that it will deliver this or, if it is going to deliver, when it will be. This is going to be a very bumpy four years with Labor in the driver's seat.

Sadly the Yarra Valley Equestrian Centre and the Esther Park soccer grounds will also miss out on funding committed by the coalition. Esther Park has a thriving soccer club. Many young females are now joining the club, and it is great to see how we have so many different nationalities out in what used to be a very strongly Anglo-Saxon area. We now have a very large number of Sudanese and Chin community members coming out and playing soccer at the club. We made a funding commitment so it could increase its support base and promote community involvement, but there is no funding for it in the budget.

Those of us who live in the Yarra Ranges have every right to feel duped by the Andrews state budget. It staggers me to think that this government can find \$1.5 million in loose change for ethical clothing but it cannot find \$250 000 for upgrades to popular community sporting facilities that are well used and essential to the health and wellbeing of the community. We all know that a feeling of disconnectedness is a large part of the reason people feel lonely, turn to drugs and turn to alcohol; they feel they do not belong. Sporting clubs provide the social area and the activity that goes to general wellbeing.

I note that not a cent has gone to the Yarra Ranges in this budget. I also note that just \$130 000 has been allocated to the wine industry ministerial advisory council, which is part of a broader \$1 million promised by the Andrews government to develop a wine tourism strategy. It is unclear whether the \$1 million commitment will include wineries in the Yarra Valley, which arguably are the most well known by both local

and overseas visitors. One of the biggest challenges winemakers face in terms of impact on the quality of their outputs is smoke taint. This government has had little to say about that or about what actions it is prepared to take. In contrast the coalition invested heavily in research to balance the needs of a thriving wine industry with the need to conduct planned burning to protect rural and regional life and property.

In relation to older Victorians: there is no plan in this budget for how to get Victorians who are over 50 back to work. With Australians having to stay in the workforce longer than ever before, our over-50s are at risk of becoming our next big unemployment challenge. Instead of getting ahead, the Andrews government has adopted a very narrow employment strategy focused on young Victorians alone. While there is no denying that we need a strong youth employment strategy, what the government is offering is by no means comprehensive or well planned.

Reading through the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015 I noted that although there has been a blowout in overall public service wages, the operating budgets of a few departments have been sliced and diced. As listed in the appropriation bill, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has been cut by \$69 million; the Environment, Land, Water and Planning Department has been cut by \$265 million; and the Department of Justice and Regulation has been cut by \$182 million. It is unclear why these departments have been targeted, but there it is in black and white in the appropriation bill. I would argue that these departments are at the heart of delivering services and new infrastructure, yet their budgets have been dealt a blow. This is inconsistent with the government's own rhetoric about its vision to improve services for the state.

Then we have the east–west link payout. In Yarra Ranges we have the highest proportion of tradesmen in the state. Tradies are renowned for their extensive travel across the state, driving from east to west, west to east, north to south and back again. The congestion on our major arterials is increasing. Many tradies are angry about the government not proceeding with east–west link. It was not only about reducing travel times, preparing for population growth and reducing business logistics costs; the longer our cars sit idling in traffic, the more polluting fumes they are pumping into the atmosphere, which is bad for the environment and our health. There are many reasons east–west link was going to make Victoria better off, and I think it is a decision that is going to be deeply regretted. Unfortunately it is a decision that every taxpayer has to pay for.

The government clearly counted on the commonwealth pennies before they were in the bank. As the shadow Treasurer pointed out earlier, the government has taken the money for a project it was not proceeding with and then banked the money to give an imaginary surplus. In fact the government does not have a surplus; the \$1.5 billion is not the government's to bank. The true cost of Labor scrapping east–west link is still unknown — \$800 million and going higher. One thing we can be sure of is that it will cost Victorians for generations to come.

What is the rating warranted for the Andrews government budget? I do not want to be rude. Instead I will just offer some words of encouragement: the government has three more budgets to try to get it right before the next election.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. Today I will be reflecting on a very strong and solid budget, as outlined by our Treasurer. It is a budget that will give this state energy and a shot in the arm, and it will provide a boost for our communities. I would like to focus on a few key narratives today — the budget itself, and also how we came to be in this position and what we are trying to achieve. I would also like to reflect on some of the contributions made by the member for Malvern, the shadow Treasurer.

This budget gets the basics right. It focuses on the key principles of state government: education, health, public transport, road investment and, importantly, employment policy. It looks to create the jobs of the future, and to invest in future industries. It is a very exciting budget.

There has been a bit of angst over the last few months in relation to the member for Malvern. He is a bit alone over there, with his lack of friends and his red-faced press conferences. I was reflecting on some of his apprenticeship before he took over from the former Treasurer, the member for Rowville. If you pressed the control and F keys at the same time on a laptop, you would not find 'jobs' mentioned in his first speech; that was a bit of an oversight. I looked up the *Hansard* of his first contributions and some media coverage. I am sure members of the 57th Parliament would recall this headline from the *Sunday Herald Sun*, '\$12 000 fine for insulting Victorian Gaming Minister Michael O'Brien'. The article states:

... Parliament is set to pass new legislation making it a criminal offence to 'insult' gaming minister Michael O'Brien.

That penalty was just under \$12 000. All I can say is that I am thankful this guy is no longer the gaming minister, because I think the whole Victorian community and all members of Parliament would be racking up an almighty bill at the moment — probably into the hundreds of millions of dollars that were wasted on the east-west link! It might surpass his criminality in how he approached that project.

It is worth reflecting on some of the contributions made by the Premier, as well as some of the things that the community has been saying about the budget. I will turn first to Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, which said:

This is a strong, ambitious and positive infrastructure budget.

That is a pretty good endorsement. What did the RACV general manager have to say? He put forward comments welcoming the budget and claiming it was a strong transport budget that addressed congestion on roads and public transport in Melbourne. They are fantastic comments.

Let us now go to the comments of the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which said:

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.

It looks like those opposite have not read their media clips this morning. They have not read the clips of how this budget has been received. It is a stark contrast to the federal mob who have come out recently and threatened to take \$1.5 billion from the Victorian economy. What impact would that have on services, on infrastructure, on education and on health? The Prime Minister should reflect very carefully on that threat to the Victorian people. He does not poll well in this state anyway, and we do not see him anywhere other than when he drops in with John Howard in Ringwood. He might want to reflect on those idle threats to the Victorian people.

It is worth reflecting, in relation to this budget, how we have come to the position we are in right now. In 2010 after the Bracks-Brumby era — and may I say 11 surpluses and great economic management delivered by the then Treasurer, John Brumby, and following Treasurer, John Lenders — we came to a position where members of the coalition were full of their own esteem and saying, 'We'll get there. We'll fix the problems, and we'll build the future'. That was the narrative they took forward. It was the narrative they put out on bunting all over the place.

But it seems that over that period we had problem after problem. To make a Harry Potter reference, you could probably say, ‘Thou shall not be named — the Napthine-Baillieu governments — the Voldemorts of the Liberal Party’s short history’. They will not be named again. That will not be in the history books when we go to the 100-year celebrations. Poor old Campbell Newman. They will not be thinking about Campbell anymore. They will not be talking about Ted and they will not be talking about Denis. They might be reflecting on the great contributions of the former member for Frankston, Geoff Shaw, who at least had the gumption to stand up and contribute and say something. Those opposite spent four years on the pine.

We got to a point where we saw record unemployment levels. We saw youth unemployment at terrible levels and we saw TAFE absolutely decimated, but there was nothing said by those opposite. There was nothing said in regional Victoria when they were slashing TAFE through the regions, with Gippsland TAFE taken to the wall. How much was said? That is right — absolutely nothing.

We had rail feasibility studies, and then we came to the poisoned chalice that was the east–west link, the grand crescendo of a policy that delivered an economic benefit of 45 cents for a \$1 investment. It was absolute madness. Members of the opposition will not address that. They acknowledge that that is the case; they do not shy away from that fact. So we come to all of these challenges for the Andrews government and the work it did through 2013–14 in building policy and setting up the policy we took to the Victorian people at the election. That is our budget. It is a budget based on education, health, transport and jobs, the core narratives at the heart of state services.

When we look at the investment in our schools we see the record investment led by the Minister for Education, returning money to the Gonski agreement that is so important and vital to our schools. Principals across the sector tell me that they have not seen a dollar of Gonski money — not one. We heard from the Minister for Education about the black hole of \$800 million. That is the assessment that has been done. It is an absolute shame. We have the work done by David Gonski on that report coming forward and being properly audited and properly accounted for.

We can then look at the ambulance crisis that festered for two years and at the former Minister for Health, David Davis, who completely dropped the ball and has been clearly pushed off and demoted in his role. He is now chasing around and pleading with councils to send letters about our rate capping. No-one responds to him.

He has been demoted after an absolutely shambolic performance in relation to the ambulance crisis when times blew out, patients suffered and the waiting times at our hospitals ballooned out. This budget’s investment in health is a record investment that will deliver more emergency service visits and more elective surgeries.

We come to a few local commitments, and I was thrilled to see Mordialloc College receive funding of \$4.5 million in the budget. This is a college that has a great community spirit, and it will be exciting to see its program progress. Another school in my community is the stand-alone campus at the Beaumaris College. Unfortunately the previous government left it high and dry. It said, ‘We don’t believe in your school community. We will not fund your school’. It took a Labor government coming back to power to fix those problems and invest in that school.

Then we turn to community safety and think about emergency services. The investment in the Edithvale Country Fire Authority station is about getting on with the job and fixing that wonderful station. This is a station for which \$1 million was committed by the former Bracks and Brumby governments through the work of a former member for Carrum, Jenny Lindell, who secured the land with a \$1 million investment. It was a Labor government that came back with a \$2.5 million commitment, and that station will be rebuilt under this Labor government.

There is one very important policy that goes to the heart of our community and the challenges we face in the city of Kingston. Our community over the next 10 years will grow by 20 per cent. We cannot build more lanes on highways — there is no quick fix to our problems. What we need is longer term vision, strategy and planning. With this budget our Treasurer has delivered that longer term planning and vision for our community.

The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel is absolutely vital to Melbourne. It is not just a city project. This is a project for my community in the city of Kingston all the way down to the city of Frankston. It is vital for our community. The business case stacks up — \$1.90 of economic benefit returned for every \$1 invested. It has been on the wish list for seven years, and it is time that we got on with it. The city loop project was first conceived in 1961 and went through to 1985. Construction was started in 1971. It took 14 years and long-term planning to get that done. That is what we need for this state: long-term vision about what our needs are. That will allow us to deal with the congestion that we confront. It is a vitally important

project for my community and something that will be welcomed locally.

I want to reflect on a couple of the comments made by the member for Malvern. There was a lot of red in his face, and he was getting a bit fired up and trying to get the one-liners out for the Spring Street press gallery. He got a few tweets and a few mentions but his contribution was very lacking in substance. If you contrast his budget reply speech to the one made by our Treasurer in opposition at the time of the previous budget where he talked about the values and the lack of investment in education and health and the decimation of TAFE, you could see where the Labor Party was coming from with its values. What I saw today was Henny Penny running around screaming that the sky was falling in, despite the fact that 96 per cent of our election commitments are in train under this budget, the fact that we are delivering a surplus and the fact that we have a AAA credit rating. They are the facts, and that is the narrative that those opposite conveniently forget.

The member for Malvern made reference to the airport rail link. If members reflect on my contribution to the debate on the matter of public importance a little while ago, they will recall me saying that this is a proposed project that would have run an underground train line through major sewerage infrastructure. I do not want to put the pooh-pooh on the coalition's project and its long-term policy planning, but it was absolutely shambolic.

The member flips and flops. I think he has a part in the next Batman movie as well — as Harvey Dent, who became Two-Face. One minute he will not go anywhere near a business case; it is like the plague, and he is standing back from it. The next minute he is coming in here saying that business cases are the way to go. What an absolutely absurd position to take for a guy who hid behind a business case which did not stack up, which would have put tolls on our major arterials and freeways and which would have cost Victorians well into the future.

The member for Malvern also referenced Infrastructure Victoria. I shudder to think that he could ever be Treasurer of this state again. I do not think anyone would be silly enough to put him in that position again, but for Treasurers in future parliaments I note that it is vitally important that a body like Infrastructure Victoria be in place. It was one of our key election commitments, and it is something that this Labor government has put forward of which we are most proud. The problem we have in politics these days is that people do not trust their local representatives, and having that independent umpire to do that credibility

work and look from a longer term perspective at what we will need in the future is vitally important. I am excited by the opportunities that Infrastructure Victoria will put forward in assessing some of our key priorities.

I will talk about the M80, out in the west. Those opposite scrapped that project even though it had a \$2.30 economic benefit return for every \$1 invested. That was absolutely absurd. We got to the point where rank politics on the opposition side of the house took over. Hearing the bleating and screaming from the member for Malvern today reminded me that former federal Treasurer Wayne Swan would use the songs of Bruce Springsteen to get inspired and he would come out firing. However, I think the poor member for Malvern on this occasion has been listening to the Eagles — who I think will be touring later in the year — and he has gone for the song *Desperado*, with one of the first key lines being, 'Why don't you come to your senses?'. The member for Malvern has to come to his senses. He is running around screaming about a budget that absolutely stacks up from an economic standpoint. He should come to his senses and see the value of what is being put forward.

The member for Malvern is a Carlton Football Club fan and he loves to get along to the footy. I do not know if he is on the Mickey Malthouse bandwagon, or maybe, with Carlton president Mark LoGiudice, he is looking towards the future. Mick Malthouse has commented during the year that Carlton would not lose a single game in the AFL this year. Maybe the member's approach of believing the east-west link has some kind of economic merit is similar. Maybe he is singing from the playbook of Mickey Malthouse in his Carlton football way.

I come now to a key element of this budget and the press conference that was conducted yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Malvern, the shadow Treasurer. I watched that and reflected on it a couple of times. I was standing there thinking, 'This is a team that has just recently come into opposition'. It is a single-term government team that was one of the biggest failures of the Liberal Party for the last 60 years. You would think they would come out of the gates with the desire to put forward some synergy and policy. Not this mob.

What did the member for Malvern say? He pleaded with federal Treasurer Joe Hockey and Prime Minister Tony Abbott to do all they can to hold Victoria to ransom over their pulling \$1.5 billion out of Victoria. My message to the Prime Minister and the federal Treasurer, and the member for Malvern, is: if you want to go down that path and risk investment in our state,

the Labor Party will be there holding you to account, and so will the federal Labor Party. We will hold them to account.

In his first budget reply speech, the member for Malvern made a number of comments about accountability, and I think we need to reflect on his performance. He should resign from his position. He should move on. Maybe the member for Hawthorn can step up.

This budget is a fantastic result for our community. I am happy to support it. I am excited by the opportunities it offers to the community in the Mordialloc electorate, and I commend it to the house.

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — I am pleased to rise today to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015, the Victorian state budget. I want to focus my contribution and make some general comments on the following areas: budget surpluses, expenses growth, infrastructure investment, jobs, unemployment levels and implications for my electorate of Forest Hill.

I say at the outset that this is a typical Labor government budget. It is high taxing and high spending, and it is bad for Forest Hill residents and for all Victorians — except Labor's mates. We can see that very clearly. It is interesting that that has already been reflected in the newspaper headlines. The *Australian Financial Review* of 6 May contains an article by Ben Potter with the headline 'Andrews is spending big and hoping the revenue arrives'. The *Australian* of 6 May contains an article by John Ferguson with the headline 'Andrews raids surplus to boost spending on services', which opens with the following paragraph:

Public sector wages will blow out by almost \$4 billion and nearly \$6 billion will be axed from budget surpluses as Labor yesterday swooped on the proceeds of the former government's austerity measures.

So there you have it. The editorial in the *Herald Sun* of 6 May is headed 'Labor's back and spending' and states:

This is a distinctly Labor budget.

Big spending — to the tune of almost \$280 billion over five years — and big taxing; revenues of \$296 billion across the same period.

Money comes in one door and an almost commensurate amount goes out. It's a highwire act, predicated on Treasury forecasts staying on track.

I will speak on surpluses, and I spoke a little bit about them yesterday in my contribution on the matter of public importance. There are some very clear figures in the budget papers and in the pre-election budget update,

and that is what I want to address today. Under the coalition the 2014–15 surplus was scheduled to be \$1.1 billion; under Labor it is \$0.9 billion. For 2015–16, under the coalition the surplus was to be \$2.3 billion; under Labor, \$1.2 billion. For 2016–17, under the coalition the surplus was to be \$2.7 billion; under Labor, \$1.4 billion. For 2017–18, under the coalition the surplus was to be \$3 billion; under Labor, \$1.4 billion. That is a total of \$9.1 billion of coalition surpluses as against Labor's surpluses of \$4.9 billion, which is a staggering difference of \$4.2 billion.

That is even before you take into account the fact that the 2015–16 surplus shown there includes the \$1.9 billion in federal money for the east–west link. That is the shovel-ready project that was scrapped by the incoming Labor government at a cost to Victorian taxpayers of who knows what, but somewhere in excess of \$600 million. It is a loss of over 3000 jobs immediately, and it has massive implications not only now but for the long-term future, particularly for those of us who live out in the eastern suburbs.

I just want to look at a couple of quotes from Premier Daniel Andrews. He is quoted in the *Herald Sun* of 19 November 2014 as saying:

In fact we have got no intention of changing the surplus profile outlined in the pre-election budget update, which is \$1.1 billion in the current year out to about \$3 billion in the last of the forwards.

The current Treasurer, Tim Pallas, said on 27 November 2014 when talking on the ABC 774 *Drive* program:

... our commitments will have no impact on the projected budget surplus throughout the four years of the forward estimates ...

There we have the first of the broken promises — the first of the lies — from the Treasurer and the Premier.

I want to look now at expenses growth. We can see that under Labor the actual expense growth for the decade 2000–01 to 2009–10 was a substantial 8 per cent. For 2010–11 to 2013–14, under the coalition, it was 3.1 per cent. Under the coalition the forecast for the years 2014–15 to 2017–18 was 2.6 per cent. The figure Labor has for 2014–15 to 2018–19 is an estimated 3 per cent.

When I was going back and doing some research in this area I was extremely alarmed when I found the actual facts. Labor has forecast average expense growth of 3 per cent. However, when we turn to what history shows we find the irrefutable truth of what happens under a Labor government rather than what it says in its

budget papers. It is there for everybody to see. In 2000–01 Labor estimated expense growth of 7.4 per cent. In fact it ended up being 10.5 per cent. Okay, that is only 42 per cent over — not too bad for Labor. For the next year, 2001–02, the budget figure was 3.1 per cent; the actual was 5.9 per cent, so that is 90 per cent over. In the next year, 2002–03, the budgeted expense growth was 2.1 per cent; the actual figure was a staggering 6.8 per cent, a 224 per cent blowout.

It keeps going on and on. In 2003–04, Labor budgeted for expenses growth of 0.2 per cent, and it came in at an almost unbelievable 7.7 per cent, a staggering 3750 per cent above what Labor estimated. It just goes on and on. I could recite examples for every one of those years, but for the sake of time I will skip a few. In 2006–07 in the budget figures Labor estimated expenses growth of 4.5 per cent, but it came in at 7.7 per cent, 71 per cent out. In 2008–09 an expenses growth of 3.3 per cent was budgeted for and the actual growth was 9.4 per cent — Labor was a staggering 185 per cent out. History clearly shows this; it is indisputable.

You can go back and have a look at the coalition's figures. In 2011–12 we said budget expenses growth would be 4.7 per cent, and it was actually 4 per cent — 15 per cent less. The next year, in 2012–13, we budgeted for 3.2 per cent, and the actual figure was 2.1 per cent. We had got things under control — that was 34 per cent less. In 2013–14, 3.6 per cent was estimated and the actual was 2.7 per cent — a 25 per cent decrease. You can therefore see the stark reality there: the difference between what Labor says and what actually happens as compared to the difference between what the coalition says and what happens under the coalition.

That is the frightening thing for me, for everybody in this house and for all Victorian taxpayers: when this Labor government's forecast is 3 per cent and when we know that the average of those variations is probably over 200 per cent or basically double. So who knows what we will be looking at this time next year in terms of actual expenses growth? That is a frightening thing because there is only one way that can be paid for — by increasing the top line. The alternative is to cut expenses, but we know Labor does not do that, so it will be increasing the impost on all Victorians, which is a frightening thing in the current circumstances. As I said yesterday in my contribution on the matter of public importance, the graph on page 45 of budget paper 2, as presented by the Treasurer — chart 4.1 — which shows what he claims to be average growth in expenses of 6 per cent for the last 10 years as opposed to his 3 per cent for the forward years is extremely

misleading, and it is there to deceive anyone who looks at it.

In terms of wages policy, we have a cost blow-out there. On page 49 of budget paper 2 you can see that the budget figures go from \$18 billion in 2014–15 to \$19.9 billion in 2015–16 — a 7.7 per cent increase in the first year, after which there are 3.3 per cent, 4.5 per cent and 4 per cent increases. Overall in four years we have a 21 per cent increase in the wages bill for the state, which is an enormous impost. The papers have picked that up. Yesterday there was an article in the *Australian Financial Review* entitled 'Public service pay bill will rise by 7.6 per cent to \$19.9 billion', and another article published the same day entitled 'Vic ALP pays off public servants' says:

The 7.6 per cent increase in government payrolls ushers in a new era of pacesetting public sector wage growth ...

We can see that that is essentially the payback for the work that was done during the lead-up to last year's election campaign. What a shameful thing it is for all Victorians to be lassoed with a bill and for debt to be collected by the many supporters of the ALP in this manner, because it is going to affect each and every one of us and the services offered in our electorates.

I now want to turn my attention to infrastructure investment. Page 13 of budget paper 2 outlines the infrastructure investment levels. While for 2014–15 under the coalition they were to be \$5.8 billion, under Labor they are \$4.2 billion. In 2015–16 the coalition's infrastructure investment figure was \$7.3 billion and Labor's is \$5.2 billion. In 2016–17 the coalition figure was \$7 billion and Labor's is \$6.5 billion. In 2017–18 the coalition figure was \$6.7 billion and Labor's figure is \$4.5 billion. The totals for those four years are \$26.8 billion for the coalition and \$20.4 billion for Labor, representing a staggering cut of \$6.4 billion of infrastructure expenditure over that four-year period.

The Treasurer says on page 45 of budget paper 2:

The government is committed to delivering high-quality services and infrastructure for all Victorians in a fiscally responsible manner.

You see that that is an extraordinary claim when you compare the theory with the practice, when you compare the trite words that have been said with what actually happens. One of the early acts of this government was to scrap shovel-ready projects: the east–west link and the airport rail link. It is obvious to anybody who cares to look at the budget papers or cares to look outside that nothing is in fact shovel ready — and what an indictment that is of this government. Twenty-two billion dollars worth of projects have been

announced, with a mere \$6 billion of relevant funding budgeted for. We have projects such as the Melbourne Metro rail project — an \$11 billion project for which \$1.5 billion has been budgeted. It has no start date, it will cut the city in half and it is an outrageous impost on all Victorians. How that is ever going to work is beyond me. It is amazing that those opposite are trying to dig the tunnel shallow and have not thought about how they will get under the river. We will see what happens there, but stopping the busiest tram route in the world for who knows how many years is going to lead to a lot of inconvenience for many Victorians.

The Mernda rail project is a \$600 million project for which \$9 million has been allocated. On and on it goes. I want to read an extract from an article by Rick Wallace published in the *Australian* yesterday. It states:

There is still no clarity on the exact funding model for the \$9 billion–\$11 billion Metro rail project or, indeed, the final cost.

And the signature road project — not included in the budget — is an idea suggested by a listed company (Transurban) that is demanding 15 years' more toll revenue on a road due to revert to government hands.

Here is the clincher:

There is no business case for this venture, yet Daniel Andrews is falling over himself to endorse it.

Here we have the blatant hypocrisy of the Labor Party, which used to bang on and on about business cases yet which — here we go — has reverted to type. There is no business case for this major proposal that is before the Parliament.

We can turn our attention back many years. I remember that in the first couple of years I was in this place, on a weekly basis in sitting weeks reports would be tabled by the Auditor-General or the Ombudsman in relation to the absolute financial incompetence of the previous Labor government. Those reports are there in the library for anybody to look at. We saw over and again the lack of management on major projects, we saw the lack of business cases and we saw the lack of management in terms of the ongoing running of those projects. There were projects that blew out and projects that did not have business cases.

We have the desalination plant at a cost of \$1.8 million a day for 27 years, excluding the water use. We have myki. We have so many others that I have not got time to talk about them, but that is the history. You just have to look to history to see what is going to happen in the future. When we look at unemployment levels, we can see that Labor's prediction starts off at 0.25 percentage points higher than the coalition's for 2015–16. It then

drifts out to 0.5 percentage points above the coalition's projection for 2017–18.

Turning my attention to the electorate of Forest Hill, sadly there is very little for my constituents in this budget. Thankfully the coalition government invested in a range of important community infrastructure — schools, the police station and other important things — during its term in office. In fact we invested over \$11.9 million in capital maintenance for local schools, and we had committed to a further \$6.7 million in a range of schools. I am sad to say that we have received a token gesture of a very small percentage of that in a \$5 million pledge to one of our secondary colleges. The primary schools in Forest Hill will have to continue to suffer as a result of being neglected in this Labor budget.

In conclusion, this is a bad budget for Victorians. It reflects irresponsible economic management. Labor compares poorly in this area with the opposition. Our responsible economic management was not theoretical or projected but actual and there for everybody to see in financial statements. It was not about prospective funding in years to come but visible in actual financial statements. In them you can see how well the coalition government ran the economy. We have got a high-taxing, high-spending Labor government, and woe betide all Victorians, including the residents of Forest Hill. This is a bad budget for all residents, particularly those in eastern suburbs, who so sorely needed the east–west link to ease the traffic congestion at the end of the Eastern Freeway.

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — It is my pleasure to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. Responding to the member for Forest Hill, I will cut to the chase: there was only one thing I agreed with in his contribution and that was that this is very much a Labor Party budget. It is the work of a proud Premier and a proud Treasurer. He obviously did not read the *Age* yesterday, which ran an editorial headed, 'Budget firepower kept in check for the future'. This goes to the heart of the distinction I want to make, and I want the member for Forest Hill to listen to it. It states:

... Labor's philosophical heritage with its commitment to more spending on schools, hospitals, community services, especially children in crisis, and public transport.

And therein lies the stark contrast between Labor and the former coalition government, which, in its last budget, earmarked \$27 billion for new roads and a rail tunnel. This budget is about restoring ... the crucial services that had been cut —

and I underline the word 'cut' —

by the Napthine government, and doing the groundwork for big infrastructure projects in years ahead.

In this budget, incredibly, 96 per cent of our election commitments are fully committed to. The editorial goes on to say that ‘at its heart’ this is a budget that provides more resources, which is very Labor ‘for the community’s most vulnerable’.

This is a budget I am very proud of. You only have to look at the responses from stakeholders in press statements that were issued following its release. A media release from the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) of 28 April is headed ‘Budget infrastructure commitment welcomed by VECCI’. It states:

Chief executive Mark Stone:

VECCI welcomes the announced \$1.5 billion funding to progress the Melbourne Metro rail project’s planning, design and significant early works, to be allocated in the upcoming 2015–16 state budget.

...

VECCI strongly supports the project as it will create 3500 jobs during peak construction and provide much needed improvement in Melbourne’s rail capacity.

Another VECCI press release, this one dated 4 May, is headed ‘Rolling stock strategy and investment supports Victorian jobs, training and apprentices’. In it, Chief Executive Mark Stone says:

The state government’s 10-year strategy, including a \$2 billion 2015–16 budget commitment to grow the train and tram manufacturing industry in Victoria, is a win for jobs ... in our state.

One big thing happened under the previous government: the car industry went. The member for Broadmeadows and the member for Sunbury touched on its demise. Following the loss of the Ford factory in Broadmeadows, the former government did not lift a finger. This is going to be remembered for the next 50 or even 100 years. Under state and federal Liberal governments the car industry crumbled. The impact has been felt from the northern and western suburbs right through to the south-east. That industry is gone, and it will never come back. We were one of the few countries in the world that made a car from start to finish. Supporting the car industry and investing in it was vital. It provided jobs for people moving into the shipbuilding industry and aerospace engineering, but it has gone. The Andrews Labor government’s \$2 billion commitment makes it one of the only states in one of the few countries in the world that makes trams. It is going to be very important for rolling stock. That

\$2 billion commitment in the budget for more trams and trains is incredibly important.

There is another VECCI media release, in this case dated 5 May, headed ‘VECCI commends 2015–16 state budget’s strong commitment to statewide infrastructure and jobs’. As has been touched on, the former government released its budget without jobs even being mentioned in the Treasurer’s speech. The opposition is not into the job-creating infrastructure that we are so proud to support.

At the heart of job creation is education. I could actually spend my time reading out the Treasurer’s speech because I thought it was so good. I want to begin with education. The member for Melbourne said in her contribution that Gonski was not mentioned in the second-reading speech. The Treasurer’s speech actually says:

... the government reconfirms our commitment to the Gonski agreement.

For the first time ever in Victoria, we’ve met our obligations under Gonski — with full allocations for the 2016 and 2017 school years to make up the \$805 million shortfall in allocated funding to the department that was left behind by the previous government.

An honourable member — Did they read the budget?

Mr CARROLL — I do not think some members have read the budget. We have also commissioned the Honourable Steve Bracks, a former Premier, and it was touching to see him here for the Treasurer’s speech. He witnessed a great Labor budget and heard a great speech and about a fantastic investment in education. I was proud that one of my schools made it to page 8 of the Treasurer’s speech.

The member for Keilor would know the Essendon Keilor College very well. In 2011 a *Herald Sun* article said that it had 1341 items needing attention. That is incredible; it was the most run-down school in the state. We could not get the minister to go out there, so we brought the school’s door to the minister in the Parliament. We still have that door in the Premier’s office, and it is going to be part of the program when we rebuild that school. But even worse, when the minister finally went out to visit the school he came back describing it as disgusting and unsafe but then did not provide the necessary funding for it to be rebuilt. It is an incredible shame.

When we announce that we are going to fulfil our commitments, we put it in the budget papers. We have made a \$10 million commitment to the school, and I

can see from the social media post which I am monitoring on Essendon Keilor College it has as of now 365 likes and more than 80 comments. It has had an organic reach of almost 22 000, and the member for St Albans knows what social media is like when you invest in your community. It takes right off. That is an endorsement of our commitment. I am very proud of that and I am very proud of this budget.

I also want to take up something the member for Mordialloc said in his contribution, and that is the contrast between the east–west link and the Melbourne Metro project, because this goes to the heart of and the philosophy behind what we are debating today — an appropriation bill about financial management and economic responsibility. In an article in the *Age* of 19 March with the headline ‘Liberals are not better economic managers’ Josh Gordon said that new details suggest that the Liberal Party rushed to lock in the east–west link deal for political reasons, exposing us to unnecessary risk. He went on to say:

... it’s time to abandon the rhetoric from the Liberals that they are the better economic managers, certainly in Victoria, where the handling of the east–west link shows they exposed taxpayers to greater financial risk than they needed to, ostensibly for political reasons. That’s not good economic management, that’s economic sabotage.

It goes to the heart of the signature of the former Treasurer, the member for Malvern. In the article Josh Gordon says it has been revealed that:

... the former coalition government was so desperate to lock the deal in before the last election, it agreed to a demand by the consortium contracted to build the \$6.8 billion road to sign a so-called side letter, guaranteeing a large amount of compensation even if the contract to build it were rendered invalid by a court.

Evidently state Treasury had some concerns. In top secret advice to O’Brien, seen by the *Age*, senior government officials warned the special compensation deal could create a precedent for future projects. If one business group was offered a guaranteed payout even in the absence of a valid contract, why not others in the future?

...

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 —

which the former Treasurer signed. I put on the record that under this Treasurer and under this government Labor will never, ever seek to enter a side deal to economically and financially sabotage this state. It is incredible that the former Treasurer even considered it. I think if we had another leadership contest on that side of the house, there would probably be three or four

contenders, because I am sure the member for Malvern’s numbers have gone backwards. And today we witnessed another performance, which I am sure will send them further down. It is incredible. If the Leader of the Liberal Party gets a bit hot under the collar and the party decides to go to the member for Malvern, we just cannot wait. He was cut from the same cloth as former federal Treasurer Peter Costello, and look what we have before us now. We are cleaning up their mess.

I want to get onto something positive now, a significant project that has a positive cost-benefit ratio, and that is the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. In the *Age* of 16 April there is an analysis by Adam Carey with the headline ‘Metro rail tunnel — Melbourne needs it, so let’s build it’, that says:

It is difficult to overstate how badly Melbourne needs the metro rail tunnel.

...

A hundred years ago Melbourne’s population was 1.3 million. Today it’s 4.4 million. In that time the only significant expansions that have been added to the rail network are the city loop and the Glen Waverley line.

But the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel will also help to transform my community of Niddrie. I would like to put on the record the difference between investing in public transport and investing in road infrastructure. When the former government was creating its east–west link and focusing on the east–east tunnel, there was a lot of commentary about how it was only a tunnel to the airport to get Liberals there faster and that it had no economic benefit behind it. Road engineers at the RACV and VicRoads all came out saying that if we do not make the switch to public transport now, we never will. We have had CityLink, we have had Peninsula Link and we have had the ring-road, all of which were great projects and represented significant investments in road funding, but we must make the switch to public transport. Our city is growing by more than 1500 people a week, the fastest growing population in the country, and it is a city we must invest in.

In Adam Carey’s article on the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel he says:

In raw terms, the metro tunnel will create space for an extra 17 trains an hour in each direction —

An honourable member — Seventeen?

Mr CARROLL — Seventeen —

each capable of carrying 1100 passengers — 37 400 people an hour in total.

By contrast:

The east–west link was projected to carry 80 000 vehicles a day by 2031, which equates to 96 000 people using VicRoads' measure that shows each vehicle in Melbourne carries —

how many? —

an average 1.2 people.

So we have 1.2 people in a car versus 17 trains an hour going in each direction, each capable of carrying 1100 passengers. That is a massive difference in terms of mobility and the sustainability of our transport network going into the future. That brings me to the Craigieburn line and that of my colleague the member for Sunbury.

At the heart of the Melbourne Metro project will be a grade separation, if you like, in the city loop. The northern loop, which is shared by the Sunbury, Craigieburn and Upfield lines, cannot take any more trains. It is at capacity, and it has been at capacity for too long. If we were to switch the Sunbury line to the new tunnel, there would be capacity for an extra 17 trains an hour on the Craigieburn line and 6 on the Upfield line. That would make a massive difference to transport mobility going into the future.

The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel project is a significant project for our future. It will make an immense difference when combined with the removal of the 50 most dangerous level crossings, including the Buckley Street level crossing that I have spoken so much about in the Parliament.

I am very proud of this budget. I have said what VECCI said about the budget. I have said what the RACV has said about the budget, which was a glowing endorsement. As Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, I want to take a moment to highlight what Police Association Victoria said about the budget. It is good to see The Nationals members in the chamber. I was in Bright over the weekend, but I did not see the member for Ovens Valley at the Bright Festival, which was great. I also visited the Wangaratta and Seymour police stations, and the message that officers at those stations gave me was that they wanted to switch the regional radio network to digital. I could not believe that in four years The Nationals did not stand up in the cabinet to look after country police and do just that. It is a rehash of the Kennett days, with the Liberal Party running the show. Here we have The Nationals in opposition with their numbers going backwards. They invested in the future, which was great, but there is also an investigation into the Office of Living Victoria on foot.

History is repeating itself, with The Nationals being whipped by the Liberal Party.

In its press release the Police Association started with the headline 'State budget delivers on numerous pre-election commitments sought by the Police Association'. Let us get to the heart of the press release and the statement on country police stations. It says:

Fixing country police radios is an issue for which a number of our country delegates have long advocated on behalf of the members they represent. We're pleased that their persistence has come to fruition.

We welcome funding that will deliver an extra 15 police officers to Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula to alleviate desperate staffing shortages in the region.

Our members in Geelong have been extremely passionate about this issue. Less than 12 months ago they and their families rallied in their hundreds to push for extra staff.

This is a Labor government that is investing in the future, investing in the regions and investing in the sustainability of our future. The Treasurer is coming out to my electorate for my own budget breakfast next weekend. We are going to make sure that this budget goes down in history.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to comment on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015 and to examine its impact on the Mildura electorate. I am going to divide my speech into examining the impact of the budget on a number of lifelines: the Murray River, our roads, our airport, our railway lines and our services in the regional city, all of which make our country region livable. This budget particularly fails regional Victoria. I cannot help but look at the lovely glossy document, and note that as we have all pointed out, apart from the member for Gippsland East, who copped the index, funding is pretty sparse across regional Victoria.

Let us look in detail at the budget's impact on my electorate. The Murray River is vital for my electorate. With fewer dollars in the agriculture budget for water-saving measures — growing more using less water — which are vital for us to go forward, we are putting at risk the very future of our vital economy in the north of the state. That will hinder the development of our high-value horticulture sector. In particular, if we look at the promising future of one part of that sector, we see that the almond industry is very much going gangbusters, yet for some reason this government has let the opportunity to facilitate the proposed almond centre of excellence slip through its fingers. This would have established in Mildura a centre of scientific excellence to take our almond industry to the next level.

Why is this so important? The almond industry needs to grow while using less water and also making the best use of the valuable horticulture land that we have. The centre would have provided more than just services to the almond industry. It would have provided mentoring regarding scientific careers for people in my region, which is important for the aspirations of our young people, to show them that there are career paths. It would have supported La Trobe University's regional campus, which has the capacity to then support postgraduate students doing research into horticultural and agricultural subjects. If the government wanted us to be the education state, it should not have let the Almond Centre of Excellence slip through its fingers, but it has gone to South Australia, and that is of concern. With 70 per cent of Australia's almonds grown in the greater Sunraysia region and 30 per cent in South Australia, a victory was whipped from right under our noses.

The loss of that opportunity is typical of activity in the agriculture budget. Outputs are down by 10 per cent. When you are looking at the economics of this region, we have billions of dollars produced in agricultural products that need to be exported. They are in the high-value area. They might be boxed up in Mildura, put in a container on a train or a truck and sent to a port and then on to our valuable export markets. However, the dollars pass through many hands on their way back to Mildura, so supporting these billions of dollars of exports with a strong agricultural budget is vital for the future.

We also have concerns in our region about pest and disease control. We have a clean green image, but it does not happen by accident. It needs to be supported, and a strong budget is needed to do that. A 10 per cent funding reduction leaves our growers looking over their shoulders at pests like fruit fly and exotic diseases which can decimate our industries. If we go down, the city goes down, because of all the money that passes through so many hands on its way back to the bush.

We need to have the confidence that our products are excellent products, but they need to be supported. The inbound and outbound trade missions of the last government provided that confidence. We produce so much more product than the local market could possibly absorb that we must have these strong markets, and they must have confidence in our product. A declining agricultural budget is of great concern because once others have lost confidence in our product or we lose a market, it takes years to get it back.

Funding for roads has been reduced. Where does that leave us? Just as we were getting on top of the backlog

of road maintenance in country areas following the disastrous floods of 2011 we find that the long-term road maintenance budget has been cut. In my electorate the passing lanes on the Sturt and Calder highways were identified as an important safety feature. With the declining road maintenance budget, where does that leave those passing lanes? They were supported by the Calder Highway Improvement Committee and well discussed in the last year or so, and now we must wait to see if a reduced budget will make funds available for those passing lanes.

The Ravenswood intersection is where the Calder Highway meets the Bendigo freeway. It is the most dangerous intersection between Melbourne and north-western Victoria. There is funding in the budget for works at the intersection. However, I notice that the funding has been back-ended — that is, pushed out over two financial years. We need to get on with this project because every day that country people pull up at that intersection puts lives at risk. While we are talking about dangerous and difficult roads, local governments in my area, particularly the Buloke and Yarriambiack shire councils, were beneficiaries of the previous coalition government's roads and bridges program of \$1 million per council per year. It made a big difference to those councils, but it has gone. The councils now have to cope with that funding shortfall and with rate capping. For many country people all they ask of their local government is a road they can get down. That is going to be a bigger challenge for them than ever before, and they are not happy.

Mildura Airport is the gateway to the north-west for business, tourists and local people. The airport is growing, with over 200 000 passengers per year passing through it. It is serviced by three airlines, which have many daily services to Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. One airline is now upgrading to regular use of a 737-800 aircraft. The runway needs to be extended to ensure that we can get these larger aircraft off the tarmac in most weather conditions. A \$4 million investment really is not a great deal of money for that project. We identified the need for the project after the previous government did work on making the terminal suitable for holding a greater number of aircraft and making it a splendid gateway to Mildura. The confidence to invest and live in our community begins as soon as someone sets foot on the airport tarmac or gets in a car to drive to Mildura.

The only reference we can find in this budget to our railway line is a cute little maroon banner in one of the prelude documents that just says there is \$180 million to \$220 million there. The previous government set aside that \$220 million. As we look to the importance

of that railway line and the branch lines, we see they are needed for the high-value horticultural produce that comes out of Mildura to go to the port of Melbourne for export. Victoria's second largest mineral export behind gold is the mineral sands that come out of the Mallee. They are extremely heavy and are best transported on rail rather than road. They need to be transported from the north-west down to Hamilton where they can be processed and then sent on to Portland or Melbourne for export.

Rail is also needed for what is a huge grain-growing area. Despite all the naysayers, our grain growers continue year on year to manage to grow more grain off the same number of hectares. They have been truly innovative and have really grasped the challenge of supplying large amounts of grain for export to the world to benefit Victoria. Branch lines such as those to Murrayville, Sea Lake and Manangatang have to be included in the Murray Basin rail project. They cannot be compromised. The Victorian Farmers Federation is concerned about where this is all going and has cast that doubt over the budget.

The money for the Murray Basin rail project came from the sale of the Rural Finance Corporation. If members look at page 88 of budget paper 4, they will see that in that capital funding for this year there is \$30 million for maintenance of the rail line — which is barely enough — and \$174 million somewhere in the future. It must be in the marvellous Labor definition of contingency, and is that a magic pudding, a bucket at the bottom of the harbour or is it a never-never? Whichever it is, it is not giving confidence that this project will not only be done but done properly.

The Rural Finance Corporation was sold for \$400 million, and that was to finance this project. Initially \$220 million was set aside, and there should be ample money to do that project. The Rural Finance Corporation was a country asset. It was built up by the business done in country Victoria, and it was supposedly sold for the benefit of country Victoria. There is money there to do this project properly. Where has the money from the Rural Finance Corporation gone? It has been 'booked'. What does that mean? It means the cash was put in the bank, or if members refer to the balance sheet tabulation on page 9 of budget paper 5, they will see that it has disappeared into a footnote 14-type situation. Now the Rural Finance Corporation cash is there for the government to spend or to use to reduce its borrowings. I call on the government to keep that money tagged. No matter whether it is a slice of the magic pudding, a drop in the bucket at the bottom of the harbour or one of the never-nevers, it should remain for use on that rail

project, to produce something that will benefit not only the electorate of Mildura but also the future of Victoria.

It is with some regret that I stand before this house and announce the death of the Regional Victoria Living Expo. It lived for only four years, but it was a marvellous creature.

An honourable member — It had a good life.

Mr CRISP — It did have a good life, as I am reminded. In its very short life it bridged the great divide between the city and the country. It helped city people to at least understand country ways, to visit the country as tourists and also to look at relocating to the country. Along with many other people in my electorate, I am astounded when I learn how many people are not too sure where their food has come from. Now the expo is gone, and the death notice is on page 355 of budget paper 3.

Education is important. If people are going to change anything, they have to change education. Members have heard much about Victoria becoming the education state — except if you are in country Victoria. Then things get difficult. I have talked about the opportunity lost with the Almond Centre of Excellence. We need to consider also two schools in my electorate. The community of Robinvale is without doubt having its difficulties, but its members are having a red-hot go. They are transforming their P–12 school to a K–12, and they want to have a community hub which will be a K–12 school plus a library. That needs to be supported. If the government were going to do anything for my electorate, it should be to make a difference in Robinvale by finishing the school and creating that community hub.

Merbein is not far behind Robinvale. It is another active community whose members are having a red-hot go. All they need is just a little bit of help. Merbein people have something banked from the previous government. The previous Labor government promised them that school and did not deliver it. Now here we are with Labor back in government. The IOU stands: Merbein must have that school delivered by this government.

I want to talk briefly about the Regional Growth Fund. It delivered for Mildura, and it did so strongly. With \$35 million invested, it leveraged \$220 million of investment and supported more than 200 jobs in Mildura. If this government is to govern for all of regional Victoria, the replacement of the fund, the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, needs to step into the shoes of the Regional Growth Fund. Mildura has plenty of projects shovel ready that will deliver jobs

and economic activity. This government will be held to account. It must govern for all Victoria, and to do so it must invest in regional Victoria. Projects such as that at the airport in Mildura are vital and ready to go right now. If the government wants a quick result, it can extend the runway at Mildura Airport. The government must step up to the plate and show that it is governing for all of regional Victoria.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. It is also good to be able to follow the member for Mildura and talk about what this budget delivers for regional Victoria. First I would like to congratulate the Treasurer, who has worked hand in hand with the Premier. What an absolute delight to have these two at our helm. They are two men who have steadfastly said they will stand by every commitment that was made to the Victorian people, and in this budget they have delivered on that. Again I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier on this magnificent budget for all of Victoria. The Labor Party will govern for all of Victoria, unlike those on the other side of the house. They will only ever govern for their mates, for their vested interests and for the declining number of people who vote for them.

Along with other members on this side of the house, I cannot wait to get out of here and into my electorate. I cannot wait because tomorrow morning I will be there, and what a great time I will have visiting my schools and my local communities. There is nothing that warms the heart of a local member more than a fantastic photograph of a bunch of children at New Gisborne Primary School with their hands in the air. This is on a Facebook page. Let me tell members about that Facebook page, called ‘Build our art room’. It was started in 2011 when the children of New Gisborne Primary School lost their purpose-built art room to a fire. That purpose-built art room was part of that school’s entitlement, but was it replaced by the previous Liberal-Nationals government? What do members think? Of course it was not replaced. Promises were made but nothing was delivered. Students at that school, with more than 500 children all shoved into a portable, were unable to use their purpose-built kiln for some time.

We know that the previous government and the previous Minister for Education had an extremely poor record, and that minister will go down in history as the worst education minister this state has ever seen. He failed to deliver the facilities that those children needed in New Gisborne Primary School, so how fantastic to wake up this morning and see a photograph on the Build Our Art Room Facebook page of children with

their hands in the air, waving their paintbrushes, and the caption says, ‘The state government has announced the allocation of \$500 000 to rebuild the art room. Today we had a newspaper photographer at our school to report this news. Check out the kids with paintbrushes in their hands and smiles on their faces’.

These are some of the comments. The first is ‘Great news’, then ‘Finally! Well done Mary-Anne Thomas. You came good on your word’. Because that is what we do in the Labor Party — we stick by our word; we make promises and we deliver on them. Another comment is ‘Great news, about time’. You would not want to have waited for the Liberal-Nationals government, because it was not going to do anything at this school. Mitch Thompson said, ‘About damn time’. Others said, ‘Awesome news’ and ‘Every school needs an art room’. And so it goes on. I cannot wait to get back to Macedon tomorrow.

Ms Knight — They can’t wait to see you!

Ms THOMAS — Thank you very much, that is so kind of the member for Wendouree. It is going to be terrific when I visit New Gisborne Primary School and other schools in my electorate.

What I also want to talk about today is health. Let us be very clear on this: Victorians well know that if you want a government that cares about the two things that are most important to people, if you want a government that cares about health and education, then you elect a Labor government — and that is what the Victorian people did. They did that because we know that it is only this side of the house that will look after the interests and the health and education needs of our community.

It is a great pleasure as Parliamentary Secretary for Health to work with our fantastic Minister for Health. She has been working hard from day one, looking out for those who need us the most — that is, people who are doing it tough, the disadvantaged, the people in Melbourne’s west and northern suburbs. Our minister will look out for their needs. I talked a little before about the previous Minister for Education. If he was the worst education minister in history, then the previous Minister for Health would also be the worst health minister this state has ever seen. What a disaster! Health in Victoria went completely backwards under his leadership. He promised 200 new beds — and we have talked about that already today. Whatever happened to those 200 new beds?

Mr Richardson interjected.

Ms THOMAS — He absolutely gutted beds. In an absolute contrast to what the previous government did,

Labor engaged Dr Doug Travis in a systematic, deliberate and considered way to go and find those missing beds — and that is what Dr Travis did. We have received his report, and we have allocated \$200 million to deliver on his recommendations. I am so proud to be a member of a party that has formed government in this state and is delivering so quickly on its commitments and fixing our broken health system.

Our minister has also delivered \$60 million for an elective surgery blitz to cut our waiting lists. That is vitally important, and as the Treasurer said yesterday — I can tell members that he does not need to remind this side of the house — we are not talking numbers here; this is not about numbers, this is about real people. It is about families, it is about parents, husbands, wives and children, and it is about our loved ones. Families know that under a Labor government they can be assured that their loved ones, our loved ones, will be looked after.

Let me talk about the Western Women's and Children's Hospital. I know that it is going to be a fantastic facility, and I can see members on this side of the house are absolutely delighted with that initiative. As the representative for Macedon, I consider it to be brilliant, and it will really deliver for my constituents. It will be a nice easy drive to get there, and in an area which is fast growing with lots of young families it is vitally important that we have this specialist hospital supporting women and their children.

I am also delighted that Ballarat Base Hospital gets a \$10 million cardiac catheterisation laboratory. That is great news for the people in the west of my electorate who look to Ballarat for their specialist care. As a headline in the Ballarat *Courier* the other day stated 'It's Eureka for Ballarat'. And so it should be — it is a fantastic part of Victoria and it is well represented by two very fine members in the members for Buninyong and Wendouree.

I turn to talk about ambulance service. When we came to government we inherited a system in crisis. Make no mistake about it; we all know what it was like before the government changed. On this side of the house we met regularly with paramedics and we listened to their concerns. It was not, as those on the other side of the house would have you believe, about an industrial issue; it was about the health and wellbeing of paramedics and the people they serve. Our ambulance system was in crisis. What did the current Minister for Health do, what did Minister Hennessey do? In contrast to the previous health minister — and how novel! — she actually sat down and talked to paramedics. She did not fight them; she worked with them. I am delighted to be part of the Ambulance Policy Consultative

Committee, working with paramedics to find solutions to tackle the blowout in ambulance response times. As the member representing the Hepburn region, which had one of the largest blowouts in response times, I believe that the work of this committee is going to be absolutely vital for the people of my electorate.

This government immediately healed the deep wounds that were caused by the opposition when in government. It fought tooth and nail for reasons that remain a mystery to me. The previous government was determined to fight every step of the way against paramedics, rather than working with them to find solutions. The Ambulance Policy Consultative Committee is working exceedingly well, and we are in a good position, having made an interim report that the minister delivered within the first 100 days. We are busily working to find solutions to make sure that we have a first-class ambulance service here in Victoria. I am sure that with the \$99 million we have committed to upgrade our ambulance branches and cut response times we will see a first-class ambulance service delivered.

I would also like to talk a little about emergency services, specifically police. Police in regional Victoria were lumbered with an outdated analog radio system. The problem with the system was quite clear: all manner of people could tune in and listen in to conversations the police were having. This was a real concern. In fact as the *Sunbury & Macedon Ranges Star Weekly* reports:

Macedon Ranges Inspector Ryan Irwin said police knew that some people, including thieves and those involved in family violence situations, were using scanners to 'inform' their own movements.

'The current system just isn't secure', Inspector Irwin said.

'One of the other issues is privacy ... quite often our members will pull someone over and run through details like their address and even criminal history over the radio'.

Imagine a situation where anyone can listen in to that. It is simply not good enough. I am delighted that our police minister has announced in this budget — —

An honourable member interjected.

Ms THOMAS — He is an excellent police minister. He has announced \$35.4 million to upgrade the regional police radio system from the outdated analog network to a secure, encrypted digital network, and this includes \$11.5 million of new money. I can tell you that the police in regional Victoria are absolutely thrilled about this. At a stakeholder briefing the other day the Minister for Police told me that this government is

being extremely well received by Victoria Police, as it should be. This government is a friend of and has respect for our emergency services workers: our police, our career and volunteer firefighters, our volunteers in the State Emergency Service, our nurses and our paramedics. These are the people we will stand with and stand up for. We will fight for their rights to safe and secure workplaces and make sure that they have the equipment they need to get on with the job that they do of protecting each one of us each day. We will always stand up for emergency services workers.

There are a few other issues that I wish to raise briefly. Let us talk about education. As I said at the beginning, health and education is what we in the Labor Party do, because we know that these are the things that will enable people to succeed, no matter where they are from, what their family background is or what their material circumstances are. We live in a society which enables anyone with a good education and good health to make all sorts of progress. We have many such stories on this side of the house about people who by virtue of being able to access a good quality education have been able to lead full and interesting lives and live up to their full potential. We will always invest in education.

I commend the Minister for Families and Children. We know that education starts with quality kindergarten. I have already spoken in this house about the way in which the federal Liberal government has toyed with the children of Australia by taking away the important additional 5 hours of kindergarten from the four-year-old kindergarten program. They slashed it from 15 hours of kindergarten per week to 10 hours. Our Minister for Families and Children has fought consistently for those 15 hours, and I am glad to see that the federal Liberal government has ceded to those demands — for two years only, so we are still going to have to fight.

I also commend the minister on her \$50 million investment in early childhood education. I am delighted that this will see two kindergartens upgraded in my own electorate in New Gisborne and in Romsey. I commend the bill to the house.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I have got a cheer squad. This is charming. I thank everyone for joining me here this afternoon as I present my thoughts and observations on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015 for the appropriation for the government of Victoria.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — The member for Mordialloc might like to listen to this. This is important. The fundamental constitutional role of the legislature is to provide appropriations for the Crown. As this is the first time I have risen in this place to debate the budget I must say I feel proud to do so as the member for Kew.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — Indeed as the member for Burwood said, if only it was a budget that was sensible and well thought out enough to contend with some of Melbourne's systemic and structural issues and the problems we are facing not just for this year but for the decades to come.

As members know, Melbourne is the fastest growing city in the nation, and we could well be the biggest city in the nation by the mid-2030s. It is predicted that our population will be almost at 10 million people by 2050. This obviously presents enormous opportunities, but it is not without its problems because the ratio of working-age people to retirees is set to halve over that time frame. It is currently at a ratio of 4.72 working people to 1 retired person, and in all likelihood it will be down to 2.68 by the 2050s. That obviously creates enormous structural challenges to the way we fund government, the way we go about our business in government and the way we provide infrastructure and services for the people of Victoria and indeed across the nation.

Population growth obviously affects all services of state government. Most importantly it affects transport services, road congestion and public transport congestion. Public Transport Victoria estimates that there will be an extra 1.7 million weekday boardings of metropolitan trains by 2031. Over the last decade there has been a 70 per cent rise in the number of patrons on our train system.

Over the last four years in the state of Victoria there has been a 2.3 per cent rise in the number of registered vehicles, year on year. With 4.4 million registered vehicles on our roads we have a significant congestion issue that requires considered, well thought out plans by government to cope with that congestion. This government and the opposition agree that we require major city-altering road and rail projects to cope with the population challenges of the future. We need to futureproof Melbourne. Unfortunately this government's signature road project is not even in the budget.

The media release from Transurban, which is the bidder for the project, makes it very clear it is not bound by its bid. That is of great concern to us. It is a bipartisan view that we need a second river crossing. We absolutely agree, but I do not have a huge amount of confidence that this will actually happen given that the state is not proposing to put up any money for this project. Indeed the invoice is going to be sent to the commonwealth. You simply cannot make up projects like this on the fly. You cannot accept a bid from Transurban and say that is your policy. It is simply a bid. It really amounts to a pre-budget press release, and frankly Victorians deserve better. We had a shovel-ready infrastructure project. It was called the east–west link. The government shamefully tore it up because it was trying to placate Greens voters in the inner city. I will return to my pet subject a bit later in my address, because I thought the member for Melbourne’s address earlier today was quite extraordinary.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr T. SMITH — I will get on to her address in a second, so members should just bear with me. We will get there.

The western distributor is the government’s key road project, yet it is unfunded. It is simply a bid. It is a piece of paper. The government’s key, city-altering Metro rail project has no business case. I believe it has a small secretariat within the department to implement it, but there is no funding. Only 13 per cent of the funding has been made available for this \$11 billion project that will tear up Swanston Street and greatly alter the very fabric of the CBD. We agree that there has to be increased capacity into the inner core of the railway system. As I said yesterday in my contribution on the matter of public interest — and this was illustrated in the Doncaster rail study — the reason it is so important is that you cannot have new input lines, new feeder lines, into the system without adding capacity to the city loop. By international standards the city loop is relatively dated; it was built in the 1970s through the foresight of the Bolte and Hamer governments. We have the opportunity and bipartisan will to improve the inner city core of the railway system, but the simple fact of the matter is it is not funded. It is simply not funded, and no-one has explained to me, whether it be the Minister for Public Transport, the Premier, the Treasurer, or anyone else in this place, where the rest of the 87 per cent of the \$11 billion is going to come from.

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — Continuously, indeed. I thank the member for Hawthorn. But this is significant and very

concerning because if we do not have added capacity in the inner loop, we cannot pay for this project. It is then a pipe dream on the never-never, and we will not be able to do things like build Doncaster rail and Rowville rail, which we all know are so important to the livability of folk in the eastern suburbs. That for me is obviously very important as the member for Kew.

It goes to the heart of what we all love about Melbourne, which is the livability of this great city. We all know that population growth is so important for economic growth, particularly in a state like ours without the natural resources of other states. Without the capacity to export vast quantities of natural resources abroad, what we have is that we are the intellectual heart of the nation. That has been the case since pre-Federation, but we do not have the ability to simply rely on the natural resources of what you can dig out of the ground such as in Western Australia and the like. What we have to do is ensure that capacity is built into the local economy, that government value-adds to the local economy, to ensure that goods, services, freight and the like can be exported around the world, and that congestion is reduced. Congestion costs us a fortune every year. The last estimate was that it costs Victorians \$6 billion a year.

I remember the last time the Labor Party was in government. I was the mayor of Stonnington City Council. I had great fun with the current Treasurer, as he tried to implement his then congestion-busting method of extending the period in which clearways were operating on suburban roads to virtually half the day. That worked really well for him. Of course it did not work. At that time that was the extent to which Labor was trying to bust congestion on suburban roads. I do not think it will ever try and do that again.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr T. SMITH — It might, but I do not think Labor is that stupid. That is my great concern at the moment, because the government does not have a road project ready to go.

Ms Thomson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — It does not. It is a simple press release. Transurban, by law, has to say to the market what it is intending to do with the Victorian government. It makes it very clear in its press release that it is not bound by the negotiations with the government.

Ms Thomson interjected.

Mr T. SMITH — I am getting to that. I will move on to some other topics that are close to my heart.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr T. SMITH — No, we are not there yet.

The Victorian Institute of Sport (VIS) is a very important institution for fostering elite sport in this country. I was lucky enough when I was rowing to have a VIS scholarship, and that enabled me to row for Australia and to represent our country overseas. However, I fear that the 13 per cent cut in funding to Sport and Recreation Victoria will have a detrimental impact on our athletes as they prepare for the Rio Olympics. That is of great concern. We are not only the intellectual capital but the sporting capital of the nation, and the VIS should be leading the country when it comes to the provision of high-quality elite sport facilities and funding for that elite sport. That is simply not the case at the moment. I hope that going forward the government will reconsider its funding decision because that decrease will impact upon our ability to win gold medals at Rio and upon the ability of Victorians to succeed on the international sports stage.

The surplus is again of great concern because it is seemingly propped up on money given to the Victorian government for the construction of the east–west link. One must observe that, given the government is not going to proceed with that project, the money is currently sitting here to prop up the surplus and not to build the road. What happens if the commonwealth government says, ‘If you are not going to build it, we want the money back’? What happens to the government’s surplus then? The budget will be in deficit. The government will have done it in one year; in one year they will be back in deficit.

I can see why the right has reunited. You cannot let the lefties run the show forever, because look at what they do. I can see why the Labor Party has done this, because if you get lefties in there, they cannot count. However, those on the Labor left are not the worst lefties in this building. They are bad, but they are not that bad. Can you believe it? The member for Melbourne wants us to cycle everywhere. I can imagine the plumbers and tradies in my electorate and further afield trying to strap on their equipment and tools for work and rolling their overalls up so they do not get caught in the bicycle chain. They will be told, ‘You have to cycle across town these days’. The world view of the Greens is that you have to cycle everywhere in Melbourne.

The Greens are also going to close down our power stations. The sheer and utter lunacy of the Greens political party is unbelievable. It wants to close down Hazelwood, and it wants to close down Anglesea. What on earth are we going to power Melbourne on? Can someone answer that question for me? The Greens members are not here — of course they are not. They want us to go back to the Stone Age. We understand that renewable energy is a laudable goal, but at the end of the day you cannot power a city the size of Melbourne on renewables.

The baseload power must come from energy sources like our coal-fired power station at Hazelwood. If the Greens members were serious about talking about baseload energy solutions that could power a city the size of Melbourne and that do not have the carbon footprint of a station like Hazelwood, they would put nuclear power on the agenda and have a serious and mature discussion about it. That is the problem: they are not serious, and they are not mature. They are highly immature. They are incredibly annoying and frustrating.

I sympathise with those opposite because I think that every now and again they want to be let off the hook to give the Greens a good going over. For some reason, those opposite are not allowed to. Members of the Labor backbench are all smirking because they know they want to, so I am going to do it for them. The Greens are a profound danger to economic growth in this state, and those on the left, particularly those in the Labor Party, have to hold them to account. The Greens should be held to account for their crazy, stupid, nonsensical ideas, such as riding pushbikes around town all day and closing our power stations. A profound moralising goes on in the way that the Greens members argue their points. They seem to think they are closer to God than the rest of us; however, they do not believe in God. They do not even turn up to prayers, so that clearly cannot be true. I will conclude my remarks on the appropriation bill at that juncture.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — That is truly a hard act to follow. We all appreciate the entertainment value of the contribution of the member for Kew this afternoon. It is a pleasure for members of Parliament on this side of the chamber in particular to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015.

I would like to begin by saying congratulations to the Premier and the Treasurer on the delivery of the Victorian budget 2015–2016, because this is a budget that is first and foremost for Victorian families. The *Age* noted that the Treasurer said ‘family’ or ‘families’

23 times, and I say good on the Treasurer for spruiking the F word — families — because that is very much where the Labor Party wants to be with this budget. We are talking about looking after, caring for and supporting Victorian families. I would much prefer the F word to be used than to be in the situation that former Treasurer Kim Wells found himself in during his first budget delivery. He could not bear to use the J word; there was not one mention of jobs in the first Liberal budget when that party returned to the government benches.

I would like to contrast that with this budget, which is very much focused on families and on jobs. The Treasurer said on the day he delivered the budget:

The budget I hand down today has fairness at its heart and families in its reach.

It gets us back to basics:

Jobs, schools, hospitals and transport.

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

Is that not just the space good government should be in? The 2014 Victorian election was a time when Victorians said they wanted a better government. Indeed one of our slogans was that Victorians deserve a better government. The Treasurer and the Premier have started that process with this budget.

It is sort of quaint when people say to me with a tinge of surprise, ‘You’ve delivered on all of your election promises’. I recall the Premier remarking very early in his tenure that the trust barometer for the Victorian public, and indeed the Australian public, is very low in our civic society. This budget is more than just some numbers delivering on great programs and projects; it is also a statement to the Victorian public that this government can be trusted to deliver on what it said it would do. We said a lot of good things about what we are going to do, and it is in this budget in black and white that our election promises will be delivered for Victorian families.

This is a Labor budget through and through. It is back to basics with no razzle-dazzle. It is about getting on with it and helping Victorians to do likewise. I am starting to hear negative comments coming from the opposition across the benches, and frankly the nasty commentary, the negative talk, the lies and the concoctions that have come from members of the opposition in the last few days do them no credit. The talking down of the Victorian economy, the education system and the infrastructure commitments does them no credit.

Victorians, I have to say, wanted a better government and they are getting it. They are getting it in the positive way that this modern Labor government is going about delivering it with its first budget. I suggest that Victorians do not listen to what those over there have to say. They had the chance, and they were a lazy, crazy government. The election result on 29 November last year certainly sent the message that Victorians were sick of what that government had to offer. It is a bit hard to swallow that we have to stand here and listen to people on the other side lecture us on Melbourne being the most livable city when for four years they did nothing but make it less livable for most people.

I would like to concentrate most of my commentary around two aspects of the budget. Firstly, I would like to again compliment the cabinet for having as part of its budget papers *Suburban Growth — Budget Information Paper*. Most of Melbourne’s population is now living in the outer suburbs, and that trend will increase. This is a government that is going to be focused on what people want in order to make central Melbourne a livable place with a great world-class public transport system and great infrastructure projects within the inner urban areas, but it is also a government that is concerned about the lifestyle and the quality of education, hospitals, roads and community infrastructure in the outer suburbs as well.

I notice that in the budget there is a commitment of \$50 million as an initial contribution towards an Interface Councils Infrastructure Fund to help councils in the growing outer suburban areas get local projects up and going. Far too often constituents come to us saying, ‘I’ve made a commitment to building my dream home. I love the area and my kids are enjoying being in a suburb that has lots of young families in it, but I have some complaints about the quality of the community facilities’, ‘I am concerned about congestion on the roads’ or ‘I am frightened that I’m a little bit far away from a good world-class hospital’.

This infrastructure fund will be doing some of those local projects that need to be done much earlier to improve the quality of life for people living in the outer suburbs. As the minister has said, these projects will make a big difference in people’s day-to-day lives, and we are going to help local councils and communities to deliver them because it is at the local level that we can understand best what the issues are.

I would like to also talk about what, for me, is the pride and joy of the state budget, and that is the biggest ever commitment to education. We all know, certainly on this side of the house, that education is the key to providing the wisdom and knowledge that one can use

in everyday life and to get a job. We also know that a good education gives people lots of good prospects in their life, like becoming more wealthier, having a healthier lifestyle and living longer.

We also know that in the last four years education was not the priority of the government of Victoria. I spoke to the principal of a school in my electorate during that term of government and he declared that he had experienced the worst Minister for Education ever. I know that teachers, parents and students were very disgruntled about how they were going to make sure that kids got the best education possible and make sure that they could secure a job in the future with the qualifications they were hoping to get.

Locally, that commitment to education means an upgrade to Hampton Park Primary School, which is quite a small school in a suburb that does it hard. If you go down to Hampton Park Primary School, you will see children from nearly every nationality and parents who are newly arrived from refugee communities. They, like any of us, want the best opportunities for their children. They have made a commitment to come to our country so that their children have better opportunities than they experienced. By committing to \$5 million for the upgrade of Hampton Park Primary School we are definitely giving that community a lot of hope for their children's education in the future. That was a very important commitment to the Hampton Park community.

There is also a commitment in the budget to Berwick Fields Primary School. If you want to see education in a primary school at its best, I suggest you visit Berwick Fields Primary School. There are, I think, 1097 students at that school, but it is one of the most dynamic and innovative educational facilities you will come across. It has a truly dedicated staff, led by an amazing principal in Stephen Wigney, and they do extraordinary work.

One of the things the school wanted to do was to place greater emphasis on environmental education and sustainability. The government is very pleased to be able to provide the school with \$100 000 to develop a student-led community supported eco-cubby. The minister visited the Berwick Fields school recently. He was impressed with the school and what was going on there. He was also pleased to confirm that election funding commitment and looks forward to returning to see the eco-cubby up and working and seeing the kids having a lot of fun there.

The government's commitment to education is not confined to schools. In fact one of the new technical

schools that is part of the education state commitment will be opened in the city of Casey during this term of government. It has also guaranteed funding for Chisholm TAFE. It is not just about making sure that TAFEs are operating well every day; it is about making sure that the qualifications that students attain from a tertiary provider or training authority are real and that they are able to go out and get a job with them. We have to get that match right. That is why it is good, when we are talking about having a commitment to jobs and getting people back to work, that we are looking at the way that skills which are acquired by students at TAFEs and in other educational settings can be translated into employment.

I turn now to the half-price car registration for apprentices. There are many apprentices in my electorate. I would like there to be a lot more. Many kids have probably missed out on the opportunity to attain an apprenticeship in recent years. I hope employers and young people will take advantage of that scheme, because it is another incentive for apprentices to be taken on and means the journey of getting a qualification is made just that little bit easier and more accessible.

I am pleased to be able to report that the budget makes a strong commitment to another one of our featured election commitments around education. There is the \$148 million Camp, Sports and Excursion Fund; \$16 million for the affordable school uniforms program; \$14 million for school breakfast clubs; and \$2 million for the music in schools program. That is an especially important innovation. No matter where you go to school, if you are interested in taking up an instrument, singing loudly or being involved in a school performance, that should not be determined by your postcode. Every school should be able to run a music program that makes use of the talents that certain students have.

There is also \$1.6 million for the mentoring scheme, which I am particularly proud of. It is hoped that this innovative program will provide students who may be thinking about going to university but who have doubts about whether they will be able to achieve the score to enter university with the support necessary to do so. This scheme will provide them with the tutoring, mentoring, guidance and support necessary to get them to university and enable them to fulfil their dreams. We know there are many families out there where students are still not going to university. We also know that once those students get to university, they excel and set the pattern for future siblings in their families to take up the experience of university education and indeed

guarantee a better world and better lifestyle for themselves.

Just over \$1 million is allocated for Safe Schools Coalition Victoria, and \$400 000 for glasses for kids. As the Minister for Education has said, this will make a real difference to many families and school communities. He also said:

This is about fairness. Breaking the cycle of disadvantage starts in the schoolyard. All kids deserve the best start, no matter their background.

This is a terrific budget. I look forward to working with the Minister for Education in implementing the steps that we have taken and the financial commitments we have made to making Victoria the education state. I know our heart is in this. We have a budget that provides us with the formative funding for transforming this state into the education state. It is indeed a great pleasure to commend the bill to the house.

Mr WATT (Burwood) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. A lot has been said this week about this budget, particularly in this house. Some of the commentary about the budget reminded me of *Sesame Street*, which has a word of the day in its program. I think the word of the day and the word of the week when it comes to this budget has been ‘contingency’. The word of the day is ‘contingency’, the word of the week is ‘contingency’, and the budget is based on ‘contingency’.

During question time the member for Caulfield quite aptly gave the meaning of ‘contingency’. I thought I would do a bit of research myself, and found the *Collins English Dictionary* defines ‘contingency’ as:

a possible but not ... likely future ... or condition ...

Every time the Treasurer stands up and says, ‘That is a contingency’, what we need to remember is that it is possible, but not likely, in the future under the conditions. It is not likely — possible but not likely. When we talk about all these unfunded promises that the government seems to be telling us are all contingencies, we must remember it is a possible but not likely future or condition. Not necessarily being satisfied with one source of the definition of ‘contingency’, I thought I would have another look. When I went online I found the *thefreedictionary.com* defines ‘contingency’ as:

a. An event that may occur but that is not likely or intended; a possibility.

That means every time the Treasurer stands up here and says, ‘It is in the contingency. Have a look, there is an

asterisk there — contingency, contingency’, what he means is that it is not likely or intended. When we have talked about funding in other electorates right through the budget, every time we have asked a question in question time this week, the Treasurer has stood up and said, ‘It is a contingency. It is in the contingency’. But the people of Victoria need to know that that means it is not likely and it is not intended. It is a possibility. It might happen, but it is not supposed to. The online dictionary further describes what a ‘contingency’ is, as:

b. A possibility that must be prepared for; a future emergency.

I can tell the house that we already have an emergency. We have Labor in government, and it has introduced a budget full of contingencies. The dictionary further says:

The condition of being dependent on chance; uncertainty.

What members opposite need to remember is that every time the Treasurer says ‘contingency’, what it actually means is that it is not intended, it is not likely. It is a possibility, but it probably will not happen. I am just a little bit interested to note that someone in the office of the Treasurer or the Premier came up with this great idea of putting everything in contingency and using that slogan. By the way, the *Collins English Dictionary* defines a slogan as being:

a distinctive or topical phrase used in politics, advertising ...

The government is continuously repeating ‘It is in contingency’. It is just a slogan that was thought up in the office of the Premier or Treasurer, with no understanding of what it actually means. They do not understand what the word ‘contingency’ means. They do not understand the budget. They do not understand what it means to actually fulfil your commitments to people in electorates like Burwood or Hawthorn, or even the electorates represented by government members. A number of these things that have been put in contingency are in electorates represented by government members. I am talking about electorates like that of the member for Yan Yean. Not only has the member for Yan Yean been slighted by being put on the back bench, but she has also been slighted by not having fulfilled any of her commitments during the election campaign. I find that quite interesting.

There is another slogan. The government talks in slogans. There are quite a lot of pages over the five budget papers, and we also have the budget information papers. I specifically had a look a number of these information papers, and I saw slogans, particularly around jobs. They have the jobs slogan, but they forgot

to put in the jobs plan. There is no plan for jobs, just a slogan for jobs. I have had a look at the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. I am not sure how many members on the government side have actually looked at the bill — not the glossy documents, but the bill itself.

Those opposite talk about jobs, so let us have a look at schedule 1 to the bill. The first schedule 1 table, with headings ‘Departmental votes’, ‘Estimates’ and ‘Summary’, has a list of departments. Members opposite have their jobs slogan, but what they have forgotten is that the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the department I assume is responsible for these jobs and for the jobs slogan those opposite are going to follow up on as they introduce all these great jobs, has had its budget cut by those opposite. They have actually cut the budget of the department that is responsible for their slogan from \$8 548 481 in 2014–15 to \$8 479 892 in 2015–16. So those opposite have this jobs slogan, but they have forgotten that they have to have a plan behind it. They have forgotten that they have to put some money into it.

I remember that during the four years we were in government the now Minister for Tourism and Major Events, who is also the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Veterans and who is at the table, always used to jump up and say, ‘Show me the money! Where is the money?’. I want to know where the money is that has gone missing from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. If those opposite are going to increase jobs, one of the things they probably would not want to do is take money out of the department that is responsible for jobs. The government has a slogan for this area. We have a government that is full of slogans, but what we do not have is a government with any decent plans.

I will look at the budget and go through some of its headline items. In terms of the government’s grand jobs plan — sorry, its slogan; it is remiss of me to call it a plan, because there is no plan behind the slogan, the government has made predictions about jobs. But unemployment will actually increase over the term of this government. Unemployment will be higher than it was predicted to be under the Liberal-Nationals government. When those opposite talk about jobs and use their slogan, they need to get a plan behind the slogan, because at the end of the day they have to be able to put these things in place to be able to improve the lives of the people of Victoria.

Economic growth is predicted to fall, and inflation and cost of living pressures are going up under this

government. One of the things those opposite need to do to have a jobs plan is to invest in some infrastructure, and when they invest in the infrastructure they might want to put some money into it. Once again, those opposite cannot just have a slogan. They need to have a plan for their infrastructure. I note that this government is predicting spending on infrastructure that is \$6.4 billion less over the four years of the forward estimates than that planned by the coalition, resulting in fewer jobs. The Treasurer and the Premier stated before the election, ‘No. No new taxes. Taxes will only go up by CPI’. But if you look at state taxes you see \$1.1 billion of tax increases. State taxes are up by more than \$1.1 billion.

Then we have this magical surplus. Government members talk about a \$1.2 billion surplus, but they have forgotten that the government has \$1.5 billion in the bank that does not belong to it. Government members are trying to say that is part of their surplus. What happens when the guy whose money it is calls it in, saying ‘Actually, can I have my money back please? I said you could have the money and spend it on the east–west link, but you’re not going to spend it on the east–west link and I would like my money back please.’. What happens then? The government’s \$1.2 billion surplus turns into a \$300 million deficit. It is a phony surplus, and everybody knows it. Within six months this government has taken us into a deficit. I have to tell those opposite that they have slogans, not plans. They have slogans based on contingencies. It is very interesting. This will be the largest budget we have ever had, at \$54.3098 billion, and it is all in contingencies.

I could go on for hours, but I need to start relating this budget to my electorate. The problem is there is not a lot in it for my electorate. I looked at the budget. What you do is you go online and download the document or look at it online, and you can search for words. You go in there and search for words such as the names of suburbs or schools in your electorate. I did that type of search. I searched for Alamein. We have the Alamein train line in my electorate. Alamein does not get a mention. For those people who live in the area of Alamein, the response is, ‘No, there is nothing there for you. See you later’. This government does not care. It is putting people first, just not the people in Alamein. I searched for Bennettswood. Sorry, people of Bennettswood, this government does not care. It is not putting you first either. Its budget papers are entitled ‘For families’.

It is just not for families in Alamein or Bennettswood. I searched for Box Hill South. There was nothing for Box Hill South. There was nothing for Burwood when I

put that search term in. Canterbury? Nothing for Canterbury. Chadstone? Nothing for Chadstone. Hartwell? Nothing for Hartwell. Jordanville? No. Nada. You cannot see it. It is not there. Surrey Hills? The words 'Surrey Hills' are not in this budget. They are not in any of the five budget papers or in the budget information papers. Not once will you find the words 'Surrey Hills'. When you look for the words 'Wattle Park' you will find nothing. I know that the good students of Wattle Park and the parents of students at the Wattle Park Primary School got a commitment from the Labor Party at the last election to fix their fence. But, sorry, it is not in this budget. I hope it is in contingencies, because otherwise it would be another Labor lie.

There are some suburbs in my electorate that I looked for and found, and I thought 'Fantastic. These suburbs are actually there. Maybe we have been looked after!'. I found Ashburton, which is a lovely suburb and which has a great shopping strip. There are some good schools in Ashburton, and some of those schools are getting funding, but I noted 'Damn. That is funding from last year that the Liberal-Nationals coalition put into the budget'. I look forward to those projects finishing so that I can pop into the school and the people there will know exactly where it came from. I found Ashwood too. I speak about Ashwood College in this place quite often. The word 'Ashwood' is, as I said, mentioned in the budget, but it is mentioned in relation to money we put into the budget last year and is not mentioned anywhere else. Camberwell? I note that Camberwell Primary School is getting \$923 000, but that is from last year. It is not in my electorate, but nonetheless I will give those opposite credit for the fact that they left the word 'Camberwell' in the budget. Glen Iris? This is a good one. There is the Glen Iris fire station, which, once again is not in my electorate; it is in the electorate of the shadow Treasurer, the member for Malvern. Glen Iris is there, but once again, that is from last year. There is nothing this year.

I will move on to Glen Iris and the Burke Road level crossing. The government keeps talking about the 50 level crossings it is going to do, but the only level crossings that are mentioned in the budget — such as at Burke Road and in Blackburn — were funded by the previous government. Those opposite should get on with the job. That is what they were elected for. The name 'Glen Iris' is in the budget papers twice. Both references are to projects we funded.

Solway Primary School is in Ashburton, so I will give the government credit for that mention. Solway is a school and not a suburb, but it is there. I appreciate that the government did not cancel the rebuild at Solway. It

has cancelled quite a lot of other things. For example, it has thrown out the east–west link, and I will get to that in a minute if I have got some time. As I said, Solway Primary School is there, but once again it was funded by us. The only mention of new funding in my electorate in this budget is a half-baked idea for planning for a school lumped in with five other schools. Where is the rest of the money? If the government is going to build a school, it should get on with it.

The Treasurer talked in his budget speech about a particular school that only has portable classrooms. Just for a moment I thought, 'Wow, maybe he's talking about my school', because recently there was an article in the *Age* that talked about Parkhill Primary School being made up of portable classrooms. I thought maybe, just maybe, that it was Parkhill. Alas it was not. It might have been Seaford Park Primary School, and I congratulate the member who is responsible for that school.

I have said it many times in this chamber since the election, and I will say it many more: we need money for Parkhill Primary School. We need money for the redevelopment of the school. We need \$5 million for that school. We need the government to fulfil the promise it made to the people of Burwood at the election when it talked about rebuilding the school. It has to get on with the job and build it. I say to the government: put the money in the budget. The people of Burwood need it and deserve it. The government should get on with the job of governing.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015, the first budget of this Labor government and my first budget as a proud Labor MP. I will try not to get as excited as the member for Burwood, although I am. My Greek heritage normally causes me to get quite excited, but I will keep quite restrained.

When someone wins the Australian Open or the Masters Golf Tournament or achieves something like that, sometimes we turn around and say, 'That was an overnight success. That was incredible. How did that happen? Where did they come from? Who are they?'. It is worth reflecting on how we got to where we are in terms of this budget. It depends how far back you want to go, but this journey started at least four and half years ago, when the last Labor government lost office. It regrouped around the now Premier as Leader of the Opposition. Neither Labor nor the opposition is well known for regrouping and having solidarity in opposition, but Labor did just that four and a half years ago. It regrouped around a new leader. It went out into

the community and consulted thoroughly in different policy areas.

We did not develop policies in a vacuum. I cannot claim credit for that as I was not preselected at that stage, but I want to commend the leadership of those MPs who regrouped so successfully after the loss of the Brumby government in 2010. They went into the community and consulted — the leader, the shadow ministers and all the members. They had a program called Labor Listens, and Labor did indeed listen.

During the 2014 election campaign, at train stations, shopping centres and front doors, people said to me, ‘You guys are coming out with policies every day’. During the last couple of months of the campaign announcements were coming three or four times a day, and it was hard to keep up. But they were not policies on the run. Those policies were developed methodically over four years of listening to the community. In the run-up to the election our policy agenda resonated because it had come from the community. That is what happens when you have a grassroots party. I wanted to start with the story of that journey and to reflect on and commend the leadership of the Premier, both before the election and in the last 150 days or so as Premier.

It is important to start with some economic fundamentals. They have been covered before, but I want them on the record against my name in my contribution to this debate. We have projected surpluses over the forward estimates of \$5.8 billion over four years. That is higher not than what the previous government said it would do but what it actually did. We are maintaining our AAA credit rating, as Labor did for 11 successive years under Premiers Brumby and Bracks. That is what modern Labor in Victoria is about — getting the economic fundamentals secure so we can deliver the social policy agenda we have. The macro-economics of this budget include a projected fall in the unemployment rate from the 13-year high under the previous government. The previous government inherited unemployment from the Brumby government of 4.8 per cent and took it at least 2 per cent higher to 6.8 per cent. This is a strong modern Labor budget. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier, the Minister for Finance and the entire cabinet for putting it together.

When I was out campaigning people would say to me, ‘What does Labor stand for?’. I would specifically name four key things: employment, education, health and transport. That is where we have spent our resources in this budget. As other speakers have said, we are investing \$3.3 billion in education. This is the highest funding allocated for education in the history of the Victorian Parliament. There is \$688 million for new

and upgraded schools; \$325 million to renovate and refurbish 67 overcrowded or run-down schools; \$50 million for kindergartens, including \$9 million for kids with special needs and disabilities; and \$300 million for the TAFE sector, which was gutted under the previous government.

We are delivering a massive health funding boost. Labor is known as the party for health, despite the federal government pulling the levers the other way. There is a \$2.1 billion investment in health, with \$560 million to build and rebuild hospitals, a \$60 million blitz on elective surgeries and \$118 million in mental health support.

Despite what the member for Burwood said — and perhaps, as the member for Essendon said, he did not turn the page — there is a clear jobs agenda which is partly focused on infrastructure but also focused on our picking the key six industries for growth under the \$200 million Future Industries Fund and the Premier’s task force. We want those industries to yield new jobs, and our commitment to 100 000 new jobs comes on the back of a very good record. In the 11 years of the Bracks and Brumby governments, 25 times more jobs were created than the Baillieu and Napthine governments created.

The fourth area is transport. There will be a massive investment in transport over the next four years, with \$1.5 billion to genuinely start the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. In my part of the world there is the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail line project, with investments in removing nine level crossings, upgrading four railway stations and upgrading signalling technology. These investments will see a 41 per cent increase in public transport funding compared with previous budgets under the former government. There will also be a massive investment in outer suburban and country roads.

Just to even out the discussion, it is not just about building things — although that is a huge focus of this budget. There is also a clear social policy agenda in this budget. It has been said — although when the findings are provided in 12 months time it will be clearer — that the royal commission into family violence will be a fundamental and a watershed moment for this state. The royal commission is probably one of the biggest social policy agenda items we have seen for a long time. I am really proud to be part of a government that shepherded that in. I plan, with my community, to put a submission in to that royal commission.

We have a Minister for Equality — the first ever Minister for Equality under any government in

Australia and potentially the world. And we have a Premier who marched in the gay pride march in St Kilda — the first Premier ever to march. We also have the Safe Schools Coalition. The Premier's language is clear around equality: it is not negotiable.

We have the ice task force and the funds to come up with community responses to the ice epidemic. We have the 10-year mental health strategy. We have the requirement of accountability to the Victorian Parliament around mental health services through an annual report to the Parliament. We have the social cohesion money announced as part of the budget to help to make some inroads into determining why some young people are becoming radicalised. We often forget about this until terrorism raids and those kinds of events hit the headlines, but it is a social issue that we can visibly improve.

We have invested in reforming the processes of this chamber through changes to the sessional orders to get rid of the anachronistic Dorothy Dixers — although, as the Minister for Racing said, I did have the honour of asking the last one. Instead we now have what we clearly call ministers statements. Ministers have 2 minutes to talk about how good they are, but at least it is not a pretence at an answer to a question. It is a genuine 2-minute statement from a minister.

Then there are the puppy farms. We have a whole range of social policy agendas, and we have the Premier on the record as saying many times that he wants this state to play a key role in the national agenda of this country in a whole range of different areas, not just to be a passenger in national debates.

In relation to my community, I have mentioned the level crossing removals. Like many other members, I doorknocked thousands of people before the election, and without question the no. 1 issue in Murrumbeena and Carnegie was the removal of level crossings. Level crossings in Murrumbeena and Carnegie have been ranked at the top of the RACV list of level crossings that need to be removed for a couple of years in a row. I am pleased that I can turn around now and say they will be completed — not just started, but completed — by the end of this term of government.

In addition to that, there is a commitment to purchase 37 new trains, 50 per cent of which will be produced in Victoria, which again contributes to our jobs plan by having them produced locally. There is a commitment to increase capacity on the Cranbourne-Pakenham rail line by 42 per cent. I was also pleased to have been with the vice-chancellor of Monash University, Margaret Gardner, the now Premier and the now

Minister for Public Transport prior to the election at the announcement of the creation of the \$7.6 million Huntingdale bus interchange. Every day some 6000 students and others make the dangerous trek across Huntingdale Road on the cusp of a bend to catch a bus. I am surprised there have not been more accidents.

In terms of health, I was pleased to tweet last night — that is the modern form of communication — that \$3.8 million has been allocated for a new helipad at the Monash Children's hospital; \$7.1 million for infrastructure for the Monash Medical Centre in Clayton; \$16.2 million for Moorabbin Hospital, which is in the electorate of my colleague the member for Bentleigh, for MRI and CAT facilities and for consulting suites; and \$50 million to kickstart the heart hospital at the Monash Medical Centre.

People told me before I got into politics that if you are not in a marginal seat, you may not get much — but this government has changed the model. In education, I was pleased to inform the principal of Amsleigh Park Primary School that in the first year we will deliver \$5.7 million for the rebuild of that school, as we promised not only in 2014 but also four years earlier in 2010. We could not deliver, however, because we were not in government. I was also pleased to inform Glen Eira College, a very good school, that \$950 000 has been allocated to kick off its rebuild. I completely disagree with the projection of the member for Caulfield that we will not deliver on that commitment. We have to start with planning. We have to start with a design and incur architectural costs, and that is exactly what we are doing in this context.

Obviously I would say this because I have a vested interest, but it is clear from this budget and from the journey over the last four years that not only did the Victorian community get it right on 29 November, but the Victorian Labor Party got it right in terms of the work it did to put together a policy agenda which resonated with the community on a whole range of levels around capital, around social policy and around output. I want to read out a couple of quotes that show the wide acclaim for this government's first budget. As we would expect, the business community, as represented by the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), looks at any Labor budgets with some suspicion, but it has said this about the budget:

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.

...

With a strong focus on jobs, the budget funds the Back to Work scheme and establishes the Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel. It also supports new industries and new jobs through the establishment of the Future Industries Fund, along with separate funding for new energy jobs.

That is not a press release from the Premier's office, nor is it something I wrote. That comes from the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

We would probably expect that the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) would be a more friendly critic. In a press release of 5 May it said:

Today's budget is a good start and a positive first step for the Victorian government in delivering on key election promises aimed at supporting vulnerable Victorian families. We look forward to continuing to work with the government so that future budgets build further on this, supporting people to overcome disadvantage and become part of strong, cohesive, self-reliant communities, and working to build a Victoria without poverty.

That is straight from VCOSS — no pressure was applied. No internal press release or speaking notes were provided. This was an independent assessment by a key stakeholder in Victorian society.

I know this has all been about self-congratulation on the government side, but I think it is well deserved. I also think it is less about self-congratulation and more about communicating to the Victorian community through the media and through this chamber the opportunities revealed in this budget, the commitments we have made and how they are being delivered. We owe the community at least that report card.

I look forward to reading the quotes from press releases issued by VECCI and VCOSS on the fourth budget to be handed down by this government. If the Premier's passion and focus is anything to go by, they will be equally as supportive of the fourth and final annual budget of this government as they have been of the first year's budget. In a sense that will be our test as a government.

It has given me great pleasure to speak on my first budget bill as a member of Parliament. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2015–2016) Bill 2015. This is a nasty and deeply unfair budget. I do not like to reinforce a divide between rural and regional areas and the city. That does not benefit anyone and only serves to disadvantage both city and country people, but when you look at this budget, that is exactly what it does — it draws a deep divide between city and country. Labor

has absolutely abandoned the country with this budget. It has sent a very clear message to regional Victoria that if you live beyond the tram tracks, you do not matter.

By almost every financial and economic indicator, Victoria is now in a worse position under this government. You just have to look at the headline numbers. State taxes are up \$1.1 billion, more than \$4 billion has been lost from the surplus in just six months and the surplus is now being propped up by federal government grants. This government has taken a healthy budget position, which was the legacy of its two former Treasurers, and it has turned it into a structural deficit, all within the space of six months.

Not only that, this government does not even have a commitment or a plan to reduce net debt. Infrastructure spending across the state has fallen by \$1.6 billion since Labor came to office. You have to wonder what the government has been doing. As to the east–west link contract cancellation, Labor does not even know its full cost. We know it will cost at least \$640 million, but what do the budget papers say? They say 'unquantifiable at this time'. The government does not even know how much ripping up the east–west link contract is going to cost this state. You would have to think, given the reaction from business groups in the state, that it will be years before we know the real cost to the state and the damage to our international reputation.

The budget also predicts high unemployment for a longer time, and that is a very serious concern for young people and families across my electorate. Yesterday a man from my electorate contacted me with concerns about the welfare of his two sons. They are both aged in their 20s and are well educated and well qualified. One is an engineer and the other is a town planner. Despite applying for hundreds of jobs in the last few months, they have been unemployed for seven months. The man said that as a parent he worried about the mindset of kids not being able to get settled into their first job. This budget offers no hope to those young men. In fact, major cuts to local government infrastructure and local government funding in this budget means that local government will contract. It will be pulling in projects, not starting new infrastructure projects, and that has destroyed a lot of employment opportunities at a local level, particularly for these two young men.

For regional and rural Victoria the budget is a terrible story. The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) summed up the situation very well when it said:

Rural Victoria has not got its fair share for this year's state budget ...

As you work through the budget it becomes clear metropolitan Melbourne has gained more than 90 per cent of the infrastructure spend ...

Further, Peter Tuohy, the VFF president, is reported in today's *Stock and Land* as saying:

This week's state budget was overwhelmingly disappointing for farmers and regional Victorians.

Labor has cut funding streams put in place by the coalition government that were crucial to regional Victoria — for example, the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund. Labor claimed in the house this week that its Regional Infrastructure Development Fund is its equal, but it is not even a pale imitation. For the benefit of members in the house, particularly the member for Melton, I will go through some of the projects funded by the Regional Growth Fund in my electorate.

In the shire of Strathbogie we have the Australian National Show and Shine — Euroa, which was funded to the tune of \$15 000. Other funding was as follows: the Avenel Recreation Reserve, stage 1 redevelopment, \$300 000; the Euroa Community Conference and Function Centre, \$90 000; the Euroa Travellers and RV Comfort Stop, \$300 000; Euroa Memorial Park redevelopment, \$150 000; and the Black Caviar statue in Nagambie, which has become an attraction for travellers across the state, \$50 000.

In Benalla there was \$150 000 to attract businesses to the Enterprise Park development; Ryan & McNulty Sawmillers, that excellent timber firm in Benalla, received \$100 000 to expand their business and employ new people; there was \$237 000 to refurbish the Benalla Performing Arts Centre; and there was \$300 000 for the Winton Motor Raceway infrastructure development. The Girgarre Development Group received \$22 000, and there was \$390 000 to build community facilities in Rushworth. In the shire of Mitchell, \$243 000 was made available for the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk in Seymour; \$100 000 was provided for the expansion of the Valley Park Farm in Seymour; and there was \$140 000 for the Kilmore town centre revitalisation project. They are but some of the projects funded across the Euroa electorate by the Regional Growth Fund.

That funding stream was additional to core government expenditure. What has this government done? It has taken money that was left in the Regional Growth Fund and used it as a substitute for core government funding. It is trying to deceive people in rural and regional Victoria. In addition the government has cut the \$160 million country roads and bridges program, the local government infrastructure program. The regional

living expo, which was welcomed by councils in my area, and I am told had 11 000 people go through it last week, was a program that was beginning to make a real difference to country communities, and yet in budget paper 5 we see that that program has now been cut. I am told that in fact there were no Labor members there other than the minister who opened the expo on the weekend. I am very pleased that there was strong representation from coalition members.

The country football netball program was a great program. Many communities across my electorate benefited from that program, and their members would like to be able to still access that program. At Broadford, for example, they need new lights. The Seymour Football Netball Club is a fantastic club, but its facilities are desperately in need of an upgrade.

The Energy for the Regions program, which funded the extension of natural gas to Heathcote, was a fantastic program. Many other communities across my electorate need to be able to access that program — for example, the communities of Nagambie and Avenel are two that would desperately like to see the extension of natural gas.

We have discovered that the fire services levy is also being increased. What another slap in the face for regional communities. Labor opposed the coalition's efforts to reform the fire services levy. Coalition members had to drag Labor members there kicking and screaming. Now that all the hard work has been done and finally there is fairness again in rural and regional areas, with people no longer paying that levy through their insurance premiums, Labor is just jacking up the costs for rural and regional Victoria. Worse than that, last week we had Labor MPs going around northern Victoria reannouncing fire station projects that had already been announced by the coalition — because there was nothing in this week's budget for them to actually announce and to own. So those opposite are jacking up the fire services levy, and at the same time they are finding coalition projects to reannounce because they have nothing else to talk about.

This is a terrible budget for the Euroa electorate. Over the past four weeks I have been around my electorate holding listening posts and round table talks. I have had many conversations, both formal and informal, with my constituents to find out what their priorities were for the state budget. They gave me a very clear list of priorities, which I sent to the Premier and the Treasurer. I am very disappointed to say that none of those items are reflected in this week's budget.

As I have mentioned, country roads were one of the greatest concerns of people in the conversations I had with them. Labor's decision to axe the country roads and bridges program will have a terrible impact on regional communities, and it will hit small councils very hard, particularly councils such as Strathbogie, which has 507 bridges and culverts that it has to maintain. That burden will fall back onto rural and regional ratepayers. It will also stop agricultural exports getting to port, and it will have very serious consequences in the event of an emergency. There are now concerns that fire trucks in rural and regional Victoria will not be able to cross some bridges because they will have load limits applied to them. We have also discovered that the government has slashed the road maintenance budget by 10 per cent. Can the government insult rural and regional Victoria anymore?

Both Benalla and Seymour colleges have real occupational health and safety issues, and neither of them received any funding in the budget. Last week the member for Ferntree Gully, in his capacity as shadow Minister for Education, visited those schools with me. I again extend an invitation to the minister to visit those schools. When he comes — if he comes — he will meet passionate teaching staff and parents at both those schools, but he will also see a classroom at Benalla P-12 College which is absolutely riddled with mould.

Mr Nardella interjected.

Ms RYAN — Despite the best endeavours of the school to clean it, the classroom has now been sealed off completely. The member for Melton will be very interested to hear that the school has built a tunnel covered in black plastic that goes through the classroom so that the students can access the school's darkroom. The coalition committed \$15 million to those two schools, and they have received zero from Labor.

Some of the other projects include the Rushworth hospital, which is at serious bushfire risk. The coalition committed \$7 million for that, and there is not a cent from Labor. There is not a cent for health or education projects across my electorate. There are no new trains for the north-eastern and Shepparton rail lines. There were 21 new V/Locity carriages announced with great fanfare, and all of them are going to Geelong. There is no funding for the Nagambie ambulance.

Ms Allan interjected.

Ms RYAN — The member for Bendigo West is saying they are not going to Geelong, so the budget papers are clearly wrong.

Ms Edwards interjected.

Ms Allan interjected.

Ms RYAN — In the time I have remaining, I would like to touch quickly on my shadow portfolios. In my role as the shadow minister for young Victorians and the shadow minister for training, skills and apprenticeships, I would like to outline how the budget will impact upon students and young people. The Minister for Training and Skills would have people believe he is a white knight riding in to rescue TAFE and the training system, which Labor would have people believe is crumbling. Yet the budget papers quite clearly show that Labor does not intend to train one more student — not one more student.

In the outputs in budget paper 3 members can see that the government is intending to train 443 687 students, which quite surprisingly is exactly the same figure as in the 2014 training market report, a report absolutely decried as a failure of the training system just two months ago when the minister released it. Now, despite putting \$320 million into TAFE, he does not intend to train one more student — not one.

Not only that, but the minister intends to cut government-subsidised places for young people by almost 80 000. The participation rate for people aged between 15 and 24 is clearly shown as 22.5 per cent. That is absolutely astounding. It is all a sham. Labor plans to cut places for young people. It is so uncertain about its own plan for the training system that it will not even back itself and it will not set a higher target. That target, for the information of the house, is actually 100 000 more places than there were when Labor was last in office.

In conclusion, this is a terrible budget. It is a terrible budget not just for young people but for regional Victoria. I grieve for country communities. It is going to be a very, very long road for them over the next four years. The budget bears all the hallmarks of the Brumby government.

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

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

STATE TAXATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Statement of compatibility

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, (the 'charter'), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2015.

In my opinion, the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2015, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview

The bill makes a number of technical amendments to Victoria's taxation laws. Relevantly, in addition, the bill gives effect to two budget measures designed to improve housing affordability, by making local house buyers more competitive against foreign purchasers of residential land. A land duty surcharge will be payable by a foreign purchaser on the transfer of residential property. A surcharge will also be payable on taxable land in Victoria by an 'absentee owner'.

The bill amends the Duties Act 2000 to apply a surcharge on the transfer of residential property in Victoria to foreign purchasers. For this purpose, a 'foreign purchaser' is defined to denote a foreign corporation, a foreign trust or a foreign natural person, being a person other than an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia (which includes a New Zealand citizen). The foreign purchaser duty surcharge may also be imposed at any point in time after land is bought, where the intended use of that land changes to that designed and constructed for residential purposes or may lawfully be used as a place of residence.

To support the imposition of a surcharge where a relevant change of use occurs, the foreign purchaser will be obliged to notify the commissioner of such a change. Failure to pay the surcharge in accordance with these provisions will result in a tax default, for which penalty and interest may be imposed under part 5 of the Taxation Administration Act 1997.

The bill also amends the Land Tax Act 2005 to introduce a surcharge on the taxable land of an absentee owner. An absentee owner is defined to include a person other than an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia (which includes a New Zealand citizen), who does not ordinarily reside in Australia and is either absent from Australia on 31 December immediately preceding the tax year or is absent from Australia for more than six months in the year prior to the year of assessment, for which land tax relates.

As the commissioner's ability to impose the surcharge depends on him being informed of the circumstances giving rise to this liability, an owner will be required to notify the commissioner if they become an 'absentee owner' as defined in this bill. Failure to do so will constitute a notification default, for which penalty tax can be imposed under the Taxation Administration Act 1997.

The bill also amends the provisions governing the offsets that can be made when a taxpayer receives a refund under the Taxation Administration Act 1997. The amendments increase the range of circumstances in which a refund can be used to offset another liability. Where a further tax liability is likely to arise within 60 days, the bill permits the commissioner, with the taxpayer's written consent, to apply some or all of the refund to that future liability. If, however, the liability does not become payable within 60 days, or the taxpayer withdraws consent, the offset is not authorised and the amount of the overpayment must be refunded to the taxpayer.

Human rights issues

Recognition and equality before the law

Section 8(3) of the charter provides that every person is equal before the law and is entitled to the equal protection of the law without discrimination. Discrimination, under section 6 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, includes discrimination on the basis of race, which is defined to include differentiation based on a person's nationality or national origin.

The bill provides that foreign purchasers will be liable to a surcharge on the transfer of residential property in Victoria or on the acquisition of a relevant interest in certain landholders that hold residential property in Victoria. A foreign person may be a company, a trust or a natural person. A foreign natural person is defined as being a person other than an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia (which includes a New Zealand citizen).

Similarly, the land tax surcharge introduced by the bill draws on the criteria relating to a person's nationality. An absentee owner is defined as a person other than an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia (which includes a New Zealand citizen), who does not ordinarily reside in Australia and is either absent from Australia on 31 December immediately preceding the tax year or is absent from Australia for more than six months in the year prior to the year of assessment, for which land tax relates.

The right to recognition and equality before the law is engaged by provisions that define a foreign purchaser as liable for the duty surcharge and includes criteria relating to nationality in establishing liability for the land tax surcharge. To the extent that the bill differentiates between taxpayers' liability on the basis of a person's nationality, it limits a person's right to recognition and equality based on the person's race.

This differentiation is central to the purpose of the proposed measures. It reflects the purpose of the surcharges, which is to increase the entry cost of foreign purchasers in the Victorian residential housing market and to place an additional holding cost on speculative absentee landowners. These measures assist in balancing housing affordability to ensure that a larger number of local homebuyers are able to remain competitive in the market.

There is a direct relationship between the limitation and the public purpose of improving the affordability of housing in Victoria. The contributions to state revenue made through the surcharges will flow through to the Victorian economy.

The bill establishes the legislative framework for the imposition of surcharges. By providing a legislative framework under the bill, the limitation is consistent with

section 75 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, which provides that a person may discriminate if the discrimination is necessary to comply with an act or enactment.

I am satisfied that there is no less restrictive means available and I consider the limitation on section 8 of the charter to be reasonable in the circumstances.

Freedom of movement

Section 12 of the charter provides that every person lawfully in Victoria has the right to move freely within Victoria and to enter and leave it and has the freedom to choose where to live.

The bill places an obligation on landowners to notify the commissioner if they are an absentee owner (as defined in the legislation) to enable any applicable surcharge to be assessed. While this notification requirement does not directly limit a person's freedom of movement, the imposition of a tax surcharge on an absence could be regarded as having an effect on the full exercise of that freedom. To the extent that the obligation to notify the commissioner may affect a person's decision regarding an absence from Australia, this provision may limit a person's freedom of movement.

The imposition of a land tax surcharge on an absentee owner is a key element of the government's affordable housing strategy. I regard this obligation on an absentee owner to pay the surcharge to be a reasonable limitation on the taxpayer's ability to move freely, and the related notification requirement is necessary to ensure that correct information is received to allow for the efficient administration of taxes by the commissioner.

Freedom of expression

Section 15(2) of the charter protects the right to freedom of expression. This is the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds whether within or outside of Victoria, and in any form. Freedom of expression is also the freedom from being compelled to say certain things or provide certain information.

To the extent that the bill introduces notification requirements in respect of circumstances that trigger liability for a duty or land tax surcharge, it limits the right to freedom of expression. The purpose of requiring a person to provide information is to ensure that the correct amount of duty or land tax is assessed. The limitation is directly related to the purpose, which is to ensure that each person is correctly assessed for land tax, or duty, as applicable. Accordingly, the limitation plays an important role in maintaining the equity between taxpayers and protecting the public revenue. As the circumstances relevant to a taxpayer's liability for the surcharge are exclusively in the taxpayer's possession, there are no other means reasonably available to achieve this purpose.

I therefore consider the limitation on section 15 of the charter to be reasonable in the circumstances.

Right to privacy and reputation

Section 13 of the charter provides that a person has the right not to have his or her family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with.

To the extent that the bill establishes obligations on a foreign person or absentee owner to notify the State Revenue Office of circumstances that trigger their liability for a surcharge,

these provisions engage the right to privacy. As noted above, the obligation to make a notification is necessary to ensure the commissioner is in a position to make timely and accurate assessments of duty and land tax. The obligation to provide the commissioner with the requisite details is therefore a necessary limitation on the right to privacy, imposed to protect the public revenue and provide an equitable basis for the calculation of tax liabilities.

The commissioner currently collects various amounts of information for the purpose of administering the taxation laws. In addition to the protection afforded to personal information by the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014, the confidentiality of information obtained under and for the taxation laws is protected by the secrecy provisions in the Taxation Administration Act 1997. These prohibit the disclosure of information collected by the commissioner except for specified purposes or recipients. The additional information required for the purpose of administering the new provisions of the bill will be governed by this existing framework.

I consider the limitation on section 8 of the charter to be reasonable in the circumstances.

Right to property

Under section 20 of the charter a person must not be deprived of his or her property other than in accordance with law.

Provision for the imposition of a surcharge payable by a foreign purchaser or an absent land owner engages the right to property. However, the administration of the surcharges will be conducted in accordance with the Victorian taxation laws. Where a duty surcharge liability arises after the acquisition has been assessed, the commissioner may make a fresh assessment on the purchaser under the Taxation Administration Act 1997. The Taxation Administration Act 1997 sets out the commissioner's powers and obligations, establishes taxpayers' rights of review of tax decisions and provides a framework to protect the confidentiality of tax related information.

While the surcharges engage a person's right to residential property, by imposing a tax consequence for the acquisition or ownership of that property in certain circumstances, I see this limitation as necessary to give effect to the public policy of improving the affordability of residential property in Victoria.

The bill also amends the Taxation Administration Act 1997 to enable the commissioner, with the consent of the taxpayer, to allocate amounts of money overpaid to a future liability of that taxpayer arising in the next 60 days. To the extent that this amendment provides the legislative authority to retain an amount payable to the taxpayer for a period of time, it may be regarded as engaging the taxpayer's property rights. However, as this arrangement is only permitted with the taxpayer's written consent, and can only be made within 60 days of the refund entitlement arising, I believe the provision for future offsets does not in fact limit the taxpayer's property rights.

Tim Pallas, MP
Treasurer

Second reading

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Speech as follows incorporated into *Hansard* under sessional orders:

This State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2015 makes amendments to the Duties Act 2000 (Duties Act), the Land Tax Act 2005 (Land Tax Act) and the Taxation Administration Act 1997 (TAA).

The Victorian government recognises that housing affordability is an increasing problem for homebuyers, including first home buyers. For some segments of the market, prices have moved out of reasonable reach. That is why the Victorian government is committed to improving housing affordability for Victorian families and through the measures contained in this bill, will place Victorians in a more competitive position in the housing market.

Recent data suggests that between 10 to 20 per cent of new properties are bought by foreign buyers, putting pressure on supply and keeping many Victorian families out of the market. At the same time, Victoria has experienced an increase in non-resident ownership of Victorian real estate, which equally results in distortions to the housing market.

Importantly, while local families have contributed significantly to the funding of government services and infrastructure through state and commonwealth taxes, foreign investors and absentee landowners do not contribute equivalently like those living and working here do. Foreign purchasers and absentee landowners are mostly investors who enjoy capital growth from their investments, adding to their own personal wealth. Yet it is the same services and infrastructure generally paid for by Victorian families over many years that supports capital growth for these investors.

Therefore, the Victorian government is introducing a 3 per cent stamp duty surcharge on the purchase or acquisition of residential property in Victoria (either directly or indirectly) by a foreign purchaser from 1 July 2015. This surcharge will tackle the distortions created by increasing foreign ownership of Victorian real estate. At the same time, the government is introducing a 0.5 per cent land tax surcharge on land owned by absentees, to apply from 1 January 2016. This surcharge will address the distortions created by increasing non-resident ownership of Victorian real estate. These surcharges will apply to foreign purchasers and landowners, which will include corporations and trusts, as well as natural persons. Existing duty and land tax exemptions will apply to foreign purchasers and landowners. In addition, appropriate exemptions will apply to ensure relevant Australian-based corporations and trusts are not unintentionally caught.

These taxation measures are appropriate to assist in adjusting the increasing inequity in the local housing market and in order to promote a fairer tax system. Combined, these represent equity measures designed to reduce the barriers to home ownership that many Victorian families face.

This government also recognises that small business in this state faces various pressures. Victoria's small businesses are a vital part of our economy. Over 500 000 small businesses provide employment for Victorians, often in high skilled, high

wage jobs. Through this bill, the government will begin to support small businesses with measures to reduce the costs of running a small business, making it easier for small businesses to compete and provide greater access to the public sector market. From 1 July, all vehicles classified as mobile plant or plant-based special purpose vehicles will be exempt from Motor Vehicle Duty on the registration or transfer of registration of those vehicles. The types of vehicles that this stamp duty exemption will apply to include backhoes, excavators, bulldozers, headers, scrapers and tractors. Providing this exemption from stamp duty for mobile plant and plant-based special purpose vehicles has the potential to decrease the excess burden for business inputs.

This bill also makes amendments to the landholder duty provisions in the Duties Act. The proposed amendments will ensure the technical operation of the Duties Act does not disqualify a person from accessing concessional landholder duty treatment that is intended to apply on a relevant acquisition in a listed entity and removes the potential for transactions to be structured to take advantage of a loophole in the definition of 'private company' to avoid the payment of landholder duty.

Under the landholder regime, an acquisition of an interest of 90 per cent or more in a listed company or listed trust is subject to landholder duty at a concessional rate of 10 per cent of the standard rate of duty. The definition of 'listed company' and 'listed trust' requires that all of the entities' shares or units to be quoted on a recognised stock exchange. Shares and units are currently defined to include 'a right' to shares or units. As a result, any person making a relevant acquisition in a listed entity that has also issued unquoted securities is not technically entitled to benefit from the higher acquisition threshold, or the reduced rate of duty, that applies to acquisitions in listed entities. This is despite that the main class of securities, which carry winding up entitlements are quoted on a relevant exchange. This is an unintended consequence of the current definition of 'shares' and 'units' in the Duties Act.

The State Revenue Office's (SRO) administrative practice is to treat an entity that has issued unlisted securities as a listed company or listed trust as long as the main class of securities, which carry winding-up entitlements, are listed on a relevant exchange. The proposed amendment will give effect to the current administrative practice and ensure the technical operation of the Duties Act does not disqualify a person from accessing concessional landholder duty treatment that is intended to apply on a relevant acquisition in a listed entity.

Also under the landholder duty regime an acquisition of 50 per cent or more in a private landholder company is subject to duty. In contrast to a 'listed company', a 'private company' is defined as a corporation that is not listed on a relevant exchange and whose shares are not quoted on a relevant exchange. A current anomaly exists in the Duties Act where a landholder company may not fall within either the definition of 'listed company' or 'private company' because the corporation's shares are listed on a relevant exchange, but are not quoted. This can result in an otherwise dutiable acquisition to be technically deemed not subject to landholder duty. Accordingly, the proposed amendment will extend the definition of 'private company' to expressly include these entities. This will remove the potential for transactions to be structured to take advantage of a loophole and provide greater certainty to practitioners and taxpayers in applying the Duties Act.

One of the functions of taxation bills is to correct minor technical defects in taxation laws, and keep the taxation laws up to date by removing references to obsolete or redundant legislation. This program of technical amendments benefits Victorians by making taxation laws easier to read and understand, and ensures that these laws continue to operate as intended. Accordingly, this bill provides for a number of technical amendments to be made to the Duties Act. Two of these will apply retrospectively and include an amendment to rectify an incorrect reference to a section of the Social Security Act 1991 (cth) in defining an eligible pensioner for the purposes of the pensioner exemption and concession from duty to include a person issued with a 'Seniors Health Card' under that act. This provision is intended to be made retrospective to 1 July 2011, which was the date the incorrect legislative reference was inserted into the Duties Act.

Another amendment this bill makes is to rectify an incorrect reference to the National Insurance Act 1953 (cth) in defining medical benefits insurance (private health insurance) for the purposes of an exemption from insurance duty. The term is currently defined by reference to entities registered under the National Insurance Act 1953 (cth), however, this act has been replaced by the Private Health Insurance Act 2007 (cth). This provision is intended to be made retrospective to 1 July 2007, when the Private Health Insurance Act 2007 (cth) commenced.

In each case, the SRO has been applying the law in accordance with its intended operation to ensure that taxpayers were not disadvantaged by the technical defects in the legislation. The retrospective operation of these amendments will give legal effect to the duty exemptions and/or concessions provided under these provisions.

Minor technical amendments are also being made to the motor vehicle duty exemption for primary producer vehicles. Over time a number of definitions that relate to 'primary producer vehicles' in the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 have been updated. As a result, the definitions and references to certain primary production vehicles currently contained in the Duties Act are outdated. This amendment will align the relevant definitions to ensure that consistency of application across the Duties Act and the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 continues.

This bill also makes minor amendments to the TAA in order to streamline administration and reduce red tape for taxpayers, by extending the circumstances in which a refund of tax can be offset against another revenue liability. The TAA allows the SRO to offset a tax refund against an existing tax debt or First Home Owner Grant liability. The offset function helps to protect the revenue by preventing payments to taxpayers that have existing debts. It also reduces administrative costs to the government and taxpayers by limiting unnecessary transactions.

The amendments in this bill propose to extend the circumstances in which the SRO can offset to allow an amount of tax which is payable to a taxpayer after a successful objection, review or appeal to be offset against an existing tax or First Home Owner Grant debt, and a refund to be offset against a future tax liability, if the taxpayer consents in writing, within 60 days of the refund becoming payable. The proposed amendments are consistent with the existing policy for offsetting tax debts to streamline payments and protect the revenue, and are already in place in most other states and territories.

The measures enacted by this bill will improve the operation of Victoria's taxation laws. In line with government policy, these amendments will help to maintain the integrity and sustainability of the taxation system, and limit the burden of government regulation on taxpayers.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern).

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 21 May.

APPROPRIATION (2015–2016) BILL 2015

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr PALLAS (Treasurer).

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — After the last contribution that was made on this bill by the member for Euroa, all I can say is: bring back Bill Sykes! After the four long, dark years of the Liberal-Nationals coalition government when nothing occurred in Victoria, other than the unemployment rate going from 4.8 per cent to 6.8 per cent and debt going up and doubling, we now have a budget that means Victoria will again become the best place in Australia to live, work and raise a family. That is what the Labor Party and the Labor philosophy is all about. It is about putting Victoria first. It is not about Prime Minister Tony Abbott, not about the Liberal-Nationals coalition government in Canberra, not about putting down people and taking away their opportunities and not about taking away services from children within Victoria. It is about making Victoria great again; it is about making Victoria the best place to live, work and raise a family.

We hear tripe from the members on the other side of the house, and we even hear the Greens saying that this is a bad budget. The last speaker, the member for Euroa from The Nationals, said that this is the worst budget for country Victorians. It was really interesting when I heard the contribution by the Greens member for Melbourne — I might be examined on this later — but I think in 15 minutes she talked about Melbourne for about 1 minute. She talked about her own seat for a very short period of time. She talked about Yallourn and Anglesea; she talked about climate change and how we were doing nothing in this budget; she talked about homelessness and a whole range of other things; but she did not really talk about her own seat. Then she spoke about things overseas, but the real issues are about our families, our kids, our schools, our hospitals and hospital beds, our ambulance officers and treating them properly and our fireys and treating them properly, and

she did not have anything to say about those issues. There is not one word about the repair that we have had to put in place through this budget because of the four long, dark, wasted years of — what was it? — the Baillieu and then the Napthine governments.

Let me talk about the member for South-West Coast. — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NARDELLA — The Shaw government; yes, it was in there somewhere. It was just a mess.

But I return to the member for South-West Coast, and I want to know why he is still in this place, in the ejector seat. What is he doing? Is he waiting for Maxwell Smart to come along and press the button so that he ejects out of this place? I know the reason why he is still here. Journalists have been asking me, ‘What is it, Don? Why is the member for South-West Coast still in this place?’. In recent memory whenever we have had a Premier or a Deputy Premier lose an election, they have gone. There was former Premier Bracks who left; former Deputy Premier John Thwaites left and was replaced; former Premier Jeff Kennett left; and when former Deputy Premier Pat McNamara lost, he left and we took his seat in Benalla. Why is the member for South-West Coast still here? I will tell members a secret: he is still here because he covets the leadership position. He wants the leadership position.

Mr Katos — On a point of order, Speaker, while I often find the contributions of the member for Melton entertaining, the leadership of the Liberal Party or any party, or whether anyone in this place stays or goes, has nothing to do with the appropriation bill, and I ask you to bring the member back to the bill.

Mr NARDELLA — On the point of order, Speaker, there are very few debates within this place, other than the grievance, the appropriation bill and the address-in-reply debates, that are very broad. This debate is a very broad debate, and in terms of referring to other honourable members, because it is a conjoint debate with the parliamentary appropriations bill, it is appropriate that I raise matters in terms of members in this house, in terms of by-elections or in terms of other matters that I have been talking about.

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

Mr NARDELLA — I see the member for Malvern in operation. He works the backbench. I see him talking to members of the backbench. He is in the house for every debate, and he is here because he thinks he was

duded by Robert Doyle — does anyone remember ‘Hold onto your hats’ Robbie Doyle? — when he took over the leadership in 2002. That was a great decision by the Liberal Party! He was duded because then followed the two and a half years of the do-nothing Baillieu government, and then he had to take over the reins and he was duded because they lost. That is why he is here with his other colleagues. They do not want to cause a by-election either and incur expenses to this Parliament. Even though we have got the departure lounge over there, they are all concerned that if they go to a by-election, they will lose.

Let me tell the house a bit of history. One of the things you find with the Liberal Party or The Nationals oppositions in this state is that they are pretty lazy. You just have to look at the questions over the last couple of days to see that they cannot even read the appropriation papers. They do not understand that when you are going to put something out for tender or start to construct something, you have to have some money there for planning and design of the first stages of it, but then it turns into the tender process, and the tender process will bring in what the final amount is. That is why those amounts of money are in contingencies. Those opposite are extremely lazy because they do not want to understand the process that needs to be undertaken. They have no understanding that if a figure in the budget is, say, \$500 million for a road, then obviously the tenderers are going to go to \$500 million-plus because that is what the budget is telling them to do.

We have a lazy opposition, the Liberal Party and The Nationals, that wants to dud the Victorian people. They have done it consistently. Remember the side letter? We have had opposition members talk about our budget credibility. We had a Treasurer in the last government that left a contingent liability of \$339 million, which the Victorian taxpayers forked out and which was wasted and thrown against the wall.

Mr M. O’Brien interjected.

Mr NARDELLA — Not after we came into office; not after November. It was suggested that they do it on 5 December, but the honourable member for Malvern made the consortium take the \$339 million before the election to make sure that the people of Victoria were disadvantaged, because he knew that he was going to lose, and he was going to punish — and he is still punishing — the people of Victoria. It has cost the people of Victoria \$339 million that could have gone into schools, into hospitals and into the services that people in Victoria need. But no, the member for Malvern stood up against the wall and piddled it out, bit

by bit, \$339 million — and he wants to lead the Liberal Party. He wants to replace the present Leader of the Liberal Party, the current Leader of the Opposition, and yet his credibility is shot.

Imagine if we brought to this house a budget where we said, ‘We have a project that is going to cost \$6.9 billion for 6 kilometres of tunnel’.

Mr M. O’Brien — 6.8.

Mr NARDELLA — \$6.8 billion. I stand corrected by the honourable member for Malvern. What did we find in the contract? I ask the member for Malvern: what was it in the contract?

Mr M. O’Brien — It was 6.8.

Mr NARDELLA — He cannot even lie straight now. It was \$10.9 billion in the contract. It is only \$4 billion!

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr NARDELLA — And they hid it, that is correct. The honourable member for Eltham said they tried to hide it, and they did — until we exposed their economic incompetence. How can you not only can give away \$339 million for nothing whatsoever but then have exposed within the contract in black and white that there is another \$4 billion — a \$10.8 billion project that was supposed to be \$6.7 billion? How could you do this?

How could you do this and still have the gall to sit in the seat opposite and profess to be the shadow Treasurer? Let me say: may he remain the shadow Treasurer for a long time to come! Given the figures and the decisions that were taken by the last government which disadvantaged Victorians and put them behind the eight ball at every opportunity, may he remain the shadow Treasurer for a long time to come!

We I will be judged in Melton on this budget. It provides \$5 million for the first stage of the Bacchus Marsh Secondary College. It provides for four new maternity hospital beds for the Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital. That is just fantastic and will cater for the delivery of an additional 700 babies. There is \$200 million for the new maternity hospital at Sunshine. We are putting more police on the beat, because we are getting them away from having to babysit. Can you imagine, Speaker, that the responsible government of the last four dark years had police officers sitting down and babysitting prisoners instead of having protective services officers and others doing

that job? We are getting those police officers out on the beat.

The final thing I want to talk about is the Royal Commission into Family Violence. I commend the honourable member for Northcote, who is the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, and the government on this initiative. It is an extremely important issue, and I await the outcome of that royal commission.

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

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — It is with great sadness that I rise to speak about an appalling budget delivered by the current government. It has absolutely failed at every post. We heard that there was going to be a big jobs plan for the future delivered by this government. That was correct; the government has delivered on jobs. In fact there is a 7 per cent increase in the public sector. But you cannot rely on jobs in the public sector to deliver an economic outcome for this state. Ultimately we need business growth and business investment and to ensure that people have a job they can be proud of and get up for each day.

We have seen at every post this government receive an absolute shellacking. Infrastructure investment is down by \$6.4 billion over four years. We have spoken a lot in this Parliament about shovel-ready projects, and there is nothing shovel ready when it comes to this government. We heard from the shadow Treasurer that Darwin has more shovel-ready projects than we have in Victoria, which is an absolute disgrace. When you talk to members of the business community, they do not know where to turn when it comes to the vision and direction of this government. There was an east–west link project all ready to go that was going to provide jobs and infrastructure, and over \$640 million was ripped out and handed back with not a dollar to be seen in value from it. This is where the business community has lost and will continue to lose confidence in this government. We need to do what we can to ensure that this state is ultimately protected from complete closure by this government.

The decision to declare the two public holidays that have already been announced is incomprehensible, particularly given that we would have a grand final public holiday with there having been no consultation with the AFL. You would think that if you were going to create a public holiday for the AFL, you would speak to the AFL and make sure it was on board. In fact, you have the AFL running around trying to find another place to hold the parade because the city is going to be

closed for business. Unfortunately that is the vision we are seeing from this government.

As we have said, we are happy to be having a road, rail and port discussion. However, it is just a discussion from the government's point of view, particularly when you consider the metrolink proposal and the concerns around where that may be sited. Firstly, there is the lack of funding. Secondly, if the government does get around to building the metrolink, what will that do to Swanston Street? I have had conversations with a number of businesses and real estate agents in Swanston Street. It is fair to say that a number of those retailers are already finding it tough, but if you close the city for three or four years and expect those businesses to hang around until there is an upswing in business, then you are absolutely dreaming. It means that we are holding those businesses in contempt and shows no regard for them as businesses.

Looking specifically at my electorate, I mentioned earlier today that the only secondary school in my electorate, Glen Eira College, was promised \$9.5 million in the budget — and this has been talked about. In fact the college was one of the first schools the Labor Party put forward before the election. It had plans already drawn up and ready to go. It showed the plans to the media, and the *Caulfield Glen Eira Leader* published an exclusive story on it. It was on the front page. We have seen delivery of only 10 per cent of the promised amount, \$950 000, with the rest being in contingencies — that is, it is on a basis of maybe, possibly or if everything goes all right down the track.

The government has been talking a lot about side letters, and today an interesting side letter was written from the government to Glen Eira College. Because the government could not guarantee the funding in its budget, a member for Southern Metropolitan Region in the upper house, Mr Dalidakis, wrote a side letter to the school and said, 'Don't worry. Trust me. It'll be coming'. Seriously, Acting Speaker, let us consider all the schools that have been promised funding and all those Labor-held seats that have now been promised funding.

In the Bentleigh electorate, funding for McKinnon Secondary College and Bentleigh Secondary College was announced after Glen Eira College. Those schools are benefiting substantially from the budget, and so they should, as they are great schools. However, Glen Eira College is falling down and is in desperate need of maintenance works. Both parties stood up and said it needed the money, and Labor has failed on this front.

Let me tell you that I will be holding the government to account. I will be out every day at that school, and I will make sure that the balance of the money that is not in this budget will be delivered. It will be delivered. I am sure that Sheereen Kindler, the principal of Glen Eira College, along with the president of the council, the parents and the rest of the community will be waiting for the money.

There are a number of other items that I wanted to mention, one of which is the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre. This is a great place. The former government made a commitment of \$500 000 to fund the extension of that facility. That funding has not been forthcoming in the current budget, and I would urge the government to consider this matter. It has \$25 million allowed for a social cohesion fund; I cannot think of a better way to educate people than to take them through the Holocaust centre. I say this in a truly bipartisan manner: if I can work with the government to ensure that the Holocaust centre receives that funding, then I think we will all be in a better place for it. I also wanted to commend the fact that the government has provided \$500 000 for Beth Weizmann for the wall. It is a very important security measure, and I congratulate the government on doing that.

I will return now to some of the portfolio areas that I am responsible for. I will start with innovation. The Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, Adem Somyurek, is responsible for innovation. I started looking at the budget to see what elements of innovation the minister would be responsible for. I wanted to discover what things he will now have to look after. Unfortunately there have not been many changes in this area, because a lot of the portfolio responsibilities have been taken away from him. Things like ICT, which was a very important area under our government, as well as research, which is also a very important area, have been taken away and added to the health portfolio. ICT now falls under the Department of Premier and Cabinet. A lot of the areas of film and gaming — important areas in the innovation space — have been taken away and given to the Minister for Creative Industries. So what we have seen is that in a lot of these important innovation areas the responsibility has not been given to the innovation minister.

I am not sure what the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade will be doing for the next four years; I look forward to seeing what he will be doing. Hopefully with the next budget the government might give him a few dollars and a bit of responsibility to do something. There is something called the Future Industries Fund, which has a \$200 million allocation. I

am not sure whether the minister is responsible for this or not, but it does smell quite like the Victorian Economic Development Corporation of the past, where the government will be sitting on a panel and determining what is a winner, what is not a winner, what should be funded and what should not be funded. I hope that the Joan Kirner fund of the past is hopefully not a current one — —

Mr McGuire — You are factually wrong!

Mr SOUTHWICK — The member for Broadmeadows, who is interjecting and carrying on, would not know what was going on, even if someone actually stood up and told him so.

Let us hope that we are actually trying to grow jobs and grow innovation in this state. We should be ensuring that we are getting business investment. We should not have the government picking winners or having the bureaucrats picking winners in terms of the great innovation opportunities in our state.

I will turn now to energy and resources. Labor has reduced spending in the area of energy and resources in the 2015–16 budget by \$700 000, from \$154.8 million to \$154.1 million. With things growing, the population increasing and there being people in desperate need of energy supply we have seen a decrease in funding from the government. What we have seen in this budget is a discussion about renewables. The opposition is certainly prepared to talk about renewables to ensure that we have a good discussion about renewable energy in our state. What the government has done is propose a great grand plan around renewables with a \$20 million fund.

Let me remind the newbies among the government members that when we were in government we delivered one solar project of \$45 million. It was also funded by another \$45 million from the federal government. It cost \$90 million for one project. I do not know what \$20 million is going to get the government, but it is not going to get the government a lot of renewables, let me tell you. There will not be a lot of renewable energy coming from the government. There will be a lot of talk and probably a lot of pork-barrelling for certain areas and little projects that might be spun off in Labor-held seats, but it is not a fair dinkum go at renewable energy. I am sure that even the Greens would agree with me that Labor Party members are not fair dinkum when they talk about renewables. It is all a bit of lip-service; \$20 million will not go very far if you are serious about renewables. This money will not go far at all in the area of renewables.

I also wish to draw attention to the Victorian energy efficiency target (VEET) while we are on the topic of renewables and energy. The government has put together \$1.9 million for a second review of the Victorian energy efficiency target. It has already been reviewed, and the review said that all the low-hanging fruit that was there had been taken up; people had taken up what they could in terms of lighting and all the other schemes that were in place. The report said that nothing further would really be available out there and that the money should be sent somewhere else. The big ticket items would be coming from federal money, but the state should get involved in something else. But guess what? We are having another review. Taxpayers are paying for another review, brought to you by the Labor Party. So we have another inquiry, another 'look into it', another talkfest, brought to you by the Labor Party.

If we are serious about this, we should be looking at all consumers. We should be looking at those who have been hard done by in terms of energy bills. We should be looking at those people who experience hardship in paying their energy bills. Those people cannot take up some of these VEET schemes or afford them with a 50 per cent subsidy. They cannot afford a \$2000 investment to get their lighting and their panels on board; they just cannot afford that. The people who actually need the energy subsidies at the moment are not being looked after by the Labor Party. If you think the Labor Party is a party that looks after workers, you will find that it is not doing it in this area at all.

I wish to finish on a particular area that relates to my electorate — level crossings. Level crossings were one of the big-ticket items of Labor. It claimed it would remove 50 level crossings, which is a \$5 billion to \$6 billion project. This is a big commitment, and I know many people in my electorate were very keen to see it happen. What we see here is a \$3 million investment from the government, which will not even buy it one level crossing removal, and no other funding beyond the 2015–16 period.

What we have seen is Blackburn, Burke Road, Glen Iris, St Albans and Ormond — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — Order! The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has expired, and I am required to interrupt business.

CRIMES AMENDMENT (REPEAL OF SECTION 19A) BILL 2015*Second reading***Debate resumed from 5 May; motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015***Second reading***Debate resumed from 6 May; motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read second time.****SENTENCING AMENDMENT (CORRECTION OF SENTENCING ERROR) BILL 2015***Second reading***Debate resumed from 6 May; motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read second time.****REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA AMENDMENT (JOBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE) BILL 2015***Second reading***Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read second time.****Business interrupted under sessional orders.****ADJOURNMENT****The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Ward) — Order!**
The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Macalister irrigation district**Mr D. O'BRIEN** (Gippsland South) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. I want to raise the issue of the Macalister irrigation district (MID) 2030 project and invite the minister to come and visit this district in the very near future.

This is a matter I have raised with the minister before, and I acknowledge that I have received correspondence from her responding to the invitation and saying that she will be pleased to visit in future. However, this is an important project and one that I believe she should come and see soon, particularly given the failure of the government to commit any funding to the MID 2030 project in this week's budget.

The next phase of the MID 2030 project is the Southern Tinamba pipeline, phase 1B. This is a particularly important part of the project. Overall, the MID produces about \$500 million worth of economic activity every year. Phase 1B would add another \$45 million to the local economy and save about 10 000 megalitres of additional water. The coalition government provided funding of \$16 million for phase 1A, a project that saved about 12 000 megalitres of water.

This is water that is effectively liquid gold in our region. It represents economic growth. It contributes to more water to be used on farms and therefore greater productivity. It creates jobs and boosts the economy in our local region. It also has an environmental benefit, which I am sure the minister would appreciate, in delivering reduced nutrients and run-off into the Gippsland Lakes.

It is important that the minister come and see this project soon and indeed that the government fund it soon, because I believe there are prospects to also attract funding from the commonwealth government. In February the commonwealth provided \$60 million to a number of irrigation projects in Tasmania that were co-funded by the state government of Tasmania. I think the opportunity to attract commonwealth funding in the federal budget coming up next week has been lost in the short term because the state has not made a contribution. However, I encourage the minister to come and see for herself this important irrigation district, the biggest in southern Victoria and one that is growing strongly, particularly with the growth in horticulture, vegetables and salad vegetables in the MID.

I again ask the minister to come and visit. Ideally I would like her to come with a cheque to support this project, although I know it has not been funded in this week's budget. However, I believe that if the minister were to come and have a look at the MID — she could bring the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development with her — she would understand what a good project this is and ensure that the government funds it.

Huntingdale bus interchange

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is that the minister visit the Huntingdale train station at the earliest opportunity to investigate the site for the new Huntingdale bus interchange and associated car park works. It is absolutely fantastic to see the Huntingdale bus interchange funded in the Victorian budget this year. This is great news for those who use the interchange to access Monash University and the wider community.

As the minister is aware, building the Huntingdale bus interchange was a commitment made by the Labor Party last year. We have a long-term interest in this issue as it was originally a proposal by the previous Labor government in 2010. I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by Ms Ann Barker, the former member for Oakleigh, in relation to this

project. However, we saw no action and no commitment during the last term of the Liberal government.

Following Labor's announcement last year, the local Liberal candidate confirmed that the coalition would not build the bus interchange and called it a reckless commitment by Labor. That was a remarkable statement from a member of the Liberal Party, because the current situation at Huntingdale is nothing short of appalling. Over 6000 people catch a bus from Huntingdale every day, many of whom are students and staff travelling to Monash University. These commuters are currently forced to cross a busy road and wait on a footpath in a makeshift bus stop with limited lighting and shelter. This is incredibly unsafe and unworkable for such a vast numbers of commuters.

The plan to create a state-of-the art bus interchange at Huntingdale is very welcome. Providing a safe undercover environment for the thousands of commuters every day is exactly what we need to be doing. As the now Premier said last year:

Monash Clayton is growing, and Labor's plan will make it safer and easier for staff and students to commute.

This isn't just a gateway for Monash University but a gateway for the entire south-east.

Huntingdale is a terrific area, but it does need support to become modernised. Local businesses and the community will be the big winners from an investment there. Residents have told me time and again that making the Huntingdale area more vibrant, safe and accessible is terribly important. I know this bus interchange will make a big difference, not only for commuters but also for the many locals who use this station when catching trains and buses.

Point Nepean Road, Dromana

Mr DIXON (Nepean) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding the need for a pedestrian refuge on Point Nepean Road, Dromana. The action I seek is for the minister to fund the final one of the 10 planned pedestrian refuges on Point Nepean Road between Dromana and Sorrento. Nine pedestrian refuges have been installed, and they are located in Sorrento, Blairgowrie, Rye, Tootgarook and Dromana. The final one to be installed on Point Nepean Road, Dromana, will be near the corner of Permien Street and will provide a safe crossing on a very busy road from the residential and shopping side of the highway to the beach.

It does not matter what time of the year it is, the area is always busy. Obviously in summer, when we have

traffic counts in the tens of thousands along the road, it is very important to ensure that people can cross safely. At least with a refuge in place people can get halfway and then negotiate the second half of the highway, taking advantage of any traffic light pauses. Obviously on the Mornington Peninsula, especially in summer, there are young families with children in tow going to the beach, but all year round there are many elderly people, as Nepean has the oldest age profile of any electorate in the state. A lot of the senior citizens who live on the Mornington Peninsula like to walk on the beach and use the bay trail there, and they certainly require the safety of a pedestrian refuge as they cross the road.

It is a very important aspect in any beachside community that people have access to the beach, whether it be for walking or swimming, depending on the season, as well as fishing. As I said, 9 of the 10 planned refuges have been installed, and I do not think it is a lot to ask that the 10th and final one be completed. I ask the minister to find the funding for that very important project for the benefit of the people of Dromana and visitors to the area.

Taylor's–Kings roads, Delahey

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) — My adjournment matter today is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek relates to the commencement of works on the Taylor's Road–Kings Road intersection located in my electorate of Kororoit. I was pleased that yesterday, after four years of neglect under the former government, the Andrews Labor government committed \$6.1 million for the upgrade of the Taylor's Road–Kings Road intersection in the 2015–16 state budget.

I welcome the funding, which is part of the outer metropolitan congestion relief program and sees this dangerous roundabout at Taylor's Road and Kings Road in Delahey fitted with traffic lights. The roundabout is one of Melbourne's most congested intersections, and it was ranked seventh in the 2014 RACV Redspot survey. Due to congestion on the roundabout, drivers often show risky behaviour as they look for gaps in the traffic to enter the roundabout. This upgrade will improve traffic capacity and flow on Taylor's Road and Kings Road, allow for safer traffic movement in the intersection and ensure better pedestrian and cyclist safety. I now ask the minister to outline the time line for the start of this project so that I can inform the community when this much-needed infrastructure project will begin.

Chandler Highway bridge

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it concerns the duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge. The action I seek from the minister is a detailed traffic management plan and indeed a project management plan for this vitally important piece of infrastructure that crosses the river between the seats of Northcote and Kew.

We all know the Chandler Highway bridge is a shocking traffic bottleneck, which obviously has impacts the whole way down Princess, Power and Denmark streets into Hawthorn. I appreciate that it is a key north–south linkage across the river through the seat of Northcote and into the seat of Kew, but given the complexity of the site, given the presence of Guide Dogs Victoria and the Amcor site, and given the level of traffic congestion in and around Princess Street and around Kew Junction itself, with the on and off-ramps of the Eastern Freeway, it is vital to have a traffic management plan to illustrate to residents on both sides of the river how this important project will be constructed. I fear that any construction will create great traffic congestion, particularly in 2016–17, when the vast majority of the funds that have been set out in the budget will be used and the project itself will be constructed.

Might I add that the project was promised to begin immediately, as per a June 2014 media release, but unfortunately that is not the case. That is just a fact. But we obviously welcome the construction of the bridge as an important way of alleviating a traffic bottleneck that has plagued that area of Melbourne for decades. I am pleased to see that the bridge itself will be retained, as it is an important heritage bridge that was designed by Sir John Monash, and it was, for a time, a railway connection for the outer circle railway line as it existed at the time. You would be interested to know, Deputy Speaker, that up until the 1920s the Kew railway station existed on what is now a VicRoads site, which I believe could well be shifted to Ballarat, but that is another issue.

In conclusion, I implore the government to come up with a traffic management plan and a construction management plan, to show where exactly the bridge will be placed. I understand VicRoads has a number of project options, which I am very keen to see so that I can inform my constituents, as they will have to plan for what will obviously be a fairly difficult time as that bridge is constructed.

Rolling stock strategy

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, who is in the chamber tonight, and the action I seek is for the minister to update me on how the Victorian rolling stock strategy will benefit rolling stock manufacturers in my electorate of Wendouree. The Andrews Labor government will invest \$2 billion to kickstart a long-term plan for train and tram manufacturing in Victoria, securing existing jobs in the industry but also creating new jobs. This week the Premier and the Minister for Public Transport launched the *Trains, Trams, Jobs 2015–2025 — Victorian Rolling Stock Strategy*, which sets out our 10-year plan for 100 new metropolitan trains, 100 new trams and a massive expansion of our regional train fleet.

Ballarat is one of Victoria's most important rolling stock manufacturing centres, particularly with local manufacturer Alstom producing more than 50 of the X'trapolis trains operating on Melbourne's train network. Alstom has a really proud history of providing the highest quality product and is always on time or before time. The workforce is incredibly skilled and very proud of what it produces. The unions — namely, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and the Electrical Trades Union — work hard representing their members, and I want to thank the local delegates for their commitment to their workplace and also to their community. Management too is very involved in the community and has always had its door open to me. I thank the management team for its commitment to keeping the Ballarat workshops open for business.

Alstom also uses a whole lot of local services and local companies, and keeping them strong in Ballarat is important, not only for Alstom and its workforce but also for all the local suppliers that it uses. I respectfully request that the Minister for Public Transport inform me about how our strong and important rolling stock strategy and the pipeline of work that we are proposing will particularly benefit manufacturers in my electorate of Wendouree.

Beach Road, Sandringham

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action that I seek is that the minister visit the Sandringham electorate to apprise himself of a number of road and transport issues in the electorate. Beach Road is one of the great cycling thoroughfares of the world, with a high volume of cyclists commuting along it on a recreational basis and

as part of racing groups. The interface between cyclists and motor vehicles has been a matter of some community debate over a long period of time.

Between 2006 and 2010 the previous Labor government put forward a proposal for there to be a number of road safety interventions along Beach Road, subject to a number of conditions being agreed to by the City of Bayside. The rides that take place along Beach Road have taken a number of different forms. One takes off at 6 of a morning and travels down beyond Frankston towards Mornington. I understand it then turns back. The size of the peloton involved in this ride is reasonably significant. A number of community concerns have been raised in relation to this and whether it can be better regulated. Victoria Police has also done a great job in monitoring matters and trying to ensure that there is a level of compliance so different road user groups can have the benefit of the road without significant impediment.

Recreational cycling is sometimes described as the new golf, and it can have a great impact on individual fitness. Unfortunately there can be adverse consequences if people are knocked off their bikes, and there have been incidents of dooring. I make the comment in passing that the implementation of clearways along Beach Road between 6.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays has improved safety outcomes and certainly removed the rear-ending of stationary vehicles by bicycle riders. Conversely, with that clearway there had been an increase in a number of accidents, more specifically at the clock tower at Black Rock, but VicRoads has recently introduced some modifications in that precinct.

The action I seek is for the minister to visit the Sandringham electorate early one weekend morning and apprise himself directly of the range of issues. We could also look at some port infrastructure along the Sandringham coastline.

Pascoe Vale bus services

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — I appreciate the opportunity to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is that the minister take local concerns into consideration when reviewing bus routes in the Pascoe Vale district.

Currently the 542 bus route terminates at Pascoe Vale station, located at the western end of Gaffney Street. Much redevelopment is occurring along Gaffney Street in Pascoe Vale and Coburg North, including the development of the new Coburg North village precinct. The new development will relocate the Pascoe Vale

Coles supermarket from its current location on the corner of Cumberland Road and Gaffney Street to a new location on the corner of Sussex Street and Gaffney Street, approximately 850 metres down the road. Along with the Batman train station and the thriving new Batman Market, this is a relatively new and exciting precinct that includes a Bunnings store and a homemaker centre.

Some of the local residents, particularly the elderly, are deeply concerned about the moving of the Coles supermarket and the distance from the new precinct to the other end of Gaffney Street as it may affect their access to the new facilities. Many of the area's elderly residents currently walk to the supermarket to do their shopping. The combination of their physical limitations and the absence of public transport along Gaffney Street means that many local residents will be unable to access the new Coles supermarket precinct via foot or public transport. It is important that alternative public transport arrangements be provided for those local residents.

A possible solution is to extend the 542 bus route approximately 3 kilometres east along Gaffney Street, terminating at Batman train station instead of Pascoe Vale train station. After dropping commuters off at the Pascoe Vale station, the 542 would travel east, connecting local residents with the new Coburg North shopping precinct, the Bunnings store and homemaker centre and the Batman Market and Batman train station. The extension of the 542 bus route would have significant benefits for local residents and commuters, connecting them to train stations, shopping precincts and markets. In recent years the 542 route has also ceased stopping at Oak Park train station, leaving many locals at a disadvantage and leaving many local traders without this clientele stopping in their district. A key requirement for bus routes is that they connect commuters to alternative forms of public transport. I ask that the minister take these issues into consideration when reviewing local bus routes.

School religious instruction funding

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for the minister to seek support for special religious instruction programs by assisting the United Jewish Education Board, which provides Jewish education to students in government schools, with funding to aid its development of curriculum and resources and to clarify the ministerial directive to ensure that all principals give students the opportunity to participate.

Before the last Victorian election in 2014, the Victorian coalition had committed funding of \$300 000 over five years to aid the development of the board's curriculum and resources. The Victorian coalition remains committed to supporting the special religious instruction program and understands how important these classes are to many of the families who support them. The Victorian coalition understands the importance of freedom of religion and of giving kids the best education possible. Our approach to education has always been about choice for every Victorian student. The work of the United Jewish Education Board team, including executive director Marlo Newton and president Yossi Goldfarb, is crucial to delivering choice through special religious instruction. The board continues to provide families with the opportunity for their children to have quality instruction in the Jewish religion and culture.

I understand that the minister has met with the board, has seen the great work it does and values that work. However, an article in the latest *Jewish News* headed 'Class dismissed', states that yet another non-Jewish school has cancelled Jewish education, meaning that a total of about 700 Jewish students — close to 50 per cent — attending Victorian government schools are not able to receive this education. The United Jewish Education Board has been around since 1895. It is one of the oldest Jewish institutions, providing valuable work for these children. It is important that its work continue. Recently Caulfield Junior College and the Elsternwick, Murrumbeena, Carnegie and Valkstone primary schools have cancelled their special religious instruction programs, resulting in these 700 Jewish students not being able to receive this education.

Last year I met with the schools and with the former minister to clarify the ministerial direction and to ensure that the programs could continue. I would value any work the minister can do to help these children receive this education. It is a very important initiative. The board does a fantastic amount of work. The materials it needs to develop to ensure that it can at least provide cultural programs in some of the schools are expensive. The \$300 000 we committed might be a good start to help the board continue with the great work it does. I ask the minister for his assistance.

Doreen community and family services hub

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Families and Children, who is also the Minister for Youth Affairs. The action I seek is that the minister provide the community of Doreen with detail about the Andrews government's commitment of \$1.6 million for the

rollout of a brand-new community and family services hub at Ashley Park in Doreen. In particular the community would like to know the expected time lines, including when funding will be provided, where the planning and design is up to and how the local government body, being the City of Whittlesea, is placed to build this important community asset.

The government's commitment will support the construction of a one-stop shop for young families in the growing northern suburbs, with kindergarten services, maternal and child health services, early intervention services and meeting rooms for parent support groups, playgroups and other child and family services. I note that there was \$50 million set aside in the budget for this purpose, so I am delighted that the Ashley Park centre will benefit from that funding.

Labor in government has a proud record of developing these community hubs. Under the then Minister for Children, Sherryl Garbutt, I was pleased to be part of the development and delivery of one of the first of these in Mill Park Lakes. That was way back in 2005, I believe. Some 10 years on these programs have gone nationwide. The federal government made them an important part of its commitment to a minimum of 15 hours of early childhood education a week for all children. The previous state government unwisely got rid of this funding program for children's hubs, but a couple of years later it miraculously brought it back. It accepted delivery of a lot of funding from federal Labor and rolled out hubs, making a lot of claims that it had funded them rather than federal Labor. I hope the opposition has now seen the error of its ways and would never again cancel funding for this important program.

The minister, who was present at the recent opening of the Jindi Family and Community Centre, would be aware of the incredible growth in the population of Melbourne's north. There are around 65 babies born every week in the city of Whittlesea, particularly in the 3754 postcode. Demographic modelling shows that one of the largest age groups is zero to four. Doreen and Mernda have been very well supported in this budget, with investment in the Mernda rail extension, Mernda police station and Mernda central P-12 school, and I look forward to another important investment in the Ashley Park community hub.

Responses

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I thank the member for Caulfield for raising the matter of the United Jewish Education Board (UJEB) and the important role it plays not only in terms of the delivery

of special religious instruction (SRI) in schools but also in engaging with Jewish families whose children go to government schools. It supports not only the delivery of SRI but also before and after-school programs. It plays a very important role in our government school system.

Broadly, in terms of SRI, both this government and the former government have a position that parental consent is important when it comes to the participation of children in special religious instruction. As the member would know, under the ministerial order established by the previous government it is up to principals to determine whether they have the resources to deliver the program. As the member said, I did meet with Yossi Goldfarb and Marlo Newton to get a really good briefing on the work that UJEB does, and I will be engaging with UJEB over the course of the next few months.

Faith is an important part of our society. It should not be completely removed from the education of our children. It is an important feature of life on this globe. It is important that children have an understanding of the world, where faith plays an important role. As the member would know, these are very sensitive issues. There are people with quite passionate views across the spectrum. There are those who say there is no role at all for SRI within the government school system, and there are organisations such as UJEB that play a frontline role in delivering SRI and other programs. I have been engaging in a respectful way with everybody, but I do want to acknowledge the work that UJEB does.

I gave a commitment to Yossi and Marlo that I would continue to work with them in terms of SRI and the broader role UJEB plays in ensuring that Jewish families whose children go to government schools have access to language, such as the fantastic Hebrew language program at Glen Eira College, and in terms of Jewish traditions more broadly. They took me through the numbers of Jewish children at both the primary and secondary levels whose parents have chosen to enrol them in the government system. The number of such students is increasing quite substantially. This is an important area of public policy. I thank the member for raising it with me tonight. As he acknowledged, I have engaged with UJEB and will continue to do so.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — The member for Oakleigh raised a matter with me regarding Huntingdale train station. Before those opposite get a bit excited, the member for Oakleigh has apologised to me for having to head off to a prearranged meeting, but he is very much looking forward to seeing the answer that I will provide. I thank him for his advocacy for this bus interchange. It was absolutely appropriate that he

also acknowledged the strong work on this project by the previous member for Oakleigh, a good friend of ours, Ann Barker.

This project is part of the \$100 million, confirmed in this week's state budget, committed by the Andrews Labor government for bus upgrades around the state. We recognise that bus services play a vital role in the delivery of public transport services. They are very much the local part of the public transport system, providing services to streets and suburbs across Melbourne and Victoria.

The Huntingdale bus interchange is a project that will be part of the gateway for Monash University's Clayton campus. I met a few weeks ago with the vice-chancellor of Monash University, Professor Margaret Gardner, to talk about this project and express my appreciation for the cooperation and work that the university has done with Public Transport Victoria and my office. This is an interchange that will provide a safer station precinct. It will provide better movement for buses, cars and pedestrians, particularly the large numbers of students, staff and visitors who go in and out of Monash University every single day. I look forward to taking up the member for Oakleigh's offer of visiting Huntingdale train station, and I will continue to work with him as he delivers this important project for his local community.

While we are on the theme of buses, the member for Pascoe Vale also raised the matter of buses, and this is not the first time she has raised bus issues with me on behalf of her local community. She also continues that fine tradition of representation in the electorate of Pascoe Vale. The member for Pascoe Vale was concerned about bus services that are provided to her local community, in particular route 542, and has asked that a review be undertaken of those bus services. I am pleased to advise the member for Pascoe Vale that we need to undertake a review of bus services to make sure that we continuously look at ways of improving bus services and pick up local intelligence. I will instruct Public Transport Victoria to ensure that her community is engaged, and that she is fully engaged, in the considerations of better bus options within the Pascoe Vale electorate.

Turning to trains, the member for Wendouree has raised a matter with me regarding the ongoing support for the rolling stock industry. My goodness me, is she not a powerful advocate for the rolling stock industry in her electorate. She is dogged in her support of the industry, and she has been vital in seeing the Andrews Labor government, firstly, commit to significant investments in rolling stock while in opposition and,

secondly, make sure we absolutely deliver on those commitments in government. It was a great day a couple of months ago when the Premier, the members for Wendouree and Buninyong and I were together at Alstom announcing that the Andrews Labor government was going to purchase an additional five X'trapolis trains and secure the workforce in Ballarat.

This week's budget also provides for more trains to be manufactured here in Victoria — 37 high-capacity trains and 21 regional V/Locity trains, all with the local content provision that will make sure that they are built in Victoria. The rolling stock industry in Victoria supports around 10 000 jobs, and we understand that where we have an opportunity to invest in better public transport services we can also invest in creating and supporting jobs right here in Victoria, and that is what we will do. That is absolutely what we will do and will continue to do. I thank the member for her ongoing strong and powerful support for the industry and the workforce in her electorate.

Finally, the members for Nepean, Kororoit, Kew and Sandringham raised matters for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

The member for Gippsland South raised a matter for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.

The member for Yan Yean raised a matter for the Minister for Families and Children and Minister for Youth Affairs.

Those matters will be referred to those ministers for their attention and action.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 5.36 p.m. until Tuesday, 26 May.