

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Thursday, 10 November 2016

(Extract from book 15)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

HANSARD¹⁵⁰



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(to 9 November 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, and Minister for Emergency Services (from 10 June 2016) [Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation 10 June to 20 June 2016]	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	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 Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for International Education and Minister for Corrections	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 Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment, and Minister for Resources	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 Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms G. A. Tierney, MLC

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Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary.....	Ms M. Thomas, 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, Mr McGuire, 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 — 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 ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ⁵	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
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard ³	Polwarth	LP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁶	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 Fumeaux	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 Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ Elected 14 March 2015

⁵ Elected 31 October 2015

⁶ Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Ms D’Ambrosio, Mr Morris, 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 Nardella and Ms Ryall. (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmr and Mr Melhem.

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2016

DOCUMENTS.....	4375
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
<i>Adjournment</i>	4375
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Pearcedale Primary School</i>	4375
<i>Western suburbs roads</i>	4375
<i>Remembrance Day</i>	4376, 4377
<i>SPC Ardmona</i>	4376
<i>Bright Rod Run</i>	4376
<i>Altona electorate roads</i>	4376
<i>Alamanda K-9 College</i>	4376
<i>Seabrook Primary School</i>	4376
<i>Baby welcome</i>	4377
<i>Hungarian uprising anniversary</i>	4377
<i>Knox City Basketball Club</i>	4377
<i>Regency Park Primary School</i>	4377
<i>Eastern suburbs roads</i>	4377
<i>Helene Cameron</i>	4377
<i>Drysdale Soccer Club</i>	4377
<i>Government performance</i>	4378
<i>Williamstown North Primary School</i>	4378
<i>Begging legislation</i>	4378
<i>Premiers' Reading Challenge</i>	4378
<i>The Voice Gippsland</i>	4379
<i>Sir Herbert Hyland commemorative dinner</i>	4379
<i>Donald Trump</i>	4379
<i>United States presidential election</i>	4379, 4381
<i>Torquay-Jan Juc Neighbourhood Watch</i>	4380
<i>Highton law and order forum</i>	4380
<i>My Cancer Care Record</i>	4380
<i>Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute</i>	4380
<i>Bend of Islands</i>	4380
<i>Eildon Boat Club</i>	4381
<i>Alan McPhate</i>	4381
<i>Broadmeadows</i>	4381
<i>Jude Donahoo</i>	4382
<i>Former Minister for Training and Skills</i>	4382
<i>Local government elections</i>	4382
HOUSING AMENDMENT (VICTORIAN HOUSING REGISTER AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	4382, 4401, 4440
<i>Third reading</i>	4440
MINISTRY.....	4391
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Former Minister for Training and Skills</i>	4391, 4392
<i>Ministers statements: whooping cough</i>	4392
<i>Hazelwood power station</i>	4392, 4393
<i>Ministers statements: family violence</i>	4393
<i>Latrobe Valley employment</i>	4393, 4395
<i>Ministers statements: government financial management</i>	4396
<i>Parole reform</i>	4396
<i>Ministers statements: unconventional gas</i>	4397
<i>Metropolitan Remand Centre</i>	4397, 4398
<i>Ministers statements: western suburbs roads</i>	4399
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>Ferntree Gully electorate</i>	4399
<i>Broadmeadows electorate</i>	4400
<i>Morwell electorate</i>	4400
<i>Eltham electorate</i>	4400
<i>Caulfield electorate</i>	4400
<i>Essendon electorate</i>	4401
<i>Shepparton electorate</i>	4401
<i>Pascoe Vale electorate</i>	4401
<i>Kew electorate</i>	4401
<i>Macedon electorate</i>	4401
ROAD LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	4409
<i>Consideration in detail</i>	4430
<i>Third reading</i>	4432
TRANSPORT INTEGRATION AMENDMENT (HEAD, TRANSPORT FOR VICTORIA AND OTHER GOVERNANCE REFORMS) BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	4432
<i>Consideration in detail</i>	4432
<i>Third reading</i>	4439
COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	4439
<i>Circulated amendments</i>	4439
<i>Third reading</i>	4440
WORKING WITH CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	4440
<i>Third reading</i>	4440
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Barwon Heads Road duplication</i>	4440
<i>Gerry Green Reserve, Parkdale</i>	4441
<i>Phoebe Hansdjuk coronial inquest</i>	4441
<i>Fawkner police resources</i>	4442
<i>Camberwell and Surrey Hills gas supply</i>	4442
<i>Carnum Downs youth engagement</i>	4442
<i>Police numbers</i>	4443
<i>Broadmeadows</i>	4443
<i>Apollo Bay tourism</i>	4444
<i>East Keilor Leisure Centre</i>	4444
<i>Responses</i>	4445

Thursday, 10 November 2016

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

Mr T. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, I understand the government was intending to move a motion this morning to congratulate Hillary Clinton on her victory. I just wonder whether it intends to move a motion to congratulate the President-elect of the United States, Donald Trump.

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

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Audit Act 1994 — Performance Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, November 2016

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency — Report 2015–16

Financial Management Act 1994:

2016–17 Quarterly Financial Report for the State of Victoria for the period ended 30 September 2016

Report from the Minister for Agriculture that she had received the Report 2015–16 of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Industry Development Committee, together with an explanation for the delay

Health Practitioner National Law (Victoria) Act 2009 — Report 2015–16 of the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Operation Ross: An investigation into police conduct in the Ballarat Police Service Area — Ordered to be published.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

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

That the house, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 22 November 2016.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Pearcedale Primary School

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — On 18 October I joined Brooke Skilton and many other Pearcedale

Primary School parents and students to call on the Andrews government to install 40-kilometres-an-hour flashing speed signs around Pearcedale Primary School. While at the school I was presented with 500 petitions signed by concerned parents and community members calling for the urgent installation of the flashing signs at Baxter-Tooradin Road.

The installation of flashing 40-kilometres-an-hour signs around schools has been roundly acclaimed by road safety experts and school communities as being a very effective program for improving road safety around Victorian school precincts. Pearcedale Primary has a current student enrolment of 730 students, and parents have become increasingly concerned about the high number and speed of vehicles passing within metres of the school property. Cars and children are never a good mix, and while reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres is no guarantee, it will give drivers and our children a better chance of seeing and avoiding each other.

Even though the Pearcedale Primary School satisfies the same criteria used to fund the installation of flashing 40-kilometres-an-hour speed signs at hundreds of schools around the state, including the Baxter Primary School, located on exactly the same road and less than 6 kilometres away, the government refused to provide funding to install the signs in Pearcedale. I have contacted both relevant ministers, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the Minister for Education, on several occasions. Their responses have been that the policy to install flashing speed signs around schools was the program of a previous government, that all the funding had been expended and that they were not going to provide any further funding.

This situation is surprising, given that one vocal supporter of the program — up until very recently at least — was the Minister for Education and member for Monbulk. Earlier this year the member for Monbulk praised this program, pointing out how critical it was to improving the safety of children around school precincts. Now, just months later, his government is refusing to fund it.

Western suburbs roads

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to update the house of the Andrews Labor government's huge investments in road infrastructure in my local community, infrastructure that will cut commute times, support businesses and also grow jobs.

This week I joined the Premier and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to announce a \$1.8 billion

package to transform and improve roads in Melbourne's outer west. More than 700 kilometres of road stretching from Werribee to Footscray will be upgraded and maintained for the next 20 years, ensuring that local roads keep pace with rapid population growth. These crucial road upgrades in growth areas such as the much-needed Duncans Road interchange in my electorate of Werribee — and of course some roads in the Speaker's electorate as well — will significantly cut travel times and return \$4.40 for every \$1 spent.

This worthwhile investment comes shortly after the completion of the Andrews government's \$45 million Sneydes Road interchange. I was thrilled to recently open this vital link between Werribee, the Melbourne CBD and Geelong, which will significantly improve traffic flow and provide safer travel networks for pedestrians and cyclists. These road investments are about improving accessibility for residents in Melbourne's rapidly growing outer western suburbs who suffered from four years of Liberal neglect but who are now receiving the investment they deserve.

Remembrance Day

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — Tomorrow is Remembrance Day; 11 November is an important day on which to pause and remember. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month we observe 1 minute of silence. We pause to remember those men and women who have died or suffered in all wars and peacekeeping operations. Remembrance Day marks the anniversary of the armistice which ended the First World War in 1918. I encourage all Victorians to pay their respects at a service or by pausing at 11.00 a.m., wherever they are. It is important that we acknowledge these sacrifices.

SPC Ardmona

Mr McCURDY — I urge the Premier to look past the Melbourne metropolitan boundary and give the people of Shepparton and the Goulburn Valley assurances that he will support them as SPC Ardmona faces further challenges. The last time SPC Ardmona was at the crossroads it was the Victorian coalition government that delivered when the people of Shepparton needed it the most.

Although many try to claim credit for the significant investment, the coalition delivered it. Now it is time for the Premier to pledge financial support before the jobs are lost. He should not wait till the event has passed, like he has done in the Latrobe Valley. I know fruitgrowers in Cobram, Invergordon and certainly

those closer to Shepparton and Mooroopna will be adversely affected should SPC be disadvantaged by the changes initiated by Woolworths. I urge the Labor government to act now, not to wait until it is too late.

Bright Rod Run

Mr McCURDY — On Saturday I attended the annual Bright Rod Run, an event which was another outstanding success. Bright does it better than most when they organise events. Congratulations to president Russell Beatson, secretary Tracey Pawlik, Mike Dealy, David Pratt and all those involved in the committee. The Alpine Shire Council and Victoria Police are also to be commended for their support and efforts in the rod run. For those who have not experienced what Bright, Porepunkah and Harrietteville have to offer, you are missing one of the great destinations of Victoria.

Altona electorate roads

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I would like to talk about all the very exciting announcements of investments that have been made in the previous four weeks in my electorate, because we are brimming with activity in Altona and projects are moving our community from strength to strength. Yesterday morning the Premier announced that eight major arterial roads in Melbourne's west will be upgraded as part of an unprecedented injection of \$8.1 billion into the new outer suburban arterial roads project. This project, which will include widening and duplication works to accommodate for the huge growth we are experiencing in my electorate, will boost capacity and improve road conditions, allowing local residents to get to work and to get home sooner.

Alamanda K-9 College

Ms HENNESSY — Another success story of the past fortnight was the official opening of Alamanda K-9 College's stage 2 rebuild. I was delighted to be joined by the Minister for Education last Thursday to celebrate this magnificent milestone. This school is a fantastic example of the heart of the western suburbs. Its students and staff have created a community deeply entrenched in empowerment through education. My heart was warmed to see young people in my electorate so excited and engaged in both new buildings and terrific programs.

Seabrook Primary School

Ms HENNESSY — On Monday of this week Seabrook Primary School, a truly loved school that has been educating students since 1997, secured state

government funding to rebuild its boundary fence. This project is really vital for the safety of students and protection from the busy Point Cook Road. The new fence is long overdue. It ensures security, and I am delighted that we have been able to make this important investment.

Baby welcome

Ms HENNESSY — Finally, an important event took place in Point Cook earlier this month. We hosted our inaugural welcoming of babies into Point Cook. This was a fantastic event.

Remembrance Day

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — I had the pleasure last Sunday to join the member for Rowville and the member for Bayswater at the Knox Remembrance Day service. It was another well-run event. I congratulate Hurtle Lupton, a former member of this house, who is the chair of the Knox Remembrance Day committee, for all of the work of his group. It was pleasing to see the many local primary schools and secondary schools involved, particularly Knox School, Wattleview Primary School and Ferntree Gully North Primary School. Congratulations on a great event.

Hungarian uprising anniversary

Mr WAKELING — I was pleased to attend the recent event at the Hungarian Community Centre to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the uprising in Hungary. It was a well-run event, and I congratulate Márta Marót and her team at the Wantirna facility. It is a great community and a great community centre. I congratulate them all on their participation.

Knox City Basketball Club

Mr WAKELING — I was also pleased to attend the Knox City Cougars basketball club's family fun day. This is arguably the biggest basketball club in the City of Knox, and it was a well-attended event. I congratulate the committee and all those for the event. It is a great club that demonstrates the strength of sport in Knox and the strength of basketball in our local community.

Regency Park Primary School

Mr WAKELING — I was also pleased to attend Regency Park Primary School. I recognise Brandon Tia on his year 5 efforts in the Victorian Premier's Reading Challenge. I congratulate all those students who are

involved in participating in the Premier's Reading Challenge.

Eastern suburbs roads

Mr WAKELING — Finally, I wish to say on behalf of my community and the eastern suburbs of Melbourne that again this government is ignoring the east. There is no money for the east when it comes to roads. There is nothing for Knox, and nothing for the east-west link.

Helene Cameron

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — I take this opportunity to congratulate Helene Cameron on her service to the Queenscliff community following her recent resignation from council. During this month's election Helene became aware of a serious health issue within her family and thus made the difficult decision to tender her resignation, putting the interests of her family first and foremost. Helene Cameron was elected to the Borough of Queenscliffe in October 2008 and became mayor in 2012, a position she held up to the election. In that time Helene served the community of Queenscliff with great commitment and integrity, and she achieved so much during that time. As the local member I worked closely with Helene, and I found her at all times to be an untiring advocate for her community. I was pleased to have been able to work with her to advance the interests of the local community. I again congratulate and thank Elaine for her service and thank her family for enabling her to put so much time into supporting the community of Queenscliff.

Drysdale Soccer Club

Ms NEVILLE — Recently I also had the good fortune of meeting with a number of players from the Drysdale Soccer Club women's teams. This club has two female teams that compete in the Geelong competition. Its division 1 team made this year's grand final but unfortunately got beaten. Next year it will be different. More importantly, however, is the club's involvement in Football Federation Victoria's female participation program. This pilot program seeks to increase female participation in soccer not only on the field but also through coaching and administration. My congratulations to the Drysdale Soccer Club. I am looking forward to working very closely with them and particularly with the club's women's teams.

Government performance

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — To misquote Oscar Wilde, ‘To lose one minister is unfortunate; to lose two is careless; to lose three is a government in chaos’. Victoria will now have its fourth corrections minister in just 10 months, at a time when there has been a 13.4 per cent increase in crime across our state. While the Premier and his ministers have been focused on Ted and Patch, a young serious offender has literally walked out of the Melbourne Youth Justice Centre, looters have run amok through four Officeworks stores, a baby was the subject of a shocking carjacking and prisoners are not being taken to court in a timely manner, causing disruption to the courts.

I, like many Victorians, am concerned about the ideological bent of this Andrews government. This government is the most left-wing government in our state’s history. They have attacked the Country Fire Authority volunteers, they have attacked religious organisations and they have attacked parents rights to choose what is best for their children. They have been soft on crime. The Premier seems more concerned about criminals and not about the rights of innocent victims.

The Liberal-Nationals government established a Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC) inquiry to look at how the role of the victims in criminal trials can be improved. The Premier has now had the VLRC’s report for over eight weeks, but as usual he is dragging his feet and does nothing to help the innocent victims of crime.

Williamstown North Primary School

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Industry and Employment) — I rise today to congratulate a great school within the Williamstown electorate for receiving one of the 10 Victorian Education Excellence Awards. Williamstown North Primary School is a tremendous school that caters for the individual needs of each and every one of its 740 students. As a pillar of our local community, Williamstown North has an ethos of inclusion that formally enshrines the importance of student wellbeing. It is one of only a handful of schools in the state with an accreditation from Victoria’s peak autism organisation, Amaze. For six years this school has worked towards the goal of creating a safe, diverse and inclusive environment for each of its students. Its highly esteemed program has a number of distinguishable traits informed by leading research. It includes a ‘butterfly room’ for students with additional needs, and the school appointed an inclusion coordinator to ensure that all students feel valued.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Williamstown North Primary School for its receipt of the Outstanding Inclusive Education Award. Williamstown North seeks to put theory into practice, and as the only school in Victoria to receive this award it has proven that its ethos of inclusion truly is one that works and matters. My thanks go to the school’s principal, Jim Cahill; the assistant principal, Wendy Emin; the inclusion coordinator, Giorgia Moss; the school council president, Michael Lynch; and all of the teachers and staff. Congratulations to everyone that has been involved with the inclusion program. This is really a fantastic achievement.

Begging legislation

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — In Victoria begging or gathering alms is still illegal; it is a summary offence. This is a remnant of the outdated Vagrancy Act 1966, which was abolished in 2005. Today it means that just for sitting on the street peacefully and having a cap or a cup out in front of you to collect donations from passers-by, people can find themselves arrested, going to court or even ending up in jail. Indeed over the last five years over 825 charges were laid against people begging on the street. Giving already vulnerable people hefty fines and a criminal record will only make their difficult situations worse. It is nonsensical and heartless for a society to punish those who most need its help. A recent study by Justice Connect Homeless Law found that almost 90 per cent of people begging on the street had a mental illness and that over 75 per cent were homeless or jobless.

Clearly sending these people to court or jail is not the way to help. Instead we need to focus on solutions that work, like more public housing and support services. That is why my Greens colleagues and I have introduced a bill to decriminalise what is called ‘passive begging’, and over 30 welfare agencies support this change. Given there are already separate laws in place to prevent anyone from aggressively harassing people for money, there is no practical reason why begging should remain a summary offence. As a community, I hope that we can do better.

Premiers’ Reading Challenge

Ms D’AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I rise to speak about the Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge and the positive effects that this is having on the young students in Mill Park. Last week I visited Findon Primary School and Mill Park Heights Primary School in my electorate; I had visited Plenty Parklands Primary School the week before. These are great schools —

great schools made up of great kids and great principals and teachers representing a great community. I was there to present certificates of achievement to the three schools and to the fantastic students who took part in the Premiers' Reading Challenge. I am so proud to be a member of this Andrews Labor government which puts people first. We are putting students first and engaging with our community.

The Premiers' Reading Challenge saw more than 230 000 students from over 3000 schools reading nearly 4 million books. Since the program began under the previous Labor government in 2005, more than 2.2 million students have read approximately 42 million books. It has had a marked impact on literacy in this state. It encourages students to reach the highest level of achievement in reading that they can. In conjunction with our education agenda, it reinforces Victoria's position as the education state. I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Families and Children in the other place for all the work that they are doing to help our young people, and of course the fantastic principals, teachers, early childhood educators, parents, grandparents and students in Mill Park who work so hard to teach our kids to love to read.

The Voice Gippsland

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — I rise to pay tribute to Yvonne Clavarino and her team of volunteers for putting on Saturday night's The Voice Gippsland event, which raised \$10 000 for Central Gippsland Health Service's new oncology ward. We have some great singers in our region, and they helped us raise money for a very worthy cause.

Sir Herbert Hyland commemorative dinner

Mr D. O'BRIEN — I also want to pay tribute to the service of Sir Herbert Hyland in the centenary year of the formation of the National Party and its predecessor, the Country Party. Last week the member for Euroa joined me and guests at a dinner in Sir Herbert's honour in Leongatha. Sir Herbert was elected as member for Gippsland South in 1929 and served for an incredible 41 years. In that time he won 15 consecutive elections, 5 of them uncontested, and never once went to preferences. Incredibly, at his final election in 1967, after 38 years in the job, he recorded the highest two-party preferred vote in the state. He played a critical role in the development of the Country Fire Authority, fighting for country roads funding and delivering state support to infant welfare centres and kindergartens for the first time. He was also instrumental in the development of the energy sector in

the Latrobe Valley, which for a long time was part of his electorate. I suspect he would be turning in his grave at the events of the last few weeks. Sir Bert epitomised the dedication to country people of our great party. It is important that we remember and honour his service.

Donald Trump

Mr D. O'BRIEN — One wonders what a servant of the people like Sir Bert might make of the election of Donald Trump as US president. I am just as shocked as anyone, but there are a couple of important lessons we must learn from this. Firstly, people around the world are sick of politics for politicians. We need to listen more to our people and respond to their concerns. While I do not believe Trump has been a leader or offered reasonable solutions, he tapped into the frustrations of forgotten men and women. Secondly, the media, pollsters and indeed politicians, including me, totally missed this. While I do not like the outcome, the result is a reaffirmation that democracy is alive and well, and that the people truly do get to have their say.

United States presidential election

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — What a day in world politics! Americans and the world were so close to having a first female US president, but now that country will be run by a man who has boasted about exploiting and assaulting women; a man who degrades, belittles and demeans women; a man who is white and privileged. To all the minority groups, people with a disability and the LGBTI community I say, 'Yes, this is a sad and disappointing day'. To all the young girls and women out there I say, 'Yes, this is a very, very sad and disappointing day'. Yes, this election was about sexism, racism and discrimination, and yes, this election was certainly about white male privilege. The message this sends to girls and young women and to boys and young men over the world breaks my heart. It only reinforces the need for all of us to work even harder for gender equality, and I am absolutely committed to doing just that.

But I want to reassure them that it was not all about that. We cannot ask people to choose between sexual and racial equality on the one hand versus having a job and money to feed a family — there must be both. Absolutely we must stand up against sexism, gender stereotypes, racism and discrimination, and absolutely we must stand up for people and families who are struggling — for the unemployed, young people and those in our community who are less able and more vulnerable. Now, more than ever, we must continue the great work we are doing here in Victoria in standing up for social justice and for fairness for all Victorians.

Torquay-Jan Juc Neighbourhood Watch

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of Torquay-Jan Juc Neighbourhood Watch with their very successful Safe Plate Day held on Saturday, 29 October. In partnership with the police, State Emergency Service, Country Fire Authority and Torquay Lions Club, they fitted numberplates to 150 vehicles with anti-theft screws. This is an important reminder that thieves are stealing numberplates from cars and putting them on other cars, which they then use for robberies or drive-offs at petrol stations. Combined with a barbecue at Bunnings Torquay and donations, the Neighbourhood Watch group netted over \$1100 to be used for further community safety initiatives in the local area.

In addition, the group is promoting the lock it or lose it campaign, encouraging visitors, particularly to surf beach car parks, to lock their cars to avoid theft. A flyer has been produced that warns people of the risk of losing their car and valuables when parking at the beach. This will be distributed over the coming summer months, and I have been very pleased to support the group with printing of this material. Well done to the Neighbourhood Watch chairman, David Cheatley, and his team of volunteers and supporters.

Highton law and order forum

Mr KATOS — Whilst on the topic of community safety, I wish to mention that last Sunday I hosted a law and order forum at the Highton Bowls Club, with my colleagues the Honourable Ed O'Donohue and Sarah Henderson, MP. This was very well attended, with over 80 concerned residents voicing their frustrations, concerns and fears at the current level of crime in the community. With many attendees in the room having been victims of crime or knowing someone who has been a victim in the last 12 months, it comes as no surprise that there was interest there. Neighbourhood Watch programs, security systems, bail legislation, home invasions, carjackings and youth crime were all hot topics of discussion.

My Cancer Care Record

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — Last Friday I visited the Ballarat Regional Integrated Cancer Centre (BRICC) to be part of the launch of My Cancer Care Record. BRICC is of course a wonderful addition to the health services offered in Ballarat. In 2010 I was pleased to join the Premier in his previous role as Minister for Health and the then federal health minister, Nicola Roxon, to announce that the federal and state Labor governments would provide \$42 million and

\$13 million respectively to build the centre. Since BRICC opened in 2013, this world-class facility has been making a huge difference to the lives of patients receiving treatment there.

Friday's launch of My Cancer Care Record demonstrates the innovations that are taking place in Ballarat to improve patient support. Developed by the North Eastern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service and the Grampians Integrated Cancer Service, this diary assists people dealing with cancer to store their care information and medical records in the one place. The stark reality is that a cancer diagnosis is a very challenging event for patients and their families. The My Cancer Care Record not only allows patients to collect and store information about their care providers but it also provides them with information and advice about questions they might ask of their care professionals.

Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute

Mr HOWARD — I was also pleased to gain an update on the cancer research being undertaken in Ballarat at the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute, where Ballarat oncologist Professor George Kannourakis outlined the exciting opportunities for better cancer treatments being worked on at the Ballarat institute. I congratulate all involved in this great work.

Bend of Islands

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — On Saturday, 22 October, I went to the 40th year celebrations of environmental living at Bend of Islands, held at the local fire shed. Established in 1976 through a planning category that saw the area originally granted environmental living zone, Bend of Islands is in the south-west of my electorate on the north side of a bend in the Yarra River. It is quite a unique pocket. The almost 300-strong community members live on 634 hectares of bushland. This setting and zoning ensures that the flora and fauna are protected through strict regulations. The keeping of pets and livestock is not permitted, nor is the introduction of non-indigenous plants.

The community are driven to protect the uniqueness of the area and the values that they have committed to over the last 40 years. Over the years land has been traded, people have moved in and out, but the area has still retained its special character. It takes work to maintain this character, not only on an individual level but also on a community level. The Bend of Islands Conservation Association, through president Neil Kamminga and his committee, spend considerable time

and energy on weed control and regeneration works in line with their land management plan. Their knowledge and motivation is to be commended.

Many current and former residents attended the celebrations, with many memories shared from the foundation members, who provided an interesting history of the challenges they faced over time.

Eildon Boat Club

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — On Saturday, 29 October, I attended the 56th annual sail past celebrations at Lake Eildon Boat Club. Shadow minister David Hodgett and I joined Commodore Michael Willson, former commodores and many owners and industry representations for the occasion. This year's theme was Halloween, and I was impressed by the effort the owners went to in decorating their boats.

Alan McPhate

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — A true believer, Dr Alan McPhate was born at Mordialloc hospital on 9 February 1929 to Charles and Irene McPhate. Alan attended Mordialloc primary and secondary schools, then Scotch College. He went on to study medicine at the University of Melbourne, with his first placement at Royal Hobart Hospital, where he met Joan Hammond, whom he married. They went to live in Warragul. Following Joan's tragic death, he met Maureen, who had lost her husband. They fell in love and joined up their families — Margaret, Bruce, Ann and David, and they welcomed into the world their Peter. They were devoted to making a secure and loving family.

Alan had a reputation as a dedicated and skilled doctor. He was loved by his patients and respected by his peers. In 1994 he was admitted to the Australian Medical Association Roll of Fellows. I recall my first meeting with Alan and his beautiful wife Maureen at the Mount Martha Australian Labor Party branch. To say he made an impression is an understatement. Straight on to the executive and onto the council campaign trail — letters to the editor, letterboxing, public meetings and generous donations meant people like me got started on their political journeys.

As so many testified at his memorial service, he was zealously committed to social justice causes and a warrior for the ALP — a life member. He changed people's lives with his generosity, his drive and his wisdom. A prolific reader, he was always at the centre of debates and discussions. He was a member of the

humanist society for over 20 years, and was involved with the Uniting Church, Community Aid Abroad and Friends of the ABC. He made us all better people and empowered us to make a contribution to the betterment of others. He followed the light on the hill, always lending a helping hand. Alan's generous and capable hands were extended to so many of us. Loved and admired, sadly missed — vale Dr Alan McPhate, 9 October 2016.

United States presidential election

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I am so sick of the left failing to accept the democratic will of the people. I think we had the member for Carrum over there complaining about the US election result. I congratulate Mr Trump. One of the oldest continuous democracies has elected Mr Trump. We should accept the result, respect the will of the American people, and respect the will of the British people with regard to Brexit, because this is the problem: the more you hyperventilate, the more you carry on and the more that you completely belittle the people that are supporting candidates like Mr Trump, and indeed movements like Brexit, the worse you make it.

I warn the Labor Party: if you continue to get on your high horse and piously moralise at folk that you are meant to be representing, it will come back to bite you electorally over the mid term. The people of America have spoken. I may have not liked the result, but they have spoken and we ought to respect that. They are a key ally of ours, they have been with us when times have been tough and they deserve our respect when they have just elected their 45th President.

Broadmeadows

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — Jobs and future industries are critical, especially in communities hardest hit by deindustrialisation. Put bluntly, I want Broadmeadows to be remembered for the rise of CSL's manufacturing and not the demise of Ford's manufacturing and for how we harness elegant science to create jobs and export health products and not the loss of high-skilled jobs in Australia's once proud automotive industry.

Broadmeadows can become a centre for medical research and manufacturing, building on CSL's success. CSL plans a \$210 million expansion of its Broadmeadows facility to build albumen manufacturing capacity. This will create 200 jobs in the construction phase and a further 190 skilled jobs once the plant is operational. TPI Industries is one of only eight companies in the world that manufactures

pharmaceutical opiates, and they also grow poppies in Victoria, including in Broadmeadows, to support the manufacturing of these opiates. Victoria has a chance to capture a large share of this market, which is important. RMIT University's Bundoora campus has the Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute, which for decades has examined the efficacy of Chinese medicine. This is a huge and growing market.

What we need is a coordinated strategy and for the Australian government to actually be a partner and invest in Melbourne's north and particularly in a hub and precinct around Broadmeadows, because we have unfortunately some of CSL's most elegant science breakthroughs being manufactured in Switzerland instead of Broadmeadows.

Jude Donahoo

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — When it comes to commitment to a cause, there is no better example than Jude Donahoo. Jude, who is ably supported by her husband, Kevin, has dedicated herself to raising \$1 million for the You Are My Sunshine Foundation. This foundation was established as a not-for-profit charity in Phillip Island by Jude in September 2009 in memory of her beloved granddaughter Kahlilla, who was a neuroblastoma sufferer. At that time there was no dedicated funding for neuroblastoma in Australia. With support from the local community, Jude reached her target at this year's Moto GP, much to the delight of everyone involved. Congratulations to Jude. She is an inspiration and a glowing example of what can be achieved with hard work, dedication, commitment and love.

Former Minister for Training and Skills

Mr PAYNTER — On a sadder note, I condemn the Premier for his lack of action on the matters involving former Minister Steve Herbert. Clearly his actions were wrong, stupid and reeked of complete disregard for the people of Victoria right from day one, and now we hear that yesterday Minister Herbert resigned. Why did the Premier not have the guts and leadership qualities required to simply give him the sack? In anyone's language the former minister's total disregard for taxpayers property required him to be sacked on the spot. If the Premier wants to retain some shred of respectability, he should be demanding the former minister repay the full amount of his misuse of the parliamentary vehicle and not just a token amount. The people of Victoria can no longer look to the position of Premier to uphold standards of acceptable and decent behaviour.

Local government elections

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — I rise to congratulate all newly elected and returning councillors in Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Mitchell shires and offer my commiserations to those who lost and also to those who chose not to recontest. A special welcome to new councillors, particularly those I have had the privilege to meet through their already well-established and known local community work, and especially Whittlesea's youngest ever councillor, Emilia Lisa Sterjova, a Mernda local who celebrated her 20th birthday in the council chamber alongside another young activist in Cr Alahna Desiato, Donnybrook Cheese's Cr Caz Monteleone and wily old Lawrie Cox, who has returned to council after many decades, having previously been the youngest councillor in the Shire of Whittlesea at age 21.

Great friend and campaigner against violence against women Jane Ashton will be a magnificent addition to the Nillumbik council, along with activists Grant Brooker and John Dumaresq and others. In Mitchell shire I congratulate Rob Eldridge and David Lowe.

HOUSING AMENDMENT (VICTORIAN HOUSING REGISTER AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 November; motion of Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing).

Ms WARD (Eltham) — It is good to rise on this amending bill, the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. It is good to rise to speak on yet another amendment that the Labor Party is getting on with to make real, practical applications that will yet again help people with their day-to-day lives and yet again help them get to the place they need to be, which is a safe and secure Victoria that is a fair Victoria.

There may be people in this place who have not assisted people to find public and social housing, but I have. I can tell you that it is a long, and it can be a complicated, process. You have people coming to you who can be vulnerable, who have got challenges in their lives and who need assistance with filling in forms and even finding out who the housing agency associations are. It can be daunting to put in multiple applications and to work out, 'Do they cover this region? Do they cover that region? Is this a region I can go to? Is this a suburb I can go to? How close are the

houses that they have to where I need to be, to my kids' school, to shopping, to my own work if I have it?'. A whole range of complications confront people when they apply for social housing.

What this bill does is take some of that complication out. By merging the waiting lists we are doing everybody a great service, and it will deeply help not only those people who are on the social housing waiting list but also those people who are actually trying to get them into homes. It is incredibly challenging when you have the same person on multiple lists — they may want to go to all those different areas or they may just want the first house that is available. Having a list that is unified will help people find the home that they need, but it will also help the housing agency associations find people those homes.

People do need social housing, just as people need public housing. It is true that people do find challenges with getting secure housing. It is true that we have people who are on fixed incomes who are in vulnerable situations. We have women and children who are fleeing from homes with domestic violence. We have kids who have grown up in dysfunctional homes, who have parents with drug problems. We have a whole variety of reasons. We have people who just may not be able to find work, who have physical disabilities and who have some challenges that have been put in their way that make their ability to have secure housing really, really challenging and difficult. So there is absolutely a place in this community for social housing and absolutely a place in this state for public housing.

This brings me to the recent council elections, where I was quite surprised to find that one upper house member, Inga Peulich — or her son at least — has some real problems with public and social housing. He authorised a flyer that was distributed across the Kingston community, I believe, for the information of Dingley Village residents in which he seems to not support public or social housing at all. In fact he was encouraging people not to vote for Cr Steve Staikos because he is a member of the Community Housing Federation of Victoria and is committed to the local provision of social subsidised housing. This would include any residential development on the Kingswood Golf Course site.

I am sorry, but I did not realise that it was a problem to have social or public housing. I did not realise that it was the wrong thing to actually help people have secure housing. I did not realise that we live in a state where we think these people are not the people who should be in communities.

Mr Pearson — It is outrageous.

Ms WARD — It is absolutely outrageous, member for Essendon, and I think that Paul Peulich should be pretty ashamed for putting out this material. It is absolutely shocking — do not vote for someone because they support social housing. Who would have thought that that would be — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Ms WARD — I hope Paul Peulich is not the face of the modern Liberal Party, member for Essendon. I absolutely agree.

In Victoria we have approximately 65 000 public housing units and 21 000 community housing units. This is a substantial amount of housing to manage for those who are on the waiting list. There are over 40 community housing agencies and they are all managed individually. You can see quite clearly why they need to be streamlined and why there needs to be a coordinated effort in terms of the waiting list.

All of us in this place know that property prices have risen far faster than wages. There are a number of factors in that, and I have to tell you that I put John Howard at the start of them. Unfortunately the federal government has not wanted to engage in this debate in any meaningful way whatsoever. Yet again, as the state Liberal Party was, they are asleep at the wheel. Yet again they are not helping people in this community who need help. Yet again they are letting down vulnerable people.

We have seen what happens when you let down vulnerable people. We have seen what happens when you do not support people — you end up with Donald Trump. That is what happens when you throw people onto the rubbish pile. When you do not look after them, when you do not give them the foundations and the support that they need, you end up with someone like Donald Trump running your country. You end up with people feeling that they have a licence to exhibit their anger in the community, that they have a licence to unleash their bigotry, their hatred, their misogyny, their sexism and their outright anger. They are angry because they feel left behind. When you have political parties who put out rubbish like Paul Peulich did people feel left behind, they feel marginalised, they feel not cared for and they feel not listened to.

This is not the community, the country or the society that I want to live in. I want to live in a place where governments on both sides of politics, or any side of politics, actively listen to people, respond to their needs and do so in a coherent, respectful and kind manner.

This is what is important. That is why this party absolutely supports the principle of social and public housing. Of course we support it. We know that people need support when they need it. We know that people need that help when they need it. We know there are moments in people's lives when they are vulnerable and when they need a government that has a safety net that catches them, that says, 'You do matter; we do care about you and we do want to lift you. We do want to help you have the life that you can have. We want you to have the best life that you can have. No matter what that life is, no matter what that pathway is, it needs to be the best life that you can have'. This is what a Labor government is about.

This bill is a small bill. It is just a tweak — it is an administrative bill — but it is a tweak that will help people in their lives. It will help people get to where they need to be, which is in secure housing. We know that when you have secure housing you are able to get the job that you need, you are able to get the health care that you need and it is easier for you to put your kids in school. It is easier for you to get the benefits that you need and the support and training you need to get the job that you need. Once you have got housing, so much more opportunity is opened up to you. Without that housing it is hard for you to get benefits, it is hard for you to enrol your kid in school, it is hard for you to seek the health care that you need, to go to the local health service and get the support that you need. You do not have a local support service when you are homeless. When you are homeless you have absolute challenges. When you are couch surfing you have absolute challenges. What we are doing is helping people to get off the couch. We are hoping to eliminate, reduce or redress the horror of homelessness.

All of us in this place have seen people who are destitute and homeless sleeping in this city. It is absolutely shameful. I remember when I went to the UK as a backpacker in the early 1990s, being confronted by people in sleeping bags and on folded out cardboard mats spending the night in underpasses, in shop doorways and all over the place. I was absolutely shocked because I had never seen that before. I am glad we are taking action to ensure that the absolute misery that I saw in post-Thatcher Britain in the early 1990s is not visited on people here in this state, and that we create policy and introduce legislation that help people get the secure housing they need.

Over 90 per cent of public housing tenants are on fixed government benefits. This makes it impossible for them to get into private housing, and it makes it even harder for them to get into the rental market when we have house prices that are so high that most renters have to

stay in rental properties for a very long time before they can save the money to get the house or the apartment that they need. The federal government's recent proposed cuts to welfare, which unfortunately are backed by One Nation, are another example of how the conservatives only want to hurt people and how we want to help people. These shocking changes to welfare will lessen people's ability to afford private housing. What choices do they make? Do they choose to pay their rent or do they choose to feed their children? Who wants to make that choice?

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — I am very pleased to speak on this bill. The right to housing and the right to social housing for those in need is something that I am particularly passionate about. It is something that is provided for in a number of international instruments, in particular the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights at article 25, which acknowledges that the right to housing is part of the right to an adequate standard of living. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in discussing whether there is a right to housing, refers to every person having the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes the right to adequate housing. It refers to the fact that the right to housing is more than simply a right to shelter. It is a right to have somewhere to live that is adequate. Whether housing is adequate depends on a range of factors, including legal security of tenure; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability; accessibility; habitability; location and cultural adequacy. These are all extremely important points to bear in mind when we think about the right to housing and what it actually means.

In his Council to Homeless Persons National Conference on Homelessness address on 4 September 1996, then human rights commissioner Chris Sidoti also discussed this important right. He said:

Adequate housing is essential for human survival with dignity —

a point that the member for Essendon made well yesterday in this debate.

Without a right to housing, many other basic human rights will be compromised including the right to family life and privacy, the right to freedom of movement, the right to assembly and association, the right to health and the right to development.

The right to housing has particular significance for children. Because of their vulnerability they have special needs for care and protection. Without decent secure accommodation children are unlikely to realise their right to grow and develop in an atmosphere of moral and material security, free from abuse and neglect.

The right to housing is clearly supported by international law, indeed at the very foundation of the international human rights system in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, establishes an internationally recognised set of standards for all persons without qualification.

Article 25 of the declaration provides, 'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including ... housing'.

It is a right I am passionate about not only because it is a fundamental human right protected by some of our most important international covenants but because it is something I feel strongly about based on my family experience. The member for Ivanhoe yesterday talked about postcode 3081. He said he would not be in this place if it was not for postcode 3081. Neither would I, but for different reasons.

My mum grew up in housing commission accommodation in West Heidelberg. Her father had an accident when he was in his early 30s and became a quadriplegic, and their life went from one where they lived in relative security in their own home with lots of family support and things around them to one where suddenly their entire income system collapsed. My grandma, who worked as a paid nurse at the time, which was in itself unusual once she was married and had children, decided that with her nursing qualification she had an obligation to care for my grandfather post his accident. So they went from being a two-income household to a no-income household and to caring for somebody with serious disabilities and with a number of children. So they moved into housing commission accommodation in West Heidelberg. They received support from organisations like the St Vincent de Paul Society and of course their large extended family, but without the infrastructure of the public/social housing system of West Heidelberg at that time, which still stands in good stead today, I certainly would not be in this place.

It is fair to say that that experience turned my grandmother, Pat Black — or, as she became known on 3AW for talking about these issues, Pat from Balwyn — into a very strong advocate for social housing and public housing. She had no end of ideas as to how this could be achieved, including turning old nursing homes into housing and whatnot. She became a very strong advocate for a good public and social housing system. She worked tirelessly with organisations like the Housing for the Aged Action Group to try and achieve that. She worked as the manager of Prague House, which was a home for men who had been in the justice system or had suffered from alcoholism and as a result of either of those things had ended up homeless. She worked tirelessly to ensure that

people had shelter, and by 'shelter' she did not just mean a roof over their heads; she also meant a place to call home, where they could feel secure, where they could live their lives and where they could be themselves and with their families.

My grandmother was also a great advocate — I know the member for Broadmeadows talked about this yesterday when he was talking about postcodes of hope — for flexible housing solutions and for there to be mixed housing, not just creating what I think the member for Broadmeadows referred to as ghettos and not just creating public housing in one place and letting other people build their homes in other places. My grandmother felt there was an important need to have communities of housing of all different types and to bring people together and to support each other, and that really stemmed from her experience in West Heidelberg — from having people around her who could assist her with caring for her husband and her children in their time of need.

Many years later my grandmother was living in Balwyn. She was renting a place there and somebody knocked on her door to tell her about a housing development that was proposed for the other end of her street. It was a social/public housing proposal, and the neighbour who had knocked on her door said, 'We don't want people like that in this street'. My nanna said, 'You've already got people like that on this street. You've got me'. Nanna then went on to doorknock other people's doors, arguing as to why there needed to be a mix of housing in her street and, as the member for Broadmeadows said, why there needs to be a mix of housing across our communities. With that comes job opportunities and other things that can bring people together and give everybody a standard of living that is decent, as the member for Essendon said yesterday.

In referring to postcodes of hope, as the member for Broadmeadows did yesterday, this is also a particularly important bill for the people of his electorate and the people of my electorate, because when we think about the people who will benefit from public housing and social housing, they are people who are on low incomes. They are people who are in low-income working families. They are people who are perhaps unemployed. Certainly in my electorate and particularly in the suburb of Glenroy, which I share with the member for Broadmeadows, youth unemployment is at 18 per cent, which is higher than in most other parts of the state, if not the highest youth unemployment rate in the state.

They are people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and again we both represent very

multicultural districts where people have come to this country in search of a better life but perhaps have come as asylum seekers and refugees who do not necessarily have automatic access to paid employment and whatnot but who need our assistance in terms of having shelter over their heads. People who have perhaps moved through the justice system are also reflected within our communities, and again those people, within their rehabilitation processes, need to have adequate housing provided for them, and social housing and public housing play an important part in that jigsaw puzzle.

Really we are talking about the most vulnerable people in our society, whether they are unemployed, whether they are our working poor, whether they are people from non-English-speaking backgrounds who have come here perhaps as refugees and asylum seekers. We are talking about people who need social and public housing to ensure that they have that shelter — and by shelter, as I have said, we mean not just a roof over their heads but a place to call home and to live fulfilling lives with their families.

So social housing is an important part of the mix. It is something that Labor governments have been and always will be committed to. It is something that in my view we cannot do enough to support. This bill certainly goes a long way to both improving the way we deliver social housing services, including making them more flexible and efficient, and ensuring that the people who are most vulnerable in our society have that most fundamental of human rights: a place to call home.

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — I wish to speak on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. Establishing a common housing register is the first step in terms of maximising and simplifying access to housing assistance for disadvantaged Victorians. A common housing register will create better access to housing through there being one simple and effective entry point to the widest range of housing opportunities. It will create greater transparency and accountability across the social housing system and will embed homelessness and social housing into a wider community care system.

On 9 July 2015 the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing hosted a ministerial forum on homelessness and social housing. This marked the first in a series of consultations with stakeholders from the homelessness, community housing, community care, family violence, disability and Indigenous sectors. The forum addressed the renewal and growth of social housing, reducing homelessness and preventing and addressing a housing crisis, making the social housing and homelessness

systems work better for people and building better social and economic outcomes for disadvantaged Victorians. One of the recommendations was to maintain a common register for social housing.

There has been extensive consultation with the Community Housing Federation of Victoria during the development of this bill. The community housing agencies overwhelmingly support the creation of a community wait list under the register. The Victorian Housing Register will be the way applications for social housing are managed in Victoria. It will bring together all public and community housing applications into a single register. This means just one application will be required to apply for both public and community housing.

Disadvantaged Victorians who require social housing can be considered for different types of housing by many providers through the register. If they are already on a housing waiting list, their application will be moved over to the register without any disadvantage to their application. If they are a new applicant who wants to be considered for all types of social housing, they will only have to tell their story once, as there is now only one application for all types of housing.

The applicants have to choose how their information is shared on the register by, firstly, signing a consent form when applying to be on the register; secondly, consenting to a designated support worker accessing any information that may already be on the register; and thirdly, indicating whether they want to be considered for public housing and/or community housing. The government has indicated that it is now keen to see limited vacancies in community housing be prioritised towards those applicants perceived to be most in need.

In 2006 we saw a major shift in policy and the role of community housing. The Victorian government introduced a system of regulation of community housing overseen by an independent regulator, the registrar of housing agencies. Any community housing organisation that wanted to receive government support, grants or transfers via leasing of public housing was required to be registered.

These registered housing agencies — that is, the newly regulated community housing organisations — were at play within the housing system. However, the registered housing agencies had a broader eligibility range for applicants than public housing. These changes provided for the registered housing agencies to play a role in the wider housing affordability challenges faced by low-income working households, to prevent

concentration of disadvantage and to support higher rental revenue.

A recent survey revealed in Britain that the majority of people on housing benefits are working poor. I am sure that many of us in this place have had residents call into our offices seeking the assistance of their MP in securing long-term housing. I do have many; however, I wish to actually speak about one particular case, where a family of five required urgent assistance with urgent housing. The family included two youngsters under the age of six years. Here we had a family of five which was down in the dumps, with no support and nowhere to turn for support. The family was living out of a car owned by the mother. In view of a marriage breakdown, the family was left with no other option. After much investigation and hard work, my office was able to find the family emergency accommodation. Now the family enjoys a roof over its head and it is residing in social housing. The youngsters are back in school, and the mother and daughter are actively seeking employment.

There are many doing it tough in my electorate, many through no fault of their own. Many residents who approach my office are unfortunately statistics of domestic violence, with no secured housing. I applaud the Andrews Labor government on making housing for families who suffer from domestic violence a priority when it comes to housing them and their families.

The issue of who is housed by community housing remains central to the mission of the organisations. This is critical to their financial viability because of the system of financing for community housing. There was criticism from the Auditor-General in 2012 that registered housing agencies favoured tenants on higher incomes with higher rents. This was strong criticism that came from the Auditor-General. A couple on Newstart with commonwealth rent assistance, based on 30 per cent of their income, will pay a rent of \$405.36. A couple on the age pension with commonwealth rent assistance, based on 30 per cent of their income, will pay a rent of \$478.38. A couple on an annual salary of \$65 000 per annum without commonwealth rent assistance, based on 30 per cent of their income, will pay a rent of \$747.95. However, community housing organisations receive government support and grants which should compensate them for taking on low-income tenants.

The allocating of vacant homes in the community sector even with a common register will be a challenging task. For community housing to take 50 per cent of new tenants from the public housing waiting list was always understood as a target, and our government

and community housing organisations were to work collaboratively to achieve the goal.

The bill will also give statutory authority to eligibility criteria and priority categories for the purpose of identifying the relative needs of eligible applicants that should be considered when people are allocated housing from the register.

The bill will allow the director, registered housing agencies and designated service providers to share relevant information in an authorised and lawful way. As a result of the information sharing, the social housing and homelessness sector can help disadvantaged Victorians access housing that best suits their safety, support and health needs. The bill will ensure that decisions relating to the register are made in a consistent, accountable and transparent way. This also ensures that the prioritisation of housing applicants that are in priority categories, such as those aged 55 years or over, is in line with exemptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the commonwealth Age Discrimination Act 2004.

Extensive consultation was undertaken during the development of this bill. The consultation was targeted at organisations and peak bodies that work in the social housing sector or support the client cohorts targeted in the Victorian Housing Register. This bill has been very well thought through before being presented to the Parliament. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — It gives me pleasure to also make a contribution to the debate on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. We have heard from the minister and other members that Victoria has a fragmented system of community housing whereby those in need of housing must apply to each individual agency in order to access social housing. The bill that we are introducing seeks to make this a far easier process for applicants to allow them to apply to all housing agencies via one housing list. Such systems operate in other states, and it is time that we caught up.

The need for an alternative to public housing has grown substantially over recent years. The previous government saw a doubling of the previous waiting lists in four years. This is a huge issue in our community, and it is often an issue that does not get enough airplay. As the minister said, the government committed to releasing a substantial housing statement in the near future which will further tackle the growth in housing need and assist the government in partnership with the community housing sector to meet that need. As the member for Eltham said, while this is in some sense an

administrative bill that seeks to make administrative changes — and quite important changes — it is one that is not isolated in the series of changes we are making in this government, including, as the minister alluded to, a future announcement in relation to further enhancing this area of public policy.

This bill seeks to facilitate the creation of the Victorian Housing Register, which will enable greater social housing opportunities for more vulnerable Victorians. It will do a number of things, including enable the director of housing to make determinations in relation to the eligibility categories for the Victorian Housing Register, including the allocations framework of the register. I just want to pick up on a couple of salient points — and there are many salient points — that the minister made in his second-reading speech. He referred to:

... the importance of the community housing sector in housing applicants from the priority access list of the Victorian Housing Register if we are to improve outcomes for those in greatest housing need. People who are homeless, at risk of homelessness and escaping family violence need priority for social housing. The growth in these segments shows the need for more to be done to support these groups.

In the last two years alone rough sleeping has increased by 74 per cent. This bill gives statutory authority to the next important step in the process for the housing allocations framework. This work is fundamental to unlocking further housing opportunities for approximately 10 000 priority-access households currently waiting for assistance on the Victorian Housing Register.

Others have touched on this, but the concept in the public consciousness and the public narrative of homelessness has evolved over time. I still think it lingers in people's minds that the only homelessness that exists is the really visible kind on the streets of the CBD or in the stories we may see online or in the media, but there are various levels of homelessness and housing stress. I have a number of those stories in my community, and I just want to refer to one. For the purposes of the *Hansard* record, I will call him John. John has been in insecure housing, sleeping rough and sleeping on friends' and family's couches. John has four kids — adult children and under 18. I have known John for about 20 years, and in the entire 20 years bar perhaps 5 he has been in insecure housing. It is pretty extraordinary.

One day last year he came to my office and he said, 'I'm just tired. I am tired of waking up in a new place. I am tired of not having my own space'. He is prone to getting angry and he is prone to getting frustrated

dealing with any agency, to be honest — from Centrelink to Victorian government agencies. It just reminds me that we all wake up on some days — except for the member for Essendon, who is always on a high — feeling like we cannot necessarily handle what the day has got in store for us. With all the privilege that we have — a comfortable bed, a comfortable home, food on the table — we are still not able to cope some days with what life has to throw at us. As the member for Pascoe Vale said, housing is one of those fundamental needs that is not only enshrined in the United Nations conventions but is so fundamental that it really sets you up for failure or success on any given day.

The thing with John is that he is not on any public housing list. He fell out. He fell out because he did not have a fixed address. He fell out because the bureaucracy asked him to comply with processes which were valid and appropriate at the time but at some point he could not comply with them. He is not one of those statistics that are in my notes here about how many thousands of people are waiting on housing lists, so how many more are waiting that are not registered?

John's example of not being on a list shows that the lists were really not flexible enough to accommodate his reality of moving from one place to another. He was missing important mail and not updating his details — all those things. This is an important step to turning the system into a consumer-centric system, where the applicant is the important person, not the sector. The sector is absolutely vital, but it needs to provide a seamless opportunity for applicants to register and to be prioritised across the entire gamut of the housing sector. I am really pleased that we are introducing this bill. I commend the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing and the government on their work in putting this together.

I want to reflect on the values that drive a Labor government to look after people who are faced with such a fundamental need as a lack of housing or who are suffering housing stress. I am reminded of the commitment by the then Minister for Housing under the Baillieu government, Wendy Lovell, made on 21 December 2010, recorded in *Hansard*. She said:

In conjunction with the development of the common housing register, I am planning to review the early housing and wait term arrangements. The Baillieu government will provide outcomes for clients with high needs more quickly by expanding the options available through a common housing register.

Mr Pearson — She never got around to it.

Mr DIMOPOULOS— As the member for Essendon says, she never got around to it.

Mr Pearson— She was going to do it.

Mr DIMOPOULOS— She was going to do it. If we were talking about putting up fairy lights down St Kilda Road, who cares, you can wait a few years. However, this is such a pressing issue. It is not good enough to have such a bold statement from the then minister at the very beginning of that government's term and then by the end of the term, which was two years ago, she had done very little in relation to the commitment she made four years earlier to the Victorian people.

As partisan as this may sound, the reality is that the previous Napthine and Baillieu governments failed to contemplate let alone deliver on the community housing policy. Victorian social and community housing experienced sustained and conscious underinvestment. Under the previous government's watch the priority waiting list doubled — doubled in that four-year period. Even with the knowledge of increased housing demand the Napthine government did not acquire new housing stock. It failed to support families experiencing homelessness and ignored those at risk of homelessness.

On the other side, the Andrews Labor government's investment in housing is in stark contrast to the chronic underinvestment in public housing by the previous government. For example, as the minister said in his second-reading speech, in 2016–17 this government set aside \$267 million for new projects and \$713 million for existing projects. In July we saw \$4.4 million invested in a state of the art, village-style residential development in Heidelberg West. This will accommodate single people, families and older persons. In September we saw \$30 million allocated to kickstart the Flemington housing estate development, which my good friend the member for Essendon had a big part in initiating.

In concluding my remarks I just want to acknowledge the outstanding contribution on this bill that my friend and colleague the member for Pascoe Vale made. She told the anecdote about her grandmother receiving a doorknocker in the exact opposite manner to what the doorknocker expected when she said, 'You already have people in your community like this' — in other words, responding to the idea that there is something genetically wrong with people who are homeless. There is nothing wrong with people who are homeless. We can all find ourselves in that position, and I think it is very important that we take note as a government and

as a public service. I am pleased to say that this is a very important step in achieving that outcome of taking note. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — It is with pleasure and a great deal of pride that I rise to speak on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. I speak with a great deal of pride because it is only ever the Labor Party that can be relied upon to deliver in this area. This bill creates the Victorian Housing Register, something that all of us as members of Parliament know is desperately needed. I only have to think about people who contact my office — indeed all our offices — on a daily basis to know just how much easier this will make the very traumatising process, in many ways, of seeking housing when you are homeless or close to homeless.

I always think of one particular couple who visited my electorate office shortly after I became an MP. This couple was in their late 70s. They were postwar migrants. They came to Australia seeking a better life, and they certainly got that. They worked hard. They finished up with their family home in East Bentleigh — your typical East Bentleigh three-bedroom brick veneer family home. After they retired they thought they were set for their rest of their lives and could enjoy their retirement, but that was not to be the case. They had assisted their children with certain investments that did not go well, and unfortunately they ended up being homeless. This is a common story. This couple, who were nearing 80, were then going between Salvation Army crisis accommodation and the homes of friends. They were really living day by day. If that story does not demonstrate the seriousness of this issue, I do not know what does.

Members of Parliament, electorate officers and housing organisations — and there are many of them — deal with cases like this every day. There are 33 000 people on the public housing waiting list, and more are waiting for community housing. That is a real problem, and while we have managed to bring that waiting list down, there is still more to do. However, an area of policy like this requires a great deal of bipartisanship, and I am afraid to say that in Victoria we do not have that bipartisanship. I refer to the recent Kingston City Council elections and this dirt sheet that I will now quote from. The dirt sheet talks about Cr Steve Staikos and Cr Tamara Barth, and I quote:

Cr Staikos has been a longstanding supporter of social/public housing and as a member of the Labor Party, would be required to follow party policy to densify our suburbs.

Cr Staikos facilitated the building of social housing on the car park of the Kingston town hall, by passing planning laws and ruining a multimillion-dollar community asset.

The dirt sheet goes on to say:

Cr Steve Staikos is a member of the Community Housing Federation of Victoria. Both Crs Staikos and Barth are committed to the local provision of social, subsidised housing...

The dirt sheet finishes with this:

Remember when you vote: to put the interests of Dingley Village first, place Crs Staikos and Barth at the bottom of your ballot paper.

This dirt sheet was authorised by Cr Paul Peulich. His mother is a longstanding member of the Liberal Party. She serves in the other place. She holds similar views. Should those opposite ever find themselves in government again, she will be a member of the cabinet. She will sit around the cabinet table making decisions on public housing matters. How can there be bipartisanship when people in the Liberal Party hold these views? How can there be bipartisanship when people in the Liberal Party think that the fact someone works in the homelessness and housing sector should be a point of derision to be used to sully the good name of a political opponent? How can there be bipartisanship when the alternative government of this state has members that hold these views?

What do you say to the elderly couple I just spoke about? What do you say to the mother and her children who are fleeing domestic violence and sleeping rough in a car? What do you say to all of those people in desperate need of housing? The Labor Party, this government and the former Labor government, has had to push ahead against one of the most vitriolic campaigns, waged by those opposite, to deliver for these vulnerable people. I am getting very emotional because I think back to 2009 and to my predecessor Rob Hudson, who was put through absolute hell by Inga Peulich and Wendy Lovell in the other place and by Elizabeth Miller, the former member for Bentleigh, when the Labor Party had the absolute audacity to propose a housing facility for women and children. They attended meetings. They signed petitions. They attended meetings where these people were called scum — they were called scum. They were derided.

The protest was one of the most vitriolic I have ever seen in Bentleigh, and I have lived in Bentleigh all of my 30 years. But Rob Hudson pushed through, the government of the day pushed through, and in 2013 this facility opened. At the time I was working for Simon Crean. Simon's final act as a federal member of Parliament was to officially open this facility. I

accompanied him to that opening. He met a six or seven-year-old little girl who lived in one of those apartments with her mother. It was the first time this little girl had had a bedroom — the first time. And as we were leaving Simon said to me, 'This is why we're in the Labor Party'. That was the final official event that Simon attended as the federal member for Hotham. But do you know who else was at the opening? Wendy Lovell and Elizabeth Miller were — those who campaigned against the housing for women and children were at this opening. They were there giving big hugs to elderly women and to young mothers, welcoming them there as if they always supported it. The truth is they did not support it. They did not want them there.

So I ask again: how are we ever to address the issue of 33 000 people on the public housing waiting list? How will we ever assist those people out there sleeping rough when the alternative government of this state plays politics with every issue but particularly with this one? How are we ever to address this issue? Well, we are going to address this issue because we are the Labor Party, because we are a good government and because we are constantly investing in public housing because we care.

The opposition does not have any speakers on this today, but they did yesterday. Their lead speaker gloated that the former government had decreased the public housing waiting list. He should not be gloating. They cut public housing funding by record amounts. The only reason that the waiting list decreased was that former government, in their miserable four years, just rode out on the coat-tails of the Rudd federal government's stimulus package — the billions of dollars that were poured into public housing during that time — which included this women's and children's housing facility that I just spoke of. That is why during that particular period of government the public housing waiting list decreased. It is nothing that they did. It was actually despite what they did that the public housing waiting list decreased at that time. It was absolutely despite what they did.

Mr Clark interjected.

Mr STAIKOS — I do not know what the member for Box Hill is saying as he is sitting at the table, but it is probably worth ignoring.

Mr Clark interjected.

Mr STAIKOS — Well, do you know what, Bob? You have been here too long. Frankly, those opposite should reflect on what they have done in the past, on

what they have not done in the past, on their hypocrisy, on their cruelty and on their callousness and turn a new leaf. Join with this government in addressing what is one of the biggest social issues of this state.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — I am certainly pleased to add my comments in regard to the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. The bill recognises the very important role of this government to support people who are looking to ensure they have ongoing housing, to ensure that people, even if they are on low incomes, are provided opportunities to have housing that is of good quality and that is secure. Clearly the government has a significant role to play in supporting those people.

We know that we have a very significant array of public housing across our state, and certainly within Ballarat and some of the smaller towns across my electorate we have a significant number of public housing units that are well utilised and greatly appreciated by those who are living in them. We also know that across Ballarat, as is the case across the state, we have a number of community housing units. It is interesting to see that over the last 10 years the number of community housing units has doubled to now represent about 25 per cent of the social housing options for people who are seeking suitable housing across our regions. In that regard I want to recognise the great work of UnitingCare Ballarat, which has a number of housing units across the Ballarat area and has been very innovative in using government funding, particularly the social housing innovations project funding that came in under the former Bracks government. I also recognise Centacare Ballarat, which has again been very innovative in establishing more community housing. Recently they purchased a former motel in Learmonth Road, Ballarat, and turned that into a housing unit complex that is working very well.

In an associated area, I was also pleased to be in Sebastopol a couple of weeks ago, where I opened the new independent living units operated by McCallum Disability Services. It is terrific to see that they are providing facilities for young people who otherwise might have still been living with their parents, which was causing the parents great distress in trying to support them. Now that they live independently they feel good about life and their parents can feel good about life. There are some fantastic stories right across my electorate of how people who have been able to get into social housing can feel so much better about their future. I am pleased that this government is looking to extend opportunities in this area and trying to make it easier for those who are seeking public or social housing. This bill establishes a single register, rather

than people having to register with both the government for public housing and with the various — and which are becoming numerous — community housing organisations, and applying separately to them. Under this bill we will see one register established next year so that once a person who has a housing requirement for whatever reason — whether they are low income, they are a person with a disability or they are suffering from a psychiatric disorder — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Buninyong shall continue his contribution when the matter is next before the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

MINISTRY

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I rise to inform the house that a member for Western Victoria Region in the other place, Ms Tierney, has been sworn in as Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections. I am also pleased to advise the house that the member for Macedon will replace Ms Tierney as Cabinet Secretary. Representative arrangements in this place remained unchanged.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Former Minister for Training and Skills

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Given that no clear statement has ever been made by you, Premier, former minister Steve Herbert or any other member of the government of exactly how many times Steve Herbert's pets were chauffeured around in his ministerial vehicle, will you now finally tell Victorians how many times these dogs were transported in a ministerial vehicle and how much money Steve Herbert still owes the taxpayer?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition put a question to the Premier in silence. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. These exact questions were put to former minister Herbert in the other place, and he has provided answers. I would direct the Leader of the Opposition — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind members that while today is Thursday, the Chair must continue to be able to hear the Premier when he is responding to a question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, Speaker, the former minister, Mr Herbert, has been asked these exact questions in the other place, and he has provided answers to those questions. As these are issues that he has gone directly to, I would direct the questioner to those answers.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Given that you will not give a straight answer, Premier, can you guarantee that Steve Herbert has only resigned because of \$192.80 worth of roting, or has he resigned now because you and your government do not want to disclose the full truth that Mr Herbert was a repeated rorter who chauffeured his pets almost every sitting week?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook is now warned, as is the member for Essendon. The Premier, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I cannot confirm any of the nonsense involved in the Leader of the Opposition's question. No member on this side of the house will be taking lectures on integrity from the Leader of the Opposition or any of his mates on that side of the house.

Ministers statements: whooping cough

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am pleased to update the house on the government's hard work every single day to put people across our state first. There is no better example of doing just that than us delivering in full on our commitment to reintroduce free whooping cough vaccinations for new and expectant parents, after those very vaccinations were cut by those opposite. Just for the record, who cut those vaccinations? Those opposite. That is what they did, shameful as it was. What that meant is that the number of reported whooping cough incidents across our community rose considerably. Since the return of the vaccination in June 2015, more than 152 000 whooping cough vaccinations have been provided to Victorian families. What great news for Victorian families.

This of course is in very stark contrast to the period we saw under those opposite, where they cut away these most basic of entitlements. We saw the number of

whooping cough cases soar to 3646 to November 2014. It has come right down now to 2462 cases to November this year. It is a great example of where, if you make cutbacks on those things that matter most, you will hurt Victorians, as opposed to keeping your promises, delivering support, doing the right thing — the smart thing — and protecting our most vulnerable across our state.

I thank the Minister for Health, who is also the Minister for Ambulance Services, for her hard work. I thank all of those local members on the government benches who have lobbied for this commitment and its delivery. These vaccinations, provided free, are saving lives. Cutting the program cost lives, and those who did it should be ashamed.

Hazelwood power station

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — My question is to the Minister for Industry and Employment. On Tuesday the minister said that 250 Hazelwood jobs would be retained for the site clean-up post-March 2017 and told the house that:

... we do welcome the decision by the company in relation to their workforce to keep workers on. Bearing in mind that this work could be done by contractors at the lowest cost ...

Minister, can you confirm that on Tuesday, Engie briefed Hazelwood staff and told them that only 12 people — 8 operators, 2 engineers and 2 chemists — would be retained from Hazelwood staff and the rest would in fact be contractors?

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Industry and Employment) — I thank the member for his question. In fact it is an important issue, and indeed we do welcome the commitment that has been made by Engie. In fact the company made it very clear that it would retain a significant number of both direct and indirect workers that are working there — roughly 50 per cent each, up to 250, both contractors and direct hire workers.

That is what the company has said, in its own media statement of last week, and that is to be welcomed. I know because both the Premier and I have visited the valley a number of times over the last seven days. We have sat and met with the union leaders, for example. It is in fact very important from their membership point of view that you do not have a whole swathe of contractors coming in from the valley to do the decommissioning work and indeed the rehabilitation work, which will clearly take a significant period of time. This is the information that has been conveyed by the company, and in fact conveyed publicly.

Supplementary question

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — Minister, if you cannot even get your facts right about how many Hazelwood employees are going to be given ongoing jobs, how on earth can Hazelwood workers and their families have any confidence that you will give them a real job in April 2017?

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Industry and Employment) — I thank the member once again for his question. I do acknowledge that in fact the local CEO of the company, Alex Keisser, spoke with the Premier on the morning of the announcement and also confirmed directly to the Premier that the company would retain up to 250 of those direct and indirect workers.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is entitled to silence. A question was put, the minister is answering, and the minister is being responsive. The minister will continue.

Mr NOONAN — Quite simply, we would expect the company to honour that.

Ministers statements: family violence

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — A new report released this week by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety shows that intimate partner violence poses the greatest risk to health for women aged 18 to 44, the greatest risk. Last month I stood beside family violence campaigner Rosie Batty to launch the respectful relationships curriculum from foundation to year 12. Making respectful relationships a compulsory subject from foundation to year 12 was a critically important recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The Andrews government is committed to acting on each and every one of the recommendations to help rid Victoria of the scourge of family violence — no exceptions to the royal commission's recommendations.

The curriculum has been trialled and it has been evaluated. We know it works. Schools get it, kids get it, principals get it. If I can quote from David Sutton, principal — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MERLINO — Excuse me? I quote from principal David Sutton — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister to continue, in silence.

Mr MERLINO — Disgraceful interjection. David Sutton — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister to continue, in silence, while making a ministers statement. The minister is entitled to silence, and the minister is entitled to respect from all members on both sides of the house.

Mr MERLINO — David Sutton, principal at Maryborough Education Centre:

Teaching children and young people about respect is far from radical ... I know from experience that respectful relationships education works.

And there are other quotes in support:

Our schools, in partnership with families and communities, play an important role in demonstrating and communicating to students what the Victorian community expects, respectful behaviour in all relationships.

That is a quote from the former Minister for Education in 2014, launching the curriculum for year 8 and 9 students. These resources:

... drive the attitudinal change needed in that gender-based violence is completely unacceptable ...

That is a quote from the former Minister for Community Services, Mary Wooldridge, now in the other place. Now they are saying a different story — deceitful and disgraceful.

Latrobe Valley employment

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — My question is to the Premier. Following the announcement of the closure of the Hazelwood power station, the government has spruiked the possibility of government departments and agencies being relocated to the Latrobe Valley. Premier, how can the Latrobe Valley community have any trust in your government actually following through on this latest promise when right now you are closing down Ambulance Victoria's regional headquarters in Morwell, costing further local jobs?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I do thank the member for Morwell asking a question of this government about ambulances — about ambulance services — where we saw month after month, year after year a fundamental failure — —

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance. The Premier was asked a question about jobs located in Morwell. The Premier is not in any way seeking to come to that question whatsoever. On relevance, I seek you to bring him back to the question that was asked of him.

Mr Foley interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing will come to order.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for South Barwon is warned.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, as the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing interjected earlier, the Premier was indeed asked about jobs and services and particularly around ambulances in the Gippsland area. As has been pointed out, the Premier has been speaking for 21 seconds so far, and he was going to the issues that were canvassed in the question. I would suggest that you allow the Premier to continue to answer the question, given he had only been speaking for 21 seconds before the Leader of the Opposition decided to attempt to make himself relevant to this place with his pointless point of order.

Ms Thomas interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Macedon is warned. The member will not be warned again. When the Premier is about to submit an answer to the house, the Premier will be heard in silence. There is no point of order at this stage.

Mr ANDREWS — The point that I am making is that those opposite are obviously embarrassed about their appalling performance when it comes to not only ambulance services but of course employment across regional Victoria. We have seen in two years a very different approach to regional unemployment — it is coming down as opposed to going up under those opposite. We are also creating more jobs across regional Victoria than — —

Mr Northe — On a point of order, Speaker, in regards to relevance. The question was in respect to ambulance headquarters in Morwell closing down and costing jobs. The Premier has failed to address that particular question or even mention the Ambulance Victoria headquarters in Morwell or the cost to local jobs. I ask you to bring him back to the question that was asked.

Ms Allan — Again, Speaker, this is simply renewing the point of order that was made earlier. The Premier still has 2 minutes and 3 seconds to conclude — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House will continue.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — It is astonishing from the people who cut 4200 public — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House will resume her seat. The Leader of the House to be heard in silence when making a point of order. The Leader of the House to come back to making a succinct point of order.

Ms Allan — That point was the Premier has got 2 minutes and 3 seconds to continue his answer, and I am sure he will provide the information to the house.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Lim — You just don't like the answer.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Clarinda. I do rest my case about Thursday. The member for Clarinda will come to order. The Premier will come back to answering the question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr ANDREWS — And here was me thinking that jobs in the valley was a serious issue. Apparently it is not to those opposite. The point I was making was the record of this government is well understood, whether it be ambulance services or indeed employment. On that issue, particularly in regional Victoria, we will continue to do all that we can to grow jobs and opportunities. In the valley the advice I have in relation to the Morwell ambulance station — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Warrandyte is entitled to silence when making a point of order.

Mr Richardson interjected.

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

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the Premier back to the question. The question was very simple: the Premier said he would move government agencies to Morwell. He is actually removing them.

The SPEAKER — Order! As a matter of fact, the Premier was being responsive before the member for Warrandyte stood up to make a point of order. I ask the Premier to continue in a responsive way.

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you very much, Speaker. As I was about to indicate, for the benefit of the member for Warrandyte and others, the advice I have is that in relation to the Morwell ambulance facility the lease on that facility has expired. What we are doing — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — No, the oracles know everything apparently — they know everything apparently over there on that side of the house. What is happening is that new premises are being sought, they will be secured and they will be in the region.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier, to continue responding to the member for Morwell.

Mr ANDREWS — They will be in the region. What is more, we will continue the rebuilding program for the Traralgon ambulance station as part of our record investment in ambulance infrastructure. Far from the assertions made by the member for Morwell, who is only interested in perhaps scaring his constituents instead of standing up for them, the government will stand with the people of Morwell and in all things and at all times look to grow jobs and opportunities for the good people of the Latrobe Valley and, what is more, the entire Gippsland region.

Supplementary question

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — Premier, given your government's pending closure of Ambulance Victoria's regional headquarters in Morwell, can you tell the community how many local staff have already been forced to relocate from Morwell, and can you guarantee that none of the remaining workers will be joining the thousands of people already in the unemployment queue in the Latrobe Valley?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — An unemployment queue that the member for Morwell has only just become interested in. For four years, up and up and up unemployment went in his community. He sat at the cabinet table, did not do a thing, did not say a thing and now he has found his voice.

Ms Staley — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is debating the question, and I would really ask you to bring him back to answering it.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I remind members that when the Chair is on his feet all members are to remain silent. The Premier will come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — So given the member's new-found interest in matters concerning the ambulance service and indeed his new-found interest in jobs in his own community — —

Mr Northe — On a point of order, Speaker, in terms of relevance. The question related to how many Ambulance Victoria staff in Morwell have been relocated out of the Morwell office. I remind the Premier that he might want to read in *Hansard* how many times I have raised the unemployment issue over these past two years under his government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the Deputy Premier. I warn the members for Euroa, Gippsland East and Morwell. When the Chair is on his feet all members will remain silent. I further warn the Minister for Health. There is no point of order. The Premier to continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — Yes, absolute lions on Main Street but when it gets to Spring Street or the cabinet room they did nothing. The cabinet table is round, but somehow The Nationals are always sitting in the corner.

The SPEAKER — Order! The manager of opposition business, on a point of order.

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The manager of opposition business will be heard in silence, and that includes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I renew the point of order made by the member for Ripon. The

Premier is debating the issue. It is a very serious question. He should come back to answering it.

Mr Richardson interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Mordialloc has been warned; I will not warn the member again. The Premier will come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — So \$266 million — that is what we invested just last week. In four years the member for Morwell delivered \$84 million. You do the math, member for Morwell. It is about action, not just words.

Ministers statements: government financial management

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to update the house and give it some good news on the economic and financial management front because those opposite are clearly looking a bit glum today. I have got good news for you. The *2016–17 Quarterly Financial Report No. 1* has been tabled in the Parliament today. The report shows that Victorian finances remain strong and also we have a quarterly surplus of \$480 million. That is consistent with us delivering a surplus of \$2.9 billion, as we predicted. It underlines the strong economic performance of the state and demonstrates that our AAA credit rating is justified and safe. It is a surplus that reflects the growth in opportunity and confidence that is underpinning this state, instead of just being built on the cruel and indiscriminate cuts and underinvestment of those opposite.

In the first three months of this financial year this government has invested \$1.6 billion in infrastructure, with a focus on rail, roads and hospitals. We have invested in things like the level crossing removal program, the Metro Melbourne rail tunnel, the western distributor, the Casey Hospital expansion and the Murray Basin rail project, to name but a few. This demonstrates our commitment to jobs. We have seen 31 000 new jobs in this quarter and a total of 105 000 jobs for the year to September. That is more jobs in one year than those opposite could muster in four slow, pathetic years. They were a government that stopped to think and forgot to start again, and when they finally did they proved themselves incapable of running a lemonade stand. We are leading the nation in jobs growth and we are getting it done.

Parole reform

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — My question is to the Premier. As the Premier will be aware, the Callinan

review of the parole system followed the murders of a number of victims at the hands of parolees. The Premier's first Minister for Corrections, the member for Williamstown, said that a new and comprehensive electronic case management system for the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, as recommended by the Callinan review, would be implemented by December last year. However, 10 months and three ministers later it has still not been implemented. Premier, with four corrections ministers in the last 10 months, is this revolving door of ministers now having a direct impact on community safety?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his question. The issues he raises are very serious and the answer to the question is no. In terms of the specifics around the implementation of the Callinan review, and indeed of other reviews in criminal justice, the government will honour each and every one of the commitments that we have made.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Those opposite can shout all they like, but we will honour each and every one of the commitments that we have made. This is not a matter that I would have thought was necessarily advanced by being a political football. I am more than happy — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Apparently those opposite do not agree that these matters ought to be agreed amongst all members of Parliament. That is their view. That is not my view. My view is that we would be in a stronger position if we all worked together to deliver on all of these reforms. That is a pretty logical position, I would have thought, one that apparently will not find support opposite.

To that end, I am more than happy to have relevant officials brief the shadow minister in terms of the substance of the question that he asks and any other matters that he or other shadow ministerial colleagues might be interested in being updated on. That, I think, is the appropriate way to go. But be in no doubt that the government will honour, deliver and meet all the commitments it has made in relation to keeping Victorians safe and making sure that we have the best systems and processes in place to do just that.

Supplementary question

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — Given the Premier's answer, I refer him to the comments of the adult parole board chair in the board's annual report, tabled last sitting week, in which the chair indicated that this

comprehensive case management system is still ‘in the development phase’. Given this unacceptable delay and with no completion date in sight, will the Premier give a commitment as to when this case management system will be finally completed and implemented?

Ms Asher interjected.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his supplementary question and the member for Brighton for her interjection, just to remind us all that she is still here. I would say that these matters are far more serious — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The Premier, to respond to the manager of opposition business on a supplementary question, in silence. The Premier will continue.

Mr ANDREWS — The vast majority of those important recommendations as part of the Callinan review — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, all the shouting in the world will not change the fact that the vast majority of the recommendations of the Callinan review have been implemented. When it comes to the development of a transformational change around IT and case management, I think it is better to get it right than to rush it and potentially get it wrong. On that basis the government will deliver on all of its commitments and deliver a functional outcome, one that serves the interests of all Victorians, rather than that which motivates those opposite — irrelevance and political games.

Ministers statements: unconventional gas

Ms D’AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I rise to inform the house about the Andrews Labor government’s ongoing commitment to protect our world-class primary producers, our regional communities and our natural environment with our permanent ban on fracking in Victoria. We said that we would consult with the community. We did, we listened and we put them first, and they keep telling us how relieved they are right across the state. This is a government that makes policy decisions that are informed by the evidence, the opinions of experts and the views of the community.

We honoured our commitment with a parliamentary inquiry that put the clean, green reputation of Victoria’s agriculture and environment first. Meanwhile those opposite continued to play their cynical political games, using regional Victorians as a political football yet again. Our inquiry was open, transparent and informed by the evidence, unlike those opposite, who brought in Peter Reith to do a dodgy review in secret and with no science behind it — absolutely none behind it.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Morwell is warned. The member for Lowan is warned.

Ms D’AMBROSIO — It is really important when you claim an interest in what regional communities think and need that you actually mean it and do something about it — that you actually act on it. To the member for Morwell and the member for Malvem: people remember who shut them out and people remember who left them behind.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker. I draw your attention to sessional orders, which provide for ministers statements to advise the house about matters, not to debate the issue. I ask you to bring the minister back to making a ministers statement.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will come back to making a ministers statement.

Ms D’AMBROSIO — Speaker, thank you very much. The facts speak for themselves, the evidence speaks for itself. Only Labor will stand up for these communities because it is absolutely clear those opposite do not have the spine to fight on the issues that matter to ordinary people in regional communities. Our government has made commitments. We will continue to honour those commitments. We will see it through, and we will make sure that every single person in regional Victoria is represented and gets the actions that they need from this government.

Mr Pesutto interjected.

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

Metropolitan Remand Centre

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — My question is to the Premier. As the Premier will be aware, following the Metropolitan Remand Centre riot in June last year, the worst in Victoria’s history according to the commissioner for corrections, the government commissioned Kieran Walshe to undertake a review.

That review was handed to the government 11 months ago and made 17 recommendations. Premier, is it not a fact that, 11 months on, only 5 of the 17 recommendations have been fully implemented, further evidence that this revolving door of corrections ministers is now compromising community safety?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Box Hill for his question. He references the completely unacceptable behaviour at the Metropolitan Remand Centre and the fact that Kieran Walshe, a respected Victorian, was commissioned by the government to look into all the circumstances that occurred there. We made a detailed response to his report. That was back in December 2015, and it involved \$51.9 million in additional support to deal with security matters at the remand centre. That, I would have thought, would be something welcomed by all Victorians.

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, that was \$51.9 million, and it sure beats cutting the resources available. The sustainable government initiative — we all remember — —

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — There is lesson 1 from the member for Kew or Hawthorn, wherever he is from. Putting in \$51.9 million is better than that amount being taken out — and much more. That is what we did in the 2016–17 budget. We even added a further \$43.4 million over four years. All of the recommendations made by Mr Walshe are on track to be delivered by 2018. A number of them have been fully implemented, a number have been partially implemented and work is ongoing. That is about construction to repair damage and also to deal with underlying challenges.

I will not go into those details because we hardly want to be informing the criminal element of any deficiencies there might be in the architecture and fabric of that facility. But it was not simply a matter of repairing damage that had been done in that incident; there were serious flaws that needed to be addressed, and that work is ongoing. So the government has provided our support and our funding — the funding of all Victorians — and all of those with responsibility for these matters are working very hard to deliver them in full. On that point, I would single out Mr Walshe for praise, the staff at Corrections Victoria and all of those who are involved in delivering the government's comprehensive response, to not just repair the remand

centre but to make it stronger and more secure than it has ever been.

Ms Neville interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Police will come to order.

Supplementary question

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — The first of the Premier's four corrections ministers, the member for Williamstown, said in his media release of 21 December 2015 that the upgrade of the remand centre would be completed by mid-2017 at the very latest. However, as the Premier referred in his previous answer, that date has now blown out by up to 12 months. Will the Premier now provide a guaranteed date by which this upgrade of the Melbourne Metropolitan Remand Centre will be completed and returned to full capacity? Or is the revolving door of corrections ministers making it impossible for the government to manage important community safety initiatives like this?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I again draw the member's attention to the fact that we have had a detailed report from Mr Walshe. We have accepted it in full or in part and are getting on and delivering on every one of those recommendations. We will deliver both the repairs from damage done and the additional infrastructure improvements that Mr Walshe's review spoke directly to. Now, of course we will not be going into the exact detail of what some of those things are because, as I said, we will not be informing the criminal element of those matters, those perhaps structural issues, left to us by the previous government.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is now going over matters he covered in his response to my substantive question. My supplementary question was a very specific question about a completion date, and I ask you to bring him back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order at this stage. The Premier will continue.

Mr ANDREWS — I can inform the member for Box Hill that the advice I have is that there has been a full restoration in relation to damage, so it is back to the position it was in before the appalling behaviour we saw — the criminal behaviour we saw — in that riot. There are, however, other matters that need to be attended to, and I will not go to the detail of those; that would be fundamentally irresponsible. That work will be completed as soon as it possibly can be because of

the funding of this government and the hard work of officials involved.

Ministers statements: western suburbs roads

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — I rise today to update the house about how local residents and commuters in Melbourne’s west will benefit from a huge package of road upgrades and maintenance work that will cut travel times, improve road safety and better connect communities to key growth areas. As we know, the western metropolitan region is expected to double in numbers by 2031. Thirty-six thousand people in the last 10 years have made Point Cook their home. One in four people have moved to the west. This week the Andrews government made a major announcement, calling for expressions of interest for a western package of the outer suburban — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is making a ministers statement, very importantly, on the western suburbs. The Chair would expect the minister to talk about the electorate of Tarneit. Therefore the minister will continue, in silence.

Mr DONNELLAN — As we know, this commitment was a \$1.8 billion investment, the biggest ever. It combines eight high-priority road upgrades with maintenance on more than 700 kilometres of road stretching from Werribee to Footscray, ensuring motorists benefit from the new high-quality roads while the existing network is maintained to an incredibly high level. That will involve a combination of duplications and widenings.

I sincerely congratulate the members of Parliament who have lobbied for this. That includes — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is entitled to silence. The minister is about to congratulate particular members of Parliament in the western suburbs. Particularly at that point there should be silence in the house.

Mr DONNELLAN — Thank you, Speaker. I want to congratulate members. The member for Altona has done a marvellous job on that, as has the member for Werribee, who has kindly and also generously given the money. I thank also the member for Tarneit, who I can say quite honestly was jumping for joy when we told him we were going to spend \$1.8 billion.

This is very much in stark contrast to the last lot. We know what they were good at doing: they were good at doing dress-ups. They would get the hard hat on, and it was dancing — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Speaking about the western suburbs and the electorate of Tarneit is certainly an exciting matter and a good matter to talk about, but the minister should continue, in silence.

Mr DONNELLAN — Where was I? I had the hard hat on and I was dancing with Denis, but nothing was happening. It was all a mirage because there were no roads being built and no duplications started, completed or contracted during the last term of your lot.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister’s good statement has now concluded. The time for questions without notice and ministers statements has now concluded.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I raise again in this house a point of order on a constituency question raised on 13 September for the Minister for Education. It is the third time in this chamber I have asked for an answer. It has well exceeded the 30-day response time. On two occasions previously requests have been made via yourself through the Speaker for a response. We are approaching the summer period, and the new school of Eastwood Primary School has two pods that have no airflow doing the summer months, and I ask with some urgency that we get a response to that question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I will refer that to the Speaker. We are going to sit down and have some discussions in terms of the responses as well.

Ferntree Gully electorate

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — (11 986) My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, and it is on behalf of one of my residents in Tyloid Square in Wantirna. Currently it is understood that the property at 20 Tyloid Square is owned by the ministry of housing. A tenant, we understand, died in that facility, and there was a fire, I am advised, allegedly perpetrated by a tenant. My understanding is that this property now lays derelict, and as a consequence of that there is no movement on the cleaning and the potential future of the site. On behalf of the residents in Tyloid Square, Wantirna, they wish to know what the future use of 20 Tyloid Square

is, whether or not this property is going to be sold by the ministry of housing, if it owns it, and if so, will a new house be constructed?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! That was actually three questions, so we will just take the first one.

Broadmeadows electorate

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — (11 987) My question is to the Minister for Creative Industries. What information is available from his department about establishing an innovation hub in Broadmeadows to address jobs for the future following deindustrialisation? Repurposing old factories can provide creative opportunities. The Ericsson factory is an example. It has been used as the set and production office for the US television series *Hunters*, the Emmy award-winning children's program *Nowhere Boys* and the Australian commercial television series *Molly*. The ABC has used the site in the production of the satire *Shaun Micallef's Mad as Hell* and the drama *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, defining how creative industries are emerging and producing new jobs. The ABC's upcoming legal drama *Newton's Law*, starring Claudia Karvan, also features the Hume Global Learning Centre in Broadmeadows. We can build on such opportunities.

Morwell electorate

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — (11 988) My constituency question is to the Minister for Resources. Minister, what is the latest information with regard to your government's coal policy, which is supposed to be released before the end of this year? At a time of escalating unemployment in the Latrobe Valley many people within our community are keen to understand your government's position on the future use of brown coal and how it might be applied to a whole range of projects and purposes. In addition to this, there are a number of properties within the Latrobe City area that currently have coal overlays placed over them. In many of these cases these properties will never be mined in reality, and therefore these overlays are stifling any sort of potential development which is much needed in our community. One example is at the western end of Morwell — indeed the entrance to the township — where a vacant parcel of land sits between two major roads. It will never be mined but it has an overlay sitting on the top of it, and this limits the owner in developing the land to its full potential. I ask the minister for the latest information with respect to his government's coal policy.

Eltham electorate

Ms WARD (Eltham) — (11 989) My question is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. What is the minister doing to promote tourism in the local government areas of Banyule and Nillumbik? As the minister will be aware, my community is vibrant, beautiful and creative. In October, along with the member for Yan Yean, we hosted an event to promote Nillumbik as a great place not only to visit but also in which to create and promote local businesses. This well-attended event was co-sponsored by Melbourne Polytechnic and the local branch of the Bendigo Bank. Key speakers for the event included Professor Michael Buxton and Kathryn Mackenzie of Bendigo Tourism, who spoke about the challenges and key success factors in growing a strong regional tourism reputation. We know that tourism not only helps local economies but also helps create local jobs.

It was clear at this event that my electorate has a great deal of wonderful, unique qualities to offer not just locals but also visitors from near and far. It needs to be noted that business owners and operators who attended spoke about the challenge in belonging to an interface area — not quite city and not quite country. Our green wedge, our river, our food and wine production, and our historical and cultural attributes are great assets for the region, but we need to do more — —

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

Caulfield electorate

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — (11 990) My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. In 2014 both the Liberal and Labor parties committed \$9.5 million to upgrade Glen Eira College. I acknowledge the government for starting on this important redevelopment of our school. However, while the school is set to receive the much-needed upgrades, the safety of the students remains under threat due to the Booran Road, Caulfield, pedestrian crossing which students use to access the gym and English-language centre during lunch. Currently the speed limit is 40 kilometres an hour only from 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. and 60 kilometres an hour at other times despite there having been, as a result, multiple incidents of students nearly being hit. There have been numerous requests to make the crossing safe by the school's parents association and myself, but no-one seems to be listening in terms of this government or minister — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Can you ask your question, please?

Mr SOUTHWICK — Minister, why are you ignoring the safety concerns of Glen Eira College and not taking action to make the Booran Road pedestrian crossing safe by implementing a 40-kilometre-an-hour speed zone outside the times when school is starting and finishing?

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — (11 991) I direct my constituency question to the Minister for Health. Minister, what is the latest information on the rollout of the new fleet of helicopters for the air ambulance service that is based at Essendon Fields?

Shepparton electorate

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — (11 992) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. The question I ask of the minister is: on what train services on the V/Line Shepparton–Melbourne line during the last six months was there a failure to provide the usual buffet car amenity, and what steps are being taken to address the situation? The Shepparton railway station has no cafe, not even a coffee machine, and there are no facilities near the station where people can purchase hot food and drinks. Many of the travellers who take the 6.30 a.m. train have travelled for hours by bus from Griffith and look forward to purchasing food and drinks for their breakfast in the buffet car, as do the local travellers. When I recently travelled on that service an announcement was made immediately before the train's departure that there would be no buffet offered. One of my constituents referred to three such occasions when she had recently travelled, the excuse on the first occasion being lack of stock and on the two other occasions not enough staff. My constituents have much to put up with on the Shepparton line. Surely they can expect basic buffet facilities.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (11 993) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health. From the number of kilojoules and the source of palm oil to animal rennet and animal fats, chemicals and preservatives, consumers in my electorate want to know what they are eating. I ask the minister what avenues are available in particular to influence palm oil being appropriately and transparently labelled on food products. People want to know what is in the food they are eating. They have the right to make not just healthy but socially aware choices in this regard. I draw to the attention of the house the important campaign by Zoos Victoria to have palm oil accurately recorded on food labels. Whilst this issue has been fought and won in

other parts of the world, food manufacturers in Australia are still allowed to include palm oil as a vegetable oil on their labels. As well as unknowingly making an unhealthy food choice, many people do not realise they are contributing to the deaths of over 1000 orangutans a year as their habitat and that of the Sumatran elephants and tigers is destroyed through unsustainable production of palm oil. Food Standards Australia New Zealand will meet later this year to decide whether Australia will commit — —

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

Kew electorate

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — (11 994) My question is to the Minister for Police. What is the Minister for Police doing to combat the crime scourge that is currently affecting Kew, particularly the tacker on the Yarra Boulevard who is laying nails and tacks on Yarra Boulevard and has been doing so for the last two years? We have had this issue for two years. The police need more resources. I am simply wanting to know: what is the minister doing to combat this really important issue for my local community?

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (11 995) My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. I understand progress has been made on replacing the stairs at the Sailors Falls Reserve. My question is: when will this work be complete? At Sailors Falls, near Daylesford, a staircase provides access to a walk in the Hepburn Regional Park, but after damage caused by repeated heavy rain the staircase has had to be closed. It has now been closed for well over a year. Constituents of mine, Robert and Margaret McDonald, who run the Sailors Falls Estate villas and vineyard business in the area, have been tirelessly campaigning for the replacement of the staircase.

HOUSING AMENDMENT (VICTORIAN HOUSING REGISTER AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by question time, this housing bill is very important. It recognises that there are 65 000 public housing units and 21 000 community housing units across the state. They are doing a great

job in supporting people on low incomes who are often also people with disabilities or mental health concerns. There are a range of reasons why people may not be able to find housing in the private market, and therefore the government has a role to play.

One of the problems has been that with the proliferation of community housing organisations often people have had to apply to a range of different organisations to have their requirement or wish to obtain public housing recorded. What this bill does is establish a Victorian Housing Register which will simplify that arrangement so that we will have one register. When a person is listed on that register with the details associated with their need for public housing, that will be able to be picked up by all of the community housing organisations as well as the public housing sector, and they will be prioritised accordingly. The director of the department will be able to establish the reasons and criteria for prioritisation so that it will be fair across the board. It will not be a matter of people having to find out about the separate community housing organisations and apply separately to them. They will know that once they are on a list, it will be worked through appropriately and with a transparent approach to their priorities.

The other issue that is of concern to some people is whether, once they have put their name on the register, that means that private information about them can be shared. This bill specifies clearly the means by which that information will be kept so that their privacy will be maintained. Only specific people within the housing authorities will have access to that information, and only specific information will be shared across to the community housing organisations — that which will clearly be in the interest of those people applying for housing, but their privacy will be protected.

This bill recognises that the government wants to ensure that the needs of those people who are seeking housing are met as well as they can be. We know that there are too many people who are still homeless across this state and certainly in my electorate. Most members of the house will have had homeless people come to see them or contact them seeking housing and saying, ‘What can you do to help us get on the public housing register or to see that we are prioritised? We have significant need’ — themselves and possibly their children — ‘for that housing support immediately’.

As I said earlier on in my speech, I am certainly pleased that the department has been working well to support people in public housing. But we have had other supporting groups. UnitingCare have been able to provide emergency housing to many other people, as

have Centacare, as have McCallum Disability Services in supporting their clientele, people with disabilities and a range of other groups across our community who do have access to community housing. We want to ensure, and this government will be making a significant statement soon about this, there is further capital expenditure in terms of housing in our state. We are anxious. We would of course like the support of the federal government too. The federal government needs to recognise that it should be providing appropriate support for public housing as well.

The Andrews Labor government is determined to reduce those waiting lists of people who are without housing across the state. We will be committing further capital funding to ensure that we can gain more housing units across the state, whether that be directly in the public housing sector or — as we have been continuing to support — some of the community housing organisations so that we can have a broad range of housing. Certainly in Ballarat this is working very, very well, I believe, but still more needs to be done. We want to make sure that people who are seeking housing can more easily have their names put on the housing register and that their priorities will be recognised, which will mean that they will have a clear path to community housing and social housing in accordance with their needs.

This government by bringing forward this bill is recognising one important area that we need to address. There will of course be further announcements, ahead of the coming budget that will be brought down next year, from this government recognising that we want to do more to support all people to have housing. It is a vital need. Everyone needs to have appropriate housing so they can have the security of housing and set their lives around it. It is great to see that, associated with so much housing in the social area, we have support services to also address other needs.

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) — I rise to speak on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. This bill amends the Housing Act 1983 to create a single Victorian Housing Register. This is about making it more effective and much easier for people who are vulnerable and in need of community housing or public housing. The housing register will replace the separate housing waiting lists of over 40 community housing providers and make them one single register. This is important for a number of reasons. The bill will enable more housing opportunities for vulnerable Victorians and those who are in need of safe public or community housing. The register will also make it easy for those in need of housing, rather than having them make over

40 applications in some cases, with a much more effective waiting list. It will also allow greater control over personal information within the registry. It will be simple and it will improve and streamline public housing waiting lists.

Of course in my electorate of St Albans there is not a week that goes past without a constituent coming into my office with issues related to housing. From families to senior citizens to young people there clearly is an issue when it comes to appropriate housing in our community. There is no doubt the rise in property prices and the inability of most people to get into the market have caused much concern and much heartache for my constituents. The increase in the rental market has made it unaffordable for most people as well. This is why it is so important and so vital that we have appropriate public housing options and social housing agencies to assist those communities and those people that need assistance.

We know that 90 per cent of public housing tenants are on fixed government benefits. We also know that the Andrews Labor government believes that everybody in our community, regardless of their postcode and background, must have access to affordable, stable and long-term accommodation. This is critical for families and for individuals to fully be a part of the community. There is nothing greater than having your own home. We have seen in the last few years — unfortunately under the previous government — enormous cuts in these areas. We are now catching up in relation to the appropriate funding for public housing and agencies in our communities. We have had people like Jenny Smith, the CEO of Council to Homeless Persons, agree. She said that:

The current processes to get into social housing can be complicated ... frustrating for people experiencing homelessness.

A single statewide housing register for all public and community housing applications will provide a clearer and simpler method of ... allocating vacancies when they arise.

As we have heard, the numbers are significant. We know that there are over 33 000 families currently waiting on the list. This is heartbreaking, quite frankly. I see this firsthand in my community in St Albans. I live in an estate across the road from public housing, and I see what it means for families who live in public housing. I see how they prosper when they have safe and secure accommodation for their children and their loved ones. Sometimes they are pensioners who live on their own. I am very fortunate to have such fantastic neighbours. I see how grateful they are to have permanent accommodation. I also see those who are

still on the waiting list after many, many years. One constituent in particular — a senior citizen and a pensioner — has some significant health issues. She has no family, she lives on her own and she cannot afford rent. She is in temporary accommodation. She has been on the waiting list for more than four years, and it does not seem that this particular constituent will ever see the end of the tunnel and some positives.

Hopefully we can change that with this single system that we are going to put in place, particularly for those constituents from non-English-speaking backgrounds. I do get a lot of constituents coming into my office that need assistance completing the application from the Department of Health and Human Services. The thought of filling out another 40 forms and finding these agencies — imagine how difficult filling out application forms would be for someone who is already under enormous stress and in enormous grief in relation to where they are going to spend the night. That should be the last thing for someone to stress about in those sorts of circumstances.

I am extremely happy to assist my constituents fill out these forms when they come into my office. Making sure that we have a system that is easy to use for those who are in need and ensuring that they have every opportunity to have their name placed in every agency to be able to access safe accommodation is our priority. Already we have seen the Andrews Labor government invest over \$152 million in a family violence housing blitz in this budget, which is helping to address the greatest source of growth in housing need. This included \$50 million in rapid housing assistance that delivered an instant boost to housing in local government areas across the state. It also included \$25 million towards accommodation for the homeless.

We on this side of the house understand the importance of helping Victorians — every Victorian in every community — find safe places to live. We are committed to improving the public housing system and putting people first — and putting families first. This is one of the key issues that our community is facing, particularly in St Albans, in areas such as Sunshine and in areas in the west. A recent survey by a legal centre described public housing clients: 92 per cent had low incomes, 84 per cent came from non-English-speaking backgrounds, 31 per cent were single parents and over 60 per cent were women. These are the clients who are in the west, waiting for public housing. These are the issues; they are real. Quite frankly, with this system we will see an improvement in the structure of the public housing system. But of course this cannot be the only thing; we need to do much more when it comes to public housing in our communities.

Just recently I saw a number of properties being constructed for public housing. That is good to see, but we need to build more. We need to make sure that at some point we can eliminate the issue of homelessness. The most vulnerable in our community can and must have a safe home. Our ageing community must be able to confidently live in homes that they are safe in and not couch-surf from one property, or couch, to another. It is just not acceptable.

I am extremely passionate about this issue. More needs to be done. This is a step to make sure that at least there are fewer complications for those who are vulnerable and for those who need to be in the system and apply for housing. We need to make sure that every agency has their name, and that as soon as possible they and their families are placed in accommodation. We need to make sure that we have every structure in place for our communities.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong)— It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. This is an extremely important bill, as we have heard from other speakers. The primary function of this bill before us today is to amend the Housing Act 1983 to create the Victorian Housing Register.

In Victoria today we have approximately 65 000 public housing units and approximately 21 000 community housing units. As we all know, these units house people on low incomes who need particular housing assistance, especially those at risk of homelessness or those who may have experienced family violence or have other complex needs. Every day in our electorate offices we come across many of these people who need this sort of assistance. We are very familiar with the sorts of challenges that face many in our community. Sadly, some of the pressures that lead to individuals needing to seek this sort of assistance are growing, and I would like to touch on that a little bit later in my contribution.

Our housing system as it currently stands is not simple and is quite fragmented. There are over 40 community housing agencies that provide different kinds of housing to meet varying needs. Each of these agencies separately and independently manages their own housing list and application processes, which means that the process of applying for a home is arduous, it is burdensome, and often involves a person having to draft a number of different applications for each agency and undergo different processes for each. I think we would all agree that this is fairly inefficient.

The creation of a Victorian Housing Register will greatly improve this process and enable greater social

housing opportunities for vulnerable Victorians. Many of us have been given cause in this place to reflect on the pressures leading to housing insecurity. It is a big issue in our community today and one that, as our population grows and other pressures increase, we know is only going to be a bigger issue in times to come. We know that property prices have risen faster than wages. The state government cannot address all these pressures alone, but unfortunately our current federal government has refused to engage in a meaningful debate on these matters. In fact they shut down their own inquiry into housing affordability, which seems a rather bizarre step at a time like this. We are seeing more people forced into the rental market for longer periods of time. These are not only low-income people; we are seeing middle-income earners forced into rental markets for longer periods, which of course puts more pressure on those worse off and therefore more pressure on social housing agencies to assist a greater number of people.

Far from wanting to be a part of the solution, the current federal government has exacerbated this problem. For example, we know that over 90 per cent of public housing tenants are on fixed government benefits and that the private rental market also has a high proportion of these tenants. These people are very much dependent on government assistance in order to survive, so what happens when a government takes an axe to welfare support? We may find out yet again as a result of the plans of this federal government. The federal government's proposed \$6 billion cut to welfare will heap more pressure on those already doing it tough, and it will see more and more people move into the social housing system. Those opposite and their federal counterparts try desperately to blame others for this situation. They set their gaze on the planning portfolio in particular. However, the reality is that their cuts are a significant cause of rising pressure, rising stress and higher levels of inequality in our community today. Those levels of inequality and the fact that we are heading in the wrong direction has been recently reported on. It was quite shocking, certainly to all those on this side of house, but I would also hope to those in the broader community.

The good news in this story is that the Andrews Labor government and our wonderful Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing are doing all they can to try to address mounting pressures with the limited levers at their disposal. This bill forms a part of that effort.

As demand for housing has grown, so too has the number of housing agencies. I am told the community housing sector has almost doubled in size in the past 10 years. Those figures have gone from some 10 509

properties in 2006 to some 19 597 properties today. This now represents 25 per cent of the state stock. The Council of Australian Governments targets under the former Labor government set growth on a path to reach 35 per cent of Victoria's housing stock, which highlights how important it is that we make it as easy as possible for people to apply and that we make opportunities more accessible and transparent.

Having a single list makes the housing system much simpler for people who are likely already doing it tough and facing a situation of extreme stress. Following the recent Royal Commission into Family Violence, we reflect on the situation of a woman fleeing family violence. To think that she may have to fill out 40 different applications in order to find emergency housing is quite unreasonable; I think we can all agree on that. This piece of legislation is an acknowledgement of that, but more than that it seeks to act on these certain situations and make meaningful change. This list also takes the randomness out of the system to some extent, so instead of luck determining who applies to the right agency at the right time, with everyone applying through one gateway, housing agencies can reach a broader number of people in need and house those in greatest need sooner, which I think we would all agree is a better outcome, one which will lead to a much better managed system.

As a government we have listened to Victorians in need and in the housing sector in implementing this reform that is before us today. This is a reform that was called for by the Community Housing Federation of Victoria, the Victorian Council of Social Service, the Victorian Public Tenants Association, the Council to Homeless Persons, the Tenants Union of Victoria, Domestic Violence Victoria and Justice Connect Homeless Law. That alone shows us that there is a strong level of support for the measures included in this bill, and that is very heartening indeed.

The bill also sets out in detail the information sharing requirements which form a large part of this bill. It sets out what kinds of information can be kept about an individual, who can access that information, how they can access that information and what they can do with that information, which are all common sense additions to this bill.

The legislation also ensures that positive discrimination for vulnerable groups requiring housing can occur to rectify the negative discrimination they often suffer. The most obvious example of this involves our Indigenous population, who as a result of a range of factors, including experiencing discrimination in the private rental market, make up some 25 per cent of our

nation's homeless population. My local Aboriginal community have raised these concerns with me previously. I have met many, particularly young, Indigenous people who have talked about their strike rate in applying for homes in the private rental market. It gets to a point where I think they can only explain it by virtue of the colour of their skin essentially. It is quite disturbing that we are still confronting these things in mainstream Australia, but it is a reality for a great many people.

We have shown our commitment to Indigenous housing with a landmark transfer of 1448 properties from the director of housing to Aboriginal Housing Victoria. The Premier said at the time that it is a major step towards self-determination for Victoria's Aboriginal people and it will result in better housing outcomes for our people in the future. It is a proud and historic day for Victoria's Aboriginal community. So I am glad we have been able to influence some very practical measures to assist our Aboriginal community, as well as taking those more symbolic but also important measures like flying the Aboriginal flag over Parliament House permanently.

I would also like to take the opportunity reflect on what I think is Labor's very strong record on housing, despite what those opposite might say. We know that 33 073 families are waiting for housing. Despite that figure being lower than at any time under the last government, it is still too high. We know that while we are making some very important investments, there is still a lot further to go.

Mind you, it is also worth reflecting that the previous government did not assist one single bit, with four years of cuts and neglect. That is why we are seeking to repair the damage that those opposite inflicted on some of our most vulnerable Victorians for four miserable years. That is why we have invested \$152 million in our family violence housing blitz in our most recent budget, which starts with addressing the greatest source of growth in housing need. That included \$50 million in rapid housing assistance. It also included \$25 million for accommodation for the homeless. We funded \$21 million to begin redeveloping existing refuges to fit the new core and cluster models and to provide 24-hour staffing at up to six refuges. There is \$16 million to provide private rental assistance and support, and \$40 million to provide flexible tailored responses to meet the individual needs of victims of family violence.

We are also growing more social housing for our growing population. We know that that is a really important issue into the future. I could list many more millions of dollars of investment that this government

has put into our housing sector. It is something to be incredibly proud of. Indeed I am very proud. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016. I congratulate the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing on bringing this bill to the house. As we have heard from the previous speaker, the member for Dandenong, those on the other side of the house — the Liberal Party — sat on their hands on this issue for four years. We saw public and social housing completely neglected. I mention that because I am glad to see the former minister for housing in the Brumby government here in the house. I know he will be speaking on this bill. His passion for public housing is longstanding and well known. I congratulate him also for all the work he has done.

As we have heard, social housing is made up of two types: public housing and community housing. In Victoria we have approximately 65 000 public housing units and 21 000 community housing units. Social housing is for people on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other complex needs. There are over 40 community housing agencies providing a diverse range of properties for those with a range of needs. Each agency manages its own housing waiting list and application processes independently. This bill, importantly, streamlines this process, making it easier for people to apply for a broader range of housing.

What a commonsense proposition this bill presents. One has to query why the former government was unable to take any action on this despite the former minister back in 21 December 2010 speaking of the work she intended to do. She said:

In conjunction with the development of the common housing register, I am planning to review the early housing and wait term arrangements. The Baillieu government will provide outcomes for clients with high needs more quickly by expanding the options available through a common housing register.

That is just one example of the lies that were told by the former minister for housing and the former failed Napthine–Baillieu government when it came to meeting the needs of Victoria’s most vulnerable people.

This brings me to speak a little about my own electorate. I am always at pains to point out to members in this house that while my electorate of Macedon is renowned for its restaurants, fine boutique wineries, spas and mineral baths, and fantastic local festivals, it is

really very important that the government understands — and certainly the Andrews Labor government is a government that seeks to understand — that I have pockets of extreme disadvantage in my community. My role in this place is to do what I can at every opportunity to speak on behalf of those people.

So today I want to speak a little about the people in my community who are social housing tenants. As I understand it, on 30 June 2016 the total number of social housing properties in the Macedon Ranges — I make the point that it is the Macedon Ranges I am talking about, not the electorate of Macedon — is 310, of which 105 are community owned. I also note that the following housing associations are active in my electorate: Haven Home Safe; Common Equity Housing Ltd; and Housing Choices Australia. I would really like to commend those social housing agencies for the work they do in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of my community.

As Labor members are wont to do, we doorknock our communities and take the time to listen carefully to the needs of our community members. I have met with many of my social housing tenants by knocking on their doors and speaking to them. I know how precarious the lives of so many of these people are. It is really my great privilege every single day to work in the interests of the most disadvantaged and marginalised in my community. I support this bill because it is one way in which we are making it simpler and easier for those people who are doing it toughest to be able to access the services they need.

I will tell you a little bit about my electorate. I also wanted to use this opportunity to note the work of my parliamentary intern for this semester, Timothy Schmidt. Like me, he is a Kyneton resident. He has written a report for me entitled *Macedon — Affordable housing as a building block for a sustainable future*. It is subtitled *An examination of the availability of and barriers to affordable housing in Macedon*. I am delighted that I received this report. I received it only yesterday, so I have not had a great deal of time yet to absorb its contents, but I might say that what Tim has drawn to my attention is what I had suspected and what I spoke about briefly before. When we think about housing affordability in my electorate and when we think about the demographics of my electorate, again what Tim has brought home to me is how important it is that we dig deeper into the data and the statistics in order to really understand what is going on in an electorate like mine.

Tim points to the fact that the average household income for the Macedon Ranges shire in 2011 — he is using that census data — was \$1386, compared to \$926 in regional Victoria and \$1213 in Victoria as a whole. Looking at this you would be thinking that we are doing very well in my community. The point that I want to make again in this place is that, yes, there are pockets of my electorate that are very advantaged and where there are many high-income earners; however, the distribution of income across my electorate is very unequal, and Tim points to the fact that under closer inspection this becomes clear.

The median household income within the Macedon Ranges shire itself ranges from \$846 in Kyneton, where I live, to \$1745 in Mount Macedon, so that is a significant income differential. When seeking to understand housing stress, housing affordability and the needs of my community we need to pay close attention to that income differential. I am indebted to Tim for the report. I really look forward to reading it in some depth and using his findings to inform the policy of this Andrews Labor government; which I am certain it will, because this is a government that, as I said, is committed to doing what it can every step of the way to advance the interests of the most vulnerable, the poorest and the most marginalised members of our community. We will always proudly stand with those people.

I must say, it really shocks me when I look at the work that was done under the previous Labor government in partnership with the federal Labor government on the national partnership agreement on homelessness and the national rental affordability scheme. It was amazing to see both federal and state Labor governments with their commitment to tackling, thoroughly, in an evidence-based way and with real dollars behind them, the housing affordability and homelessness challenges that we face. But you know what happened? We had a federal Liberal government elected, and we saw money stripped right out of that system to the tune of \$40 million or thereabouts. And you know what else? What did we hear from the Liberal government in this state at that time when all that money was stripped out? I will tell you what we heard — not a peep.

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

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I am delighted to rise to make a contribution on the Housing Amendment (Victorian Housing Register and Other Matters) Bill 2016 following my colleague the member for Macedon, who is a passionate advocate and has always been a passionate advocate for social justice and for housing, and to be joined in the chamber today by

my colleagues the member for Broadmeadows and the member for Essendon, who were very kind in their contributions yesterday in this debate in identifying some of the good work that our government did in a previous time and the wonderful opportunity that was afforded to me to be the Minister for Housing at that time — because it was quite a unique situation that we found ourselves in, as the member for Macedon indicates. We were in a circumstance which was, from my point of view, a very unique opportunity; \$500 million was provided by John Brumby for direct provision of housing, the biggest commitment by a government to public and social housing in decades, followed on by the Rudd and Gillard governments.

I will not forget the very day that Kevin Rudd was appointed as the Prime Minister of our country. The very first thing he said to his caucus members was, 'Go and meet with your people at the homeless shelters; go and talk to them about what their needs are'. He said, 'We will have a package that will support those people', and I fair dinkum nearly fell off my chair. I said, 'It is coming from the elected representative at the highest level in the commonwealth government that we as a Labor Party should put a priority on the most vulnerable people — the homeless people in our community'.

And what did he do? He was true to his word, and I had the unique opportunity of in excess of \$1 billion — I think close to \$1.4 billion — being provided to Victoria for the direct provision of public and social housing. That was one of the wonderful legacies of the Rudd and Gillard governments, because it came, as we know, at the time of the global financial crisis, and Kevin Rudd and indeed my good friend and colleague Lindsay Tanner, the former federal Minister for Finance and Deregulation, were at the heart of putting together that whole framework which injected into the economy, right across Australia, this wonderful addition of public and social housing. This stimulated the building industry, and the flow-on effects included not only the direct jobs that were provided but the lifting of the whole of the industry through the supply chain as well, and of course it achieved such a wonderful social outcome. This was a unique opportunity for us. Can I say in the context of course of the other — —

Mr Katos — It is always someone else's money.

Mr WYNNE — Have a listen to this: 'It is someone else's money'. You are not worthy of a response to that, seriously.

The second arm of that was the national rental affordability scheme. This was a direct intervention into

the private rental market. It was a brilliant scheme which was about saying to the private sector, 'Bring on supply, bring on new housing, and if you bring that housing into the market at 20 per cent below market value for a period of 10 years, there will be a partnership subsidy between the federal and state governments'. It was a wonderful supply-side initiative by the governments. Indeed we have seen the legacy of that flow through over the last few years. That is the sort of intervention that governments can make if they are truly committed to getting both economic and social outcomes, because it is about both and it is about jobs and employment as well. That is why these sorts of interventions are just so important, and that is why I am so pleased to be part of a Labor government that has got a deep and enduring interest not just in social justice but indeed in the economic outcomes that come from these sorts of investments as well.

This bill of course establishes the Victorian Housing Register, which will enable greater social housing opportunities for our most vulnerable people. It will allow Victorians in housing need — we know there are many — to simply apply to one register and have all social housing opportunities laid out and available to them through one portal instead of applying to something in the order of 40 separate housing waiting lists. This is incredibly important, and not just for people who are on the public housing waiting list. It allows applicants to look around and see what other opportunities might be available through the social housing sector as well, both in metropolitan Melbourne and in our regional cities where we have many thriving social housing providers. This is a really important initiative. It is one that we did take to the last election, and I am delighted that my friend and colleague the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing has implemented this in a way that is going to make a real difference to the lives of people who are seeking public and social housing.

It is important that this bill will enable the director of housing to make determinations in relation to the eligibility criteria for the Victorian Housing Register, including in relation to the allocations framework of the register. I know this is a very deep issue for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing — he wants to ensure that the housing associations continue to house those in most need. It is an obvious and self-evident point, but I think there has been a bit of slippage over the journey. I think from the point of view of the minister when you are investing public dollars like this, you must ensure that they are targeted at those people who are in most need.

I acknowledge Yarra Community Housing, which has always operated with the philosophy of working with the poorest and the most vulnerable people in our community, people living right on the edges, people living in rooming houses and in some of the poorest quality accommodation you could possibly imagine within my electorate of Richmond. They have always been true to their goal, which is to house the most vulnerable people in our community, and of course I acknowledge them today as well.

I can say with some confidence that not only have we made the extraordinary commitment of \$152 million to get women and children escaping domestic violence into safe, affordable and secure housing — the biggest ever investment in this sector by a state government and a wonderful lead-up to what I am confident will be some very, very significant announcements that the government will be making very shortly in relation to public and social housing opportunities — but of course we are also working on a broader set of provisions in relation to housing affordability more generally. I look forward to the future announcements that the government will be making in relation to the direct provision of further support in the public and social housing area and in homelessness, which may well be coming very shortly. That will be yet another wonderful addition to what I think has been an extraordinary record of achievement by our Premier, the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and of course the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. This is a great outcome.

The only counterpoint I would like to make is this, and it is a simple one: the legacy of the previous government was that for the first time in decades we actually had a net loss of public and social housing stock over its four years in office. Naturally my colleague Minister Foley has had to pick up that backlog from the four years of disinvestment just to get our noses back above the water. I know that his deep and enduring commitment to public and social housing outcomes is second to none. I am delighted not only to be his colleague and friend but to be able to stand up here and say, 'This is a minister who is actually going to drive a social housing agenda, and one that's always going to look to the poorest in our community as our first priority'.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

ROAD LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 26 October; motion of Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety).

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — I rise to lead the debate for the opposition on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016, and I would just like to say from the outset that my position is that the government should withdraw this bill immediately and split it. The provisions that are outlined in part 3, division 3, are important enough to stand alone. I believe that the tragic circumstances surrounding Andrea Lehane's death and the disregard shown by the accused, Caleb Jakobsson, and others like him should have led to a specific piece of legislation that stood separately to issues such as road sign placements and website information.

I think that there is a very cynical display of politics in this bill, which contains issues that will basically hide some of the bungling of the minister in relation to the Tullamarine widening project. It bundles that up with a serious and vitally important issue — an issue that should be raised and debated in this house on its own, separate to other issues — and it is an issue that the government would have had complete and absolute bipartisan support on. The issues that are addressed in part 3, division 3, as I said, warrant a bill on their own. I would say that there was probably some delay in putting together the bulk of this bill, and there would have been a delay in putting these particular provisions forward. Having said all that, that is for the government to decide and live with, and the opposition's position on the bill in its totality is that we do not oppose the bill. But certainly I think the government should be thinking very seriously about addressing that particular issue in a piece of legislation on its own.

Having said all that, I am very happy to go through the various aspects of the bill. There are a number of innocuous and administrative provisions in the main part of the bill. The opposition has little if any problems with many of these clauses. Clauses 3 to 5 are said to clarify certain areas in relation to VicRoads, including the publication of the register of public roads on a website, as opposed to how things stand now, which is that they are listed in the *Government Gazette* — welcome to the 21st century, I guess. These clauses also cover permissions required around the placing of signage and other structures as detailed in the clause on road infrastructure, and VicRoads is empowered to tow

obstructing vehicles if those vehicles are on roadways or obstructing roads for other users.

Clause 6 deals with the holders of overseas licences and will allow visitors to our state who hold an international licence, who are currently only allowed to drive vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, to drive vehicles up to 4.5 tonnes, which is in line with what Victorian drivers can do. I do note that the purpose of this particular clause is to introduce some harmonisation with the rest of Australia's jurisdictions. I also note that Victoria is the last one to put this in place, so it is certainly quite valid we need to be in line with other states.

Clauses 7 to 22, as described to me in the briefing, allow a driver who commits a drink-driving offence in another state or territory to be subject to the same penalty as they would if they had committed the offence in Victoria. At present, those who commit these offences interstate have their licence suspended, and that seems to be the extent to which they can be prosecuted. This clause seeks to bring the penalty for those offences, if they are committed interstate or in other jurisdictions, in line with Victoria's penalties. These provisions will ensure that they are prosecuted to the full extent of Victoria's law.

I think we can certainly not overstate the dangers to other road users when people take the privilege of driving as a right and do not take the responsibility that they should. I always take particular care when I am coming home from a late night with the family in the car. If it is a Friday or Saturday night, particularly if it is about 11 o'clock, I always keep an eye out for drivers who may be intoxicated. I could not imagine anything worse than having your family taken from you in those circumstances, and I do look out very, very carefully. I do think that those who have disregard for the law in this way should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, and as such these clauses are well supported by the opposition.

Clauses 32 to 34 relate to the manner in which blood samples are taken and stored, particularly in relation to those taken at a hospital following a road accident. The member for South-West Coast accompanied me to the bill briefing and as a former nurse had some very informative views on this matter. She agreed that the changes put forward in the clauses should be made. Currently we have a situation where two samples are taken at a hospital following an accident — one for clinical tests and one for alcohol and drug sampling. There are times when, due to the seriousness of the motor vehicle accident, blood is taken for clinical reasons but there is not time to take one for sampling reasons. Because of that, sometimes police do not have

the proof that they need to prosecute someone if they are drink-driving or driving under the effect of drugs. That is a sensible approach, and it is certainly supported.

Further on, clauses 43 to 49 deal with the use of personal tolling information which is collected by tolling concession holders. It is an administrative change that takes into account the fact that the restrictions that currently apply are covered by the commonwealth Privacy Act and there is no need to have legislation that mirrors those provisions here in Victoria.

That leads us to the more contentious parts of the bill. Clause 36 goes to the issue of police pursuits. People are well aware that in Victoria, although there have been some recent changes, in the main over the last year and a half or so police command have said that police cannot pursue those who are trying to get away from them in a vehicle. When a car is signalled to stop by police and the car takes off, we have seen many cases where the police have had to let the car go. That has caused many concerns, certainly in recent times.

We have seen a couple of offences raise their heads in Victoria that have hardly been seen at all in this state prior to the last 12 or 18 months — carjacking and home invasion. Invariably home invasions happen because criminals go into people's houses, take the keys to the car and take the car, and in many cases the police are unable to chase them.

We had some conversations with senior police officers out in the west of Victoria who said that routinely on Friday or Saturday nights they would have people who would steal cars, often through stealing the keys in home invasions. They would come down to the police station and actually do burnouts in front of the police station. As police came out they would just take off and there would be no option for the police to chase them. That is certainly not the Victoria that I grew up in and certainly something that needs to be addressed, but it has not been addressed adequately by the government due to a number of issues, including a reduction in police numbers per capita when you take into account the growing population. This is certainly a big issue. We have heard anecdotally from the rank and file that this is a real concern, and on a number of occasions they have asked the government to do something about this particular issue.

As I was informed during the bill briefing, this clause goes a little way towards helping the police. Currently if the police have a car that has not stopped when it has been asked to, they have 10 days to investigate. The

most direct way of investigating is of course to take the licence plate number down and go to the address at which the vehicle is registered. That really does not help when the car is stolen or when the plates have been removed. This clause extends that investigation period from 10 days to 42 days. I am not sure how effective this will be.

I was briefed that during the period of 10 days that the police currently have they will generally go to the address where the car is registered. I do not know how an extra 32 days will really assist in those matters. I think the issue is really one of being unable to pursue vehicles that have been involved in any sort of criminal activity. We certainly understand that many of the people who go off in these cars are dangerous and the public expects them to be caught as soon as possible. We do not want to wait 10 days, and we certainly do not want to wait 42 days for these people to be followed up. We want them to be pursued immediately and caught up with immediately to make sure that they are off the roads as quickly as possible.

This brings me to division 3 of the bill, which I spoke about at the outset, with regard to creating the offence of riding miniaturised motorbikes or, as they are colloquially known, monkey bikes on the roads. I reiterate that I think this part of the bill should stand alone. The circumstances that led to Andrea Lehane's death are certainly tragic, and I think few could think of anything worse than having a mother taken from her young children. I can only imagine the depth of despair that her family and her friends must feel because of the reckless disregard of another person.

Frankly, it makes me feel quite angry, and I am sure members of the community are angry, when I read in the paper how the accused, who had been warned many times about his behaviour on monkey bikes in that area, had ignored the warnings and had fled the scene of the crime. It has been reported in the papers that he has breached his bail conditions eight times and has also not stuck to his imposed curfew. As I said, I cannot imagine how desperately sad Ms Lehane's family and friends must feel, particularly when this sort of reckless behaviour is why this young lady was taken from her family. Of course the opposition supports those provisions and believes that they should be put in place as soon as possible, but the issue seems to be of such magnitude that it should be dealt with through legislation of its own rather than put into this more expansive bill.

Clause 43 goes to the Tullamarine Freeway widening project. This gives us an opportunity to highlight some aspects of the mismanagement of this particular project.

It began its life back in 2008 when the then roads minister, now the Treasurer, told Melburnians that they would face up to 18 months of disruption at the end of the project. The *Age* reported at that time:

Motorists are facing at least 18 months of traffic disruption as work proceeds on the massive upgrade of Melbourne's Monash and West Gate freeways.

Victorian taxpayers will have to foot the bill for a \$363 million blow-out in the project, which was initially costed just two years ago at \$1 billion ...

This shows us very clearly that there was a 36 per cent blow-out in the budgeted costs — from \$1 billion to \$1.4 billion — before work had even started. Certainly it shows us, as all Victorians know, that Labor has a lot of difficulty in managing major projects.

This project was designed to complement, as was reported back in 2008, the east-west link, which had been foreshadowed in Sir Rod Eddington's John Brumby-commissioned report. It is funny to listen now to those opposite who only have convictions when they are convenient. An article published in the *Age* of 2 May, 2008 states:

Mr Pallas said that, because the financial return to the community of Sir Rod's proposed road tunnel was not as great as widening the M1, it did not mean the road tunnel was a bad idea.

It is interesting to listen to him in more recent times when he has said the tunnel was a dud, the tunnel did not stack up and the tunnel's contract was not worth the paper it was written on. Some \$1.2 billion later it certainly is interesting to see that the Treasurer only a few years ago said that the project was certainly not a bad idea. My, how the world turns! Indeed it is putting politics before infrastructure.

The fact of the matter is the project is somewhat of a traffic nightmare. When we first got this project kicked off last year the headline in the *Herald Sun* was 'Melbourne motorists facing 546 days of gridlock for Tullamarine Freeway-CityLink widening'. The article states:

Frustrated drivers are giving up and returning home, or even considering quitting their jobs, because of the hours spent in gridlock due to the widening of the Tullamarine Freeway-CityLink corridor.

The article goes on to say:

... project managers concede the pain will increase significantly ...

...

'It's an absolute debacle,' said —

one worker.

'I left home at 5.30 a.m. and got to work at 8.40 a.m. I don't think I did more than 5 kilometres per hour for an entire hour. I can't do this for 18 months.'

Indeed she goes on to say that she was seriously contemplating leaving her job because she was not putting up with that for that entire time.

The government really did not do anything to relieve the pressure on motorists and the frustrations that motorists have experienced during that period, which we are still in the middle of. The roads minister ruled out scrapping CityLink tolls for motorists during this period. He also rejected the possibility of adding more train services to the west. Even he conceded that the government had done a very poor job when he said in his comments that some commuters would 'love to literally strangle me'. I am sure that motorists on a daily basis, whether they are stuck on the Tullamarine Freeway, the Eastern Freeway, the South-Eastern Freeway, Hoddle Street or Punt Road, would all feel at many times they would like to literally strangle the minister.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

Mr R. SMITH — Further to the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill, I was talking about the chaos the Tulla widening project is in under this government. I think it is worth reiterating the remarks I made just before the lunch break, which were that even the Minister for Roads and Road Safety said that the mess he had created on that particular piece of road would certainly drive commuters to want to literally strangle him. I think he is probably right.

The provision is in clause 43 to correct what appears to be an oversight by the minister to allow for a process to be put in place that should have been put in place some time ago. It also highlights the slow, inefficient and ponderous process for the minister with regard to putting in the appropriate lease arrangements that are needed. They were slated to be done some time ago, and it is amazing that, in addition to the year that has taken, he is flagging with this provision that it could take almost another two years before these particular lease provisions are in place.

I move now to clause 39. There was some confusion with this during the bill briefing, which the member for South-West Coast accompanied me on. We asked the bureaucrats whether any of these charges detailed in clause 39 already had fees attached to them. The answer was quite plain, I would have to say, from that department. From memory, the phrasing was: 'Well, I

expect that none of them have, otherwise they would not be in the bill'. Subsequent to that briefing, some days later — in fact not until almost midday on Tuesday this week — I got advice from the minister's office saying that a number of these issues or services detailed in clause 39 actually did have some fees attached to them and that the advice I had been given earlier was wrong. I understand that points (i) and (k) in the new section 95(3F) will have services attached to them that were not previously there. That appears to be what the advice I have says.

On those charges for services I would have to say that unfortunately, generally speaking, VicRoads does not have a great reputation across the state with regard to the services they provide, particularly over-the-counter services. Since I have been in this place and certainly as a consumer, I and other people have certainly experienced service that could have been better, and I think most people would be kind of appalled that they would have to pay for a lot of things that — maybe not just recently, but in the past — were free. These particular charges do not guarantee us any more efficiency, they do not guarantee us any more productivity and they do not guarantee us any more timeliness.

Many, as I said, do complain about the service, and I guess extra charges just add insult to injury. We saw last weekend the *Herald Sun* reporting that VicRoads would now be slugging Victorians a new charge to:

... pay their registration with a credit card.

As the *Herald Sun* put it:

Apparently the 0.4 per cent fee will allow the cash-strapped agency to recover \$5 million they lose to the nasty banks that process payments.

It is interesting that the *Herald Sun* is characterising VicRoads as cash-strapped. I am surprised that this government has allowed them to become that. It appears that an agency that deals with the general public, and certainly appears to get a fair amount of money in terms of the budgeted amount that goes to this agency, is cash-strapped. That does not seem too good.

I referred earlier this week in debate on another bill to the press release that the minister put out in 2012, which basically complained about the Baillieu government limiting closing VicRoads hours to 4.30 p.m. and that some weekend hours had been cut down or got rid of. It is interesting, as I said earlier this week, that four years later almost every one of the offices — 38 out of 39 — across Victoria still close at

4.30 p.m. But there are in fact no offices — none of those 39 offices, as I understand it — open at all on weekends, and indeed some of the rural centres are closed for lunch, which would seem to be the time when people in the country would like to go to their VicRoads office.

While there was a lot of talk when the minister was in opposition, it appears he is not so keen now to deliver the sort of services that he asked for when he was in opposition. It is certainly quite hypocritical of him to say that those things were done wrongly but then not fix them when he had the opportunity.

The short of it is that the Liberal and National parties will not be opposing this bill, despite some misgivings that they have, particularly around changes to the Melbourne City Link Act 1995. I am grateful to the Leader of the House that we are going into consideration-in-detail on this bill and I will be able to raise a couple of the issues that I have with the minister later today.

It is worth noting that we have a serious issue around congestion in this city and a really serious issue around safety in country areas. The government made an announcement earlier this week but you would be hard-pressed to know it happened because other issues of the government's own making swamped this \$1.8 billion announcement. The scrapping of the public holiday for Christmas Day and the antics of the former Minister for Corrections have certainly overshadowed any announcement that the government wanted to make on this issue.

But the fact of the matter is that the roads targeted by the government in that particular announcement do not extend much past suburban Melbourne. In fact, if you go out to the south-west of Victoria, the members for South-West Coast and Polwarth have been amazingly vocal advocates for money to be spent in their areas on roads. Nationals and Liberal members in the Gippsland area have been talking a lot about the roads in their patch which drastically need work; those roads are particularly unsafe. This bill is not going to do anything to help those roads; it is not going to do anything to help congestion. As I said earlier, whether it is Punt Road, Hoddle Street, the Eastern Freeway, the Monash Freeway or the West Gate Bridge, this bill is not going to help with any of the growing frustration that people feel on a daily basis when they are trying to get to and from work.

Motorists probably will not be comforted by the fact that this government has focused instead on sign placements and overseas licence-holders. The

government needs to acknowledge the significant problems we have. We have not heard very much from the government about dealing with the congestion; we may have heard a little bit but we certainly have not seen too much action.

This is a government — and Victorians need to be reminded of this on a daily basis; I do not think they forget but we will continue to remind them — that spent \$1.2 billion to scrap a road project that was only going to cost this state \$2 billion anyway. They have replaced it with a glorified off-ramp that cost \$5.5 billion, which every expert across the board says really will do not much to relieve congestion at all. In fact the Transurban CEO has even said that in the next 10 years this area will be congested anyway.

The government has spent \$5.5 billion for a road that is, as I said, really no more than a glorified off-ramp. It is a pale imitation of the western section of the east–west link. It is a lot of money to spend on something that is not going to do all that much good, particularly when there was a very advanced project in place with financing — with a federal contribution and a commercial contribution. The fact that this government scrapped that project and, without a care, threw away \$1.2 billion of taxpayers money is quite extraordinary. But with those comments I indicate that the opposition does not oppose the bill. I look forward to raising some of the issues that I have with the bill with the minister during the consideration-in-detail stage.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I am pleased to make a contribution to debate on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. In particular I would like to focus my commentary on the crackdown on dangerous monkey bikes in Victoria, which is addressed by amendments in this bill. In particular I draw the attention of the house to a part of my electorate of Ivanhoe, particularly West Heidelberg and what was known in the past as West Ivanhoe but is simply Ivanhoe these days, that trails along the Darebin Creek. I know this area well because for several years I lived in West Heidelberg, in Goodenough Court off Liberty Parade near the Darebin Creek. But also, as a former City of Banyule councillor for Olympia ward, I know that the issue of monkey bikes, particularly along suburban bike trails such as the Darebin Creek Trail, was a real problem and continues to be a problem in my community, particularly along that Darebin trail through West Heidelberg and also through the parts of Ivanhoe that link up with the Darebin trail.

We have seen many instances over the years of not only the disruption that monkey bikes cause in the evenings and during the day to people's amenity but also the

dangerous safety issues that are affecting people recreationally, either on bicycles or on foot, on those bike paths when they are confronted by people on these illegal monkey bikes. Also, during my time as a West Heidelberg resident in the past I have had plenty of opportunities to see people belting along footpaths and crossing intersections on monkey bikes at speed. Unfortunately we have had, as the member for Carrum pointed out in a contribution in this place recently, the death of a woman in a shopping centre mall when she was hit by someone riding a monkey bike. These are very grave issues, and I am pleased that the amendments in the legislation put forward by the minister include a crackdown on monkey bikes.

I would like to take the house through some of the history around West Heidelberg and Ivanhoe in relation to the monkey bike issue. Under the heading 'Special police brought in to catch monkey bike hooners' the *Heidelberg Leader* of 25 June 2013 reports:

Hooners riding illegal 'monkey bikes' are once again causing havoc in Heidelberg West, forcing police to call in a specialist unit to bring them to ground.

Banyule Inspector Darren Harris said the highway patrol solo unit, which uses all-terrain bikes, motorcycles and four-wheel drives, will patrol known hot spots, including Liberty Parade and Bardia and Morobe streets and along the Darebin Creek.

In 2010 the *Heidelberg Leader* reported on a police initiative to get monkey bikes away from the public by organising a truck and a minibus to transport bike riders to Broadmeadows Motorbike Park. In 2009 police ran public forums asking the community when and where the bikes were being ridden. I am very familiar with those public forums because what we did at Banyule Community Health with local police and local residents — at the time I was a local ward councillor for Banyule — was to sit down with enlarged maps of the local area and try to map out the times and the places where illegal monkey bike riding was happening so that we could give police the intelligence they needed to formalise and focus their patrols and resources on known trouble and hot spots. That was some of the work we did with local police so that they were able to have far more success in pursuing those who were illegally riding monkey bikes on bike paths and putting community safety at risk. Unfortunately in amongst some of the work that was done an article on the ABC news website of 23 May 2014, headed 'Elderly woman critical after police quad bike crash', reported that:

Police officers patrolling a Melbourne bicycle path for illegal motorbikes have been involved in a crash, critically injuring a 74-year-old female cyclist.

The officers were driving a four-wheel quad bike, the type often used on farms, to patrol the Darebin Creek Trail around Heidelberg West for motorcycles and monkey bikes that use the path illegally.

Victoria Police said the officers were 'driving the Polaris at low speed' on Thursday afternoon when the cyclist rounded a corner and lost control of her bike.

She slid and hit the front of the police quad bike.

The ... woman was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital and is in a critical condition.

So despite the best efforts of police and the best efforts of the community not only are monkey bikes a threat to people and creating havoc in the community, but when police try and enforce the law and provide community safety there are inherent risks as well, as can be seen from what has happened in the past. I draw attention to the fact that in trying to make sure that we are arming the police with the laws they need, in part through this amendment in the legislation, we are very conscious that the illegal activities of these monkey bikes riders are putting the community at risk in many different ways, and I think this is a good illustration of that.

The *Heidelberg Leader* of 7 October 2014 published an article headed 'Heidelberg West Darebin Creek Trail users angry at illegal bike riders', which reported that:

Users of Darebin Creek Trail in Heidelberg West are at breaking point with an illegal dirt bike 'crisis'.

Along with community group 3081 Connect, Victoria Police, Banyule and Darebin councils and E-Focus, residents met to raise and discuss safety concerns, and how they could help rid the area of hoon behaviour.

...

'Many residents have expressed frustration that the dirt bikes are continuing to pose a safety risk to families using the Darebin Creek bike track ...

Heidelberg police Senior Sergeant Justin Goldsmith said residents should immediately phone 000 when they saw or heard the dirt and monkey bikes.

...

'Give an accurate description of the rider and bike, any registration or details of the bike, any other observations and the last direction of travel'.

What we find these days with iPhones and all the rest of it is that people are able to take photographs of and often report where people with monkey bikes reside and where that activity is happening, not just on the Darebin trail but also where those bikes are being housed and where their riders come from. There is a lot of intelligence and evidence provided to Victoria Police, but the legislative changes that have been proposed in the amendment bill will go further in

addressing the concerns that my community has about the ongoing issues along the Darebin Creek Trail through Heidelberg West and Ivanhoe with illegal monkey bikes riders.

I go forward now to an article in the *Heidelberg Leader* of 13 July 2015 headed 'Hoons wreaking havoc in Banyule parklands could be stopped with community help'. The article states:

Despite several wins against illegal monkey bike activity in the park area earlier this year after police intelligence and investigation lead to four arrests, the problem has returned.

Now the issue is not just with young teens on small trail bikes but adult men on dirt bikes fanging along the track or tearing up the parkland with burnouts, according to police.

...

Senior Sergeant Goldsmith said Greensborough highway patrol officers have formed a team tasked to deal with information from the public and to coordinate a designated day of action each week.

...

'We need more detailed descriptions of where these people are coming from, what times it's happening, what the bike looked like and what the rider looked like'.

'But people should not place themselves in harm's way'.

As late as even last year these were significant issues in my community that were affecting the amenity and safety of residents, with the aggressive behaviour of many of these monkey bikes riders. Previously I had my electorate office in the West Heidelberg mall off Bell Street, where sometimes you would have monkey bike riders travelling through the mall at speed. There are CCTV cameras there which have assisted police in the past, but what we need to be able to do is give the community confidence that we understand these issues and that we are seeking to legislate to provide the police with the tools they need to bring those offenders to account.

I also note in relation to these matters that the Premier said in a media release of 25 October:

We're not going to stand by and watch another person hurt on our roads by these dangerous bikes.

We're protecting road users and pedestrians. Now, Victoria Police will have the power to crack down on riders who are caught doing the wrong thing.

And the Minister for Roads and Road Safety said:

Monkey bikes are unsafe — and if you're riding one in public, you're breaking the law.

Police won't be granting second chances when it comes to keeping these bikes off our streets, and keeping people safe.

I commend the minister for the action he has taken in bringing this legislation to the Parliament. As a former councillor at the City of Banyule, a past president of a group along the Darebin Creek Trail at Heidelberg West and as a local member, I well know and understand the concerns of local residents, the work that they have done in providing information, evidence and intelligence to local police and the work that the police have done in trying to keep the community safe, putting themselves in harm's way in the process. We need legislation like the bill before the house today to continue to provide police with the powers they need to address these very significant issues.

We now have daylight saving, and the extended hours of daylight send a signal to some in my community that they can expect much earlier in the morning and much later in the evening to hear and see the familiar sounds and sights of monkey bike riders illegally riding their bikes in our area along the Darebin Creek Trail. I hope that with the swift passage of this legislation these residents will see a decline in that activity because we are giving the police the powers they need to bring these offenders to account.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to make a contribution on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Road Management Act 2004, the Road Safety Act 1986, the Melbourne City Link Act 1995 and the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 and to make consequential amendments to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011. The provisions in this bill that are of interest to us are in part 2, which amends the Road Management Act to allow an intranet site to count as a register of public roads, to clarify the permission that is needed to place signage and to enable VicRoads to remove obstructing vehicles. This is useful.

The definition of 'obstructing' is of some interest. Many people in my electorate bring forward details of vehicles that are abandoned on the sides of roads, how long they sit on the sides of roads and the risks they pose while they are there. Whether that is an obstructing vehicle or not is questionable, but the definition could be used to remove these vehicles. Most of these vehicles are parked on the side of the road with the numberplates removed, sometimes with the occasional bit of police tape tied to the rear vision mirror to indicate that an event has occurred, and those vehicles are not to be driven any further. Remarkably some of them sit there for weeks, sometimes longer, before they are removed. People start to vandalise them, take parts off them, smash the windows and even occasionally set fire to them. The quicker vehicles that

are abandoned for one reason or another on the side of the road are dealt with, the better for all, particularly for safety.

Part 3 of the bill allows overseas licence-holders to operate a vehicle of up to 4.5 tonnes. In Victoria we use a lot of seasonal or temporary labour, particularly in our horticulture areas, and this is a common-sense approach in allowing our international visitors to operate some of those lighter and smaller vehicles, particularly those that are associated with horticulture. This part of the bill also ensures that penalties for those convicted of a drink-driving offence interstate will be in line with those given had the offence happened in Victoria. In a cross-border region, that is plugging up a very useful gap.

It also provides for a new offence of riding a miniaturised motorcycle, known as a monkey bike, on the road and allows for the bike to be impounded. I think that is very important. Members will no doubt refer to incidents that have occurred and have already referred to incidents that have occurred. Although these bikes can be a lot of fun, there is a place for that fun and it is certainly not where other people are.

Also in part 3 the bill streamlines the process of taking and storing blood for those admitted to hospital following a road accident and increases the penalties for those who refuse to give an oral sample for drug testing. There are some rather interesting figures popping up now from our random drug or breath-testing stations about the ratio of drug-affected people to alcohol-affected people, which shows that we certainly do have an issue with those who are taking drugs and driving.

As we move through the bill, part 3 extends the period of time that police can investigate an incident involving someone driving a vehicle when police have directed them to stop, and it allows for charging for certain services undertaken by VicRoads. In some recent consultations around this area people have been reporting to me that if they use a credit card to pay for certain transactions with VicRoads, there is now a fee when there was not a fee in the past. This is being raised particularly around the context of registration issues and the desire of many people to make periodic payments for their registration rather than an annual payment. For many people when they have to pay that one-off fee, if there is a credit card charge, they certainly come into my office and express their displeasure at those issues. I think some of the additional charges will certainly come to people's attention. This could be eased if we could come up with some sort of time payment process for vehicle

registration. I think that would cause some of these issues to disappear.

Part 4 gives the minister certain powers under the Melbourne City Link Act — namely, the power to sign a tolling contract for the Tullamarine Freeway widening project that will allow tolls to be charged as soon as the road is fully operational and prior to the necessary leases being signed. It also makes changes in relation to the use of personal tolling information to bring Victorian law into line with that in other states.

There are a couple of concerns with this bill. Those areas of concern are around the bill making sensible changes regarding blood samples, clarifying the powers of VicRoads and increasing penalties for failure to provide samples for testing. That will have to be followed through with the Department of Health and Human Services because often these tests are taken on hospital sites. That is being discussed. Principally, clause 39 gives VicRoads the power to charge for a range of services that have previously been offered for free. I think clause 39 will be the sticking point in this bill, as I think people want to know exactly what these services are. I am almost certain they are going to be unhappy.

While we are on VicRoads and roads, I want to bring to the attention of the house and the government a number of roads that are of concern in my area, and I have expressed these concerns in this house on a number of occasions. These are roads of economic importance, and as the government is framing a structure to deal with the dividend for regional Victoria from the lease of the port, I want to make sure that that money does go into transport infrastructure and it does go into regional areas and it goes to roads of economic importance in my electorate.

Hattah-Robinvale Road, which runs through Wemen, is one such road. It carries very large quantities of horticultural produce, being almonds, citrus and wine grapes. It also carries grain back to the rail heads, and it needs a shoulder-widening exercise so that you can have trucks pass without flicking stones up at the general public and, more importantly, so they do not damage the edges of the roads and cost the state even more money. This will be a sound investment. There is similar work to be done on parts of Robinvale-Sea Lake Road. Parts of it have been widened but there are areas that still need to be widened. This is an access road to the large table grape and fresh vegetable area of Robinvale and the Calder Highway and then on to Melbourne or the port.

Further south in my electorate there is what is known as the Birchip–Rainbow–Wycheproof road, which is an east–west link between the Henty Highway, the Sunraysia Highway and the Calder Highway. There is a section from Beulah to the Sunraysia Highway, again, that needs shoulders. I drove that recently and in parts it does not even have a centre white line. It carries sometimes around \$2 million worth of produce a year.

Another area that does need attention in my electorate is the duplication of the road between Irymple and Red Cliffs. This carries a large amount of traffic, and as Mildura's residential area is growing, it is growing in that direction. The Seventeenth Street and Deakin Avenue intersection has long been an issue in our area, and regrettably there was a fatal accident there only yesterday or the day before. But this is the last key piece of infrastructure on what we know as the Benetook bypass for heavy vehicles to remove them from Deakin Avenue, which is the main street of Mildura where there are numerous sets of traffic lights. It has been a very long-term project undertaken by VicRoads, the federal government, the state government and the local council to get that road ready to be a heavy vehicle bypass, but that intersection needs some pretty special treatment. The risks at that intersection as traffic, particularly road traffic, grows have been brought into prominence in the last few days. These are areas where I think the money would be very well spent.

I probably should not finish without mentioning too that the other good investment would be some passing lanes between Lake Cullulleraine and the South Australian border. A couple out there are very much needed, and similarly between Hattah and Ouyen there is need for one more. We have just recently completed one passing lane there, and that has made a big difference to the safety of that road. An additional one would very much improve safety on that particular stretch of road. This is about VicRoads and how VicRoads manages some aspects of what they do, but they are responsible for our roads, and there is certainly a need for an investment in the roads in my electorate.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am also very pleased to contribute to the debate on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. This bill is making a number of amendments to improve road safety across Victoria, and I would like to commend the Minister for Roads and Road Safety for his work on this bill and also the Premier for making such a swift response in respect to the tragedy which occurred in Carrum Downs last year, which I will speak more about in a moment.

Obviously steps that we can take to make our roads safer and steps we can take to reduce road trauma should be absolutely applauded. In my contribution today I am going to focus in particular on division 3 of the bill. Division 3 deals with miniaturised motorcycles, otherwise known as monkey bikes. I am focusing my contribution on this aspect of the bill because of the tragic accident that occurred in Carrum Downs in my electorate last year.

It was on Wednesday, 23 September, last year when four young men aged between 16 and 18 made a really terrible decision — a really quite stupid decision. That Wednesday afternoon these four young men got on their monkey bikes and, rather than ride down to the bush block where they often go to ride their monkey bikes, decided to ride to the local shopping centre in Carrum Downs to look for their mates. Witnesses recalled the boys riding through the shopping centre car park at speeds in excess of 30 kilometres per hour. They narrowly missed a number of pedestrians, but unfortunately one of the boys struck a woman on the car-park pedestrian crossing.

That woman was Andrea Lehane, 34 years old, from Carrum Downs; she was a nurse, married to James Lehane and mother to two children, a daughter aged four and a son aged three. Each of the four young men fled the scene, one on foot. The whole tragic incident was captured on CCTV footage, and we saw the final bike traverse the crossing and swerve around Andrea as she lay on the ground. Paramedics arrived very soon after the accident. Andrea was in a critical condition, and she was transferred to the Alfred hospital. We heard that very sadly she died two days later, when her life support was switched off.

What we saw was a tragic and entirely avoidable accident which shattered a young local family and also rocked an entire community in Carrum Downs. I was really proud to see, shortly after Andrea's death, the community come together in their thousands to attend a candlelight service at the shopping centre. The community turned out in a show of support for and solidarity with the family, and also with the community as a whole. I recall sitting there. I was watching Andrea's young family, and we listened as her mother got up and spoke and her sister got up and spoke. I guess what was most poignant was that there was no anger from these women when they spoke about the tragedy; they actually implored each of us to really hold close those who are dearest to us. I recall pulling my son Rafferty closer to me as we watched other families and friends reach out to their loved ones as well.

I recall the Premier — almost the very next day after the tragedy — saying that we would be reviewing the laws surrounding the bikes. I am really pleased to be able to stand here today to say that that is exactly what we have done with this bill. Until now Victoria Police have only had the power to issue fines to offenders for riding an unregistered vehicle. This may extend to a fine for speeding or a fine for dangerous and reckless driving in some limited cases. But this bill will change this. It will create a new offence under the Road Safety Act 1986 with a new section 65C to make it an offence for a person to ride a miniaturised motorcycle, or a monkey bike, on a road or a road-related area, with a fine now of up to 20 penalty units. That fine equates to more than \$3000. There is also the opportunity for police to impound the monkey bike and to destroy it.

This is quite significant reform, particularly for my community in Carrum Downs where this problem with monkey bikes is certainly not new. I would also like to acknowledge Frankston City Council, which has been working very hard in this area to keep these bikes off the streets. In 2007 it was one of the first local government areas and councils to introduce by-laws to help curb the nuisance that is these monkey bikes, and I would like to acknowledge the work of Frankston council in this regard.

Importantly this bill will now give Victoria Police much greater powers to seize and destroy these bikes and require offenders to appear in court. These bikes are not allowed to be ridden on roads or footpaths. They are unregistrable; they do not meet the standards and design rules to be registered as a vehicle. And of course their being unregistered has meant it has been harder for police to track down these bikes and to trace ownership in circumstances where it is believed they have been ridden unlawfully. So this bill will address that very issue.

These new laws will be sending a very strong message to those people out there — to young people and to the parents of our young people — who might otherwise think that these monkey bikes are harmless. That message is: these bikes are not harmless. They are a real danger. They are dangerous to riders, to pedestrians, to other vehicles on the roads, to people using parks and open spaces and of course to mums who are just going shopping in local shopping centres. Our community should not have to tolerate this kind of behaviour on our streets and in our neighbourhoods. And as we have heard, tragically people have lost their lives, and we have a young family in Carrum Downs — in particular a little girl aged five and a little boy now aged four — who have lost their mum. This should

never have happened, and obviously they will live with this loss for the rest of their lives.

But there is also the other tragic side to this story — that is, the young boys who were involved in the accident. They will also have to live with this dreadful decision for the rest of their lives and the utterly tragic consequences of that decision. Of course, none of us wants to see this happen to any other family or any other young person in our community. We do not want to see these injuries or fatalities. They are absolutely avoidable.

The amendments proposed in this bill, whilst they will not entirely rid us of monkey bike problems, will certainly go a long way to curbing this type of behaviour. We know that legislative responses like this can and do affect behavioural change and bring about shifts in community attitude and community opinion. We saw, when we first introduced drink-driving laws, when we introduced laws to ban smoking in certain prescribed places, that these new laws can and do make a difference. They do change behaviour, and they bring about cultural change in our communities. So imposing sanctions on monkey bike riders through fines and the confiscation and destruction of bikes will act as a significant deterrent to their unlawful and offensive behaviour.

We know this will not be the complete answer to the monkey bike problem, but it certainly will be a significant and important step to effect long-lasting and meaningful change and bring about better public safety for our communities. We are obviously very keen to deter and prevent the type of behaviour that caused Andrea's death. As Andrea's husband quite rightly said in the local media most recently when we announced these legislative changes, we are going to require a change in attitudes. It is hoped that imposing these penalties of quite a substantial fine, the prospect of having to appear in court and the destruction of these monkey bikes will bring about significant change and cultural change to impact behaviour and curb this nuisance that is taking place in our local communities.

This means we need to be tough on the causes of crime, and those causes include significant youth disengagement in our local communities. So we need to also look at what is causing that youth disengagement and what we can do to better support and educate our young people, to help them make much better decisions, not stupid decisions that are going to have fateful consequences. Nothing is going to bring Andrea back, but this bill is a big step in the right direction to ending the scourge of monkey bikes on streets. I commend the bill.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. This bill makes a number of amendments to several acts, which I will not detail in full as I will keep my contribution brief; I know there are a lot of people who want to speak on this bill. It allows overseas licence-holders to operate vehicles of up to 4½ tonnes, it ensures that penalties for those convicted of drink-driving offences interstate are brought into line with those that would apply if the offence happened in Victoria, and it provides for the new offence of riding a miniaturised motorcycle on the road and allows for that bike to be impounded.

The unfortunate incident that occurred in the member for Carrum's electorate highlights the need to remove these monkey bikes, as they are more commonly known, from our roads. I can understand if a child with a monkey bike is under the supervision of a parent and is taken to a farm or something like that — that is all being done properly — but not the kids running amok on the roads. The unfortunate circumstance in which Andrea Lehane — forgive my pronunciation — was killed was a disgraceful thing that happened, and I am glad the government is doing something to allow those monkey bikes to be impounded. So that is a good thing that the government is doing; I have got no quarrel with that at all.

With regard to the bill, it streamlines processes for the taking and storing of blood samples from those admitted to hospital after road accidents, as there have been inconsistencies and anomalies with that. It also increases the penalties for those who refuse to give an oral sample for drug testing. That is obviously a good thing, particularly with drug testing as there are more and more people on our roads who are drug driving, unfortunately, and anything we can do to prevent that and increase the penalties for people who refuse to submit samples is a good thing. The bill extends the period of time in which the police can investigate an incident involving the driving of a vehicle when police have directed it to stop. It also allows for the charging for certain services undertaken by VicRoads.

One of the areas of concern which I know the shadow minister for roads and infrastructure, the member for Warrandyte, has raised is with regard to the imposition of fees for some services that have previously been offered for free by VicRoads. There are a couple that just need some clarity, and perhaps that might be done when, as the government has indicated, we go into consideration in detail, particularly in relation to the clearance of defect notices. So if you happen to be driving an unroadworthy vehicle and get a 'canary', as they are often colloquially known, VicRoads will now

have the ability to charge to remove that defect notice, which has not previously been the case — —

Mr Battin interjected.

Mr KATOS — The member for Gembrook in his former police life, he has told me, did hand out quite a few canaries as a police officer. VicRoads can also charge fees for services relating to the issuing and management of licence plates. There could be a fee charged there, so perhaps that can be clarified, particularly with the increasing prevalence of licence plates being stolen, whether it is for petrol drive-offs or for committing crimes — whether they are robberies or anything of that ilk. There is a lot more prevalence of that, and it is not a driver's fault that their plates were stolen by someone looking to do the wrong thing. So perhaps they should not be penalised but indeed the person doing the wrong thing should be penalised.

There are also amendments with regard to the Melbourne City Link Act 1995. It looks like some errors have been made in the contract and the government is looking to fix that.

With roads in general, as we all know the government put out a press release on Tuesday with regard to the \$1.8 billion they are seeking to spend in western Melbourne. Now most people would think of Victoria's west. I invite the minister to perhaps drive past Melbourne's city limits out west and take a look at some of those roads in western Victoria, whether it be in my own electorate or in Polwarth, South-West Coast or Lowan. The roads in western Victoria are absolutely disgraceful.

I look at some of the roads that constituents of mine are driving on, such as the Barwon Heads Road. That road is an absolute disgrace. This is one of the largest growth areas that has been opened up in Victoria and the road is completely awful. In relation to other roads in South Barwon, Boundary Road is taking a lot more traffic now with regard to Armstrong Creek. There is Reserve Road and Horseshoe Bend Road in the Surf Coast Shire, particularly at the Surf Coast end — it does not have shoulders on a lot of it and is very dangerous for cyclists. Dickins Road, in the Surf Coast Shire too — Mount Duneed has a lot of drainage issues — is a gravel road, and there is Ghazeepore Road, in the Surf Coast Shire as well.

So we have a lot of issues in country Victoria with regard to roads funding. Perhaps it is time that the minister and indeed the Premier realised that roads funding does not stop at the Melbourne metropolitan borders. Even yourself, Acting Speaker McLeish,

would know that in Eildon the roads are not of a good quality either. I certainly implore the government to increase the roads funding for country Victoria. The budget was cut for the very popular country roads and bridges program, which went to local government. It is something that this government has cut. The Surf Coast Shire was a recipient of that funding. We are two years in so already they are \$2 million out of pocket in their road maintenance. They have not been given any additional funding for roads. When you factor in rate capping on top of that, it certainly is putting extreme pressure on country roads and bridges.

We all know the form of the government with regard to country bridges, with the 10 that they funded including the apparently rural electorate of Mulgrave, which I find quite extraordinary. The justification for spending country roads and bridges money in Mulgrave was that apparently the Princes Highway in Mulgrave leads to the country. So there is the justification. I remember that response in question time going back a bit. That was the justification for spending rural money.

I am also very concerned about the port of Melbourne lease money that is supposed to be available for infrastructure, the \$970 million that is to be spent on rural and regional infrastructure projects. There is no indication by the government of what they are going to do with it. They are trying to broaden the scope of where that money is to be spent, so effectively rather than it being spent on transport infrastructure — whether it be road, rail or buses — it will just give them a little slush fund to spend on whatever they see fit, which is not what the coalition agreed to when they negotiated the 10 per cent in the Legislative Council. With that, some issues with the bill have been raised but they will probably be taken further into account in consideration in detail. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to join the debate on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. As the lead speaker for the opposition, the member for Warrandyte, indicated, it is a wideranging bill and there are a number of facets and components to the bill. It is interesting when you follow the member for South Barwon. In his contribution he started to lay the blame for what he regards as a lack of road funding in country Victoria all at the feet of the state government. That is a curious comment to make, and I am anticipating that the contribution the member for Lowan will make shortly will be a 10-minute diatribe against the state Labor government and our failure to invest in country roads. I guess what you have to appreciate is that the commonwealth budget is 10 times the size, roughly, of the Victorian state budget.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PEARSON — I would say to those opposite that they may wish to consider the role their federal colleagues are playing in short-changing the people of Victoria. We get 9 per cent of infrastructure funding. I would have thought those opposite might turn around and say, ‘Look, you know what? We are Victorians, and we have got a problem’. The member for Lowan, for example, might say, ‘Look, I’ve actually got a pretty close relationship with the federal member for Gippsland who is the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. The member for Lowan might say to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, ‘Well look, why don’t you and I go on a bit of a road trip, Minister, up to Canberra, and let’s go and have a chat with my federal colleague. We might have a chat about trying to get an increase in funding’. But unfortunately what we get from those opposite is that they are conservatives first and they are Victorians last. They are not interested in doing what is required to try to put pressure back on their federal colleagues to address some of these issues.

Mr Gidley — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, while the debate has been wideranging, I would ask you to bring the speaker back to the bill. This is not an opportunity for the speaker to indulge in his view of federal-state relations in the coalition; it is about for once talking about the taxes and charges the government is going to put on residents in Victoria. I would ask you to bring him back to the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish) — Order! The first few minutes of the member’s contribution have been fairly wideranging. I would like him to refer to the bill at some point.

Mr PEARSON — The wonderful thing about the member for Mount Waverley is that he consistently demonstrates he has got one of the most obvious glass jaws in this place. He cannot handle it.

In relation to the bill before the house, it makes some changes to the proposed CityLink widening project. This is a major project along the eastern boundary of my electorate. It has been contentious for local people. It has been contentious because of the removal of trees and the construction that is underway, and for some local residents that has been somewhat of a challenge. It is interesting, particularly if you look at the widening of the Tullamarine Freeway that forms part of this project, which is a good use of funds because there is a clear market for people to travel on the Tullamarine Freeway. People will pay a toll to travel on the Tullamarine Freeway where, for example, they would not pay a toll for a regional or rural road. The money that Transurban

can invest in terms of the CityLink widening project enables us to allocate resources to other roads where there is not a market available.

I cannot foresee the future in terms of what will happen when the concession deed expires. There have been 50 variations to the concession deed since it was first entered into in 1995, and I think that is a good thing. This is an important asset that we can use to ensure that it reflects the contemporary values and the needs and requirements of the society and the community. It may well be that a future administration might decide that at the end of the concession period it wants to take ownership of that asset, and that will be a decision down the track. I suspect though — and I cannot be sure of this — that what may happen will be that the concession deed will be extended and altered in order to free up capital to be used elsewhere. That would be my guess. That is going to be 2035, and that is something that some of us will do.

Mr Gidley — More taxes and charges.

Mr PEARSON — The voice of the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) — more taxes and charges.

Mr Gidley interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms McLeish) — Order! The member will continue without the assistance of the opposition.

Mr PEARSON — Taxes civilise society. I am not quite sure how we actually reconcile the views of the member for Mount Waverley with the views of the member for Lowan, because the reality is that if you are trying to make those sorts of investments in infrastructure in regional Victoria, it requires a taxation base.

The interesting thing with something like the CityLink widening project though is that it does provide a rich data source for policymakers. It could not have been envisaged 15 or 20 years ago that tolling technology would enable people to track traffic in real time. The *Guardian* in an article headed ‘Can the internet of things save us from traffic jams?’, dated 21 April last year, talks about more data in and more data out resulting in a better outcome in terms of understanding traffic movements. It talks about what is called AIM — autonomous intersection management — and it indicates that we will probably look at ultimately not having traffic lights but having smooth movement of vehicles through intersections. If you think about it, you can see that there is no need to stop at traffic lights if you can judge the velocity of a vehicle coming from a different angle. Those sorts of efficiency gains can be

informed as a result of the tolling technology which will be made available as a consequence of Transurban and CityLink.

I think the member for Carrum spoke quite eloquently — I was not in the chamber for all of her contribution — about the changes to monkey bikes and the fact that we are looking at taking action to ensure that we do not have a repeat of the dreadful accident that happened last year at Carrum Downs. As legislators it is important that we respond to these issues as they arise and respond to them effectively. I do not think any of us want to see a situation where something like that can happen again. Those of us who saw the vision could not help but imagine that if Ms Lehane had been just 2 seconds slower or 2 seconds faster, the accident would have been avoided and she would have been safe. She would have probably got a fright, but she would have been safe.

The bill also makes changes to reflect the fact that we now have a national standard in terms of the Privacy Act federally so that we have a consistent approach in the way in which information that is acquired by Transurban is disclosed. That, I think, is important and welcomed, that we have a consistent national approach. Transurban is not only a state company, it is a national or international company, given its holdings overseas, and I think that is quite an important step to make to reflect the times in which we live.

The member for Mildura in his contribution talked about provisions in the bill in relation to abandoned cars. A lot of us see cars left on the side of the road in our communities from time to time, and it is important that action is taken to remove and address that issue.

Bills like this are important because the reality is that roads are an important investment that the state makes. We need to make sure that legislation reflects the times in which we live. Transurban and the CityLink assets have been quite important. The reality is that having user-pay systems on those roads has freed up capital to be deployed elsewhere. So it is curious to hear the interjections from those opposite because I am not quite sure, when you actually drill down into the details, how the world of the member for Mount Waverley would actually work in an electorate like Lowan — —

Mr Gidley interjected.

Mr PEARSON — There you go: the voice of the IPA. We live in a civilised society because we pay taxes, which is something you will never, ever understand because you just do not get it.

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — I rise to make some brief comments in regard to the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. I appreciate that some of my colleagues wish to speak on this bill as well so I will ensure that they have time to do so.

It is always interesting to hear government members talk about road funding, when at the end of the day it is all about pork-barrelling for their own communities, and it is all about funding roads in their own communities. Again, this is a government that just attacks the residents in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. One only has to remember that prior to the 2002 state election then Premier Steve Bracks promised the Knox community and the residents of the eastern suburbs that they would get a new freeway, the Scoresby freeway, without tolls. Of course they got it — they got the road with tolls. I understand that the government does not like that — —

Ms Hutchins — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask you to bring the speaker back to the bill. He has been speaking for over a minute now and has not mentioned the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dixon) — Order! I will not uphold the point of order at this stage. The members contribution has just started. I am not aware of the context of the earlier debates, but I will listen carefully and I am sure he will address the bill proportionately.

Mr WAKELING — For the benefit of the minister at the table, the Minister for Local Government, who may not have been here for the earlier part of the debate, many speakers have actually been talking about toll funding, and I think that this contribution is directly relevant to the debate that has been happening in this chamber on the bill.

When one looks at what this government is doing in terms of funding roads, you need only look at the announcement this week of over \$1 billion of funding to fund roads only in the western suburbs of Melbourne, with nothing to be provided for the people in the eastern suburbs. The government has made this \$1.2 billion announcement and they resorted to the Treasurer today having to do a members statement, of all things, in order to try to sell the message that they are investing that \$1.2 billion because the Victorian community, particularly people in my community and people in the east, know that this government is a fraud when it comes to road funding.

When you look at what this government has done for people in the east, not only do we need to talk about

what happened back in 2002 but also the scrapping of the east–west link, a road that was vitally needed by people in the eastern suburbs. This government wasted over \$1 billion to not build a road. It is the most expensive project in Australian history to never proceed. This government wasted \$1 billion of taxpayers money. The taxes paid by those people sitting in the gallery were spent on paying an overseas company to allow it to not do anything. Words fail me. We know that this government is now going to be allowing for —

Ms Hutchins — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I note that the member has now been going for almost 4 minutes and still has not referred to the title of the bill or a single clause, and I ask you to bring him back to the bill.

Mr Katos — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, this has been a really wide-ranging debate. I have heard a lot of contributions. Acting Speaker Dixon, you have only just come into the chair. Many speakers have spoken about various roads right throughout their electorates, so I ask you to allow the member to continue.

Mr Gidley — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the bill clearly deals with scenarios where there is private sector investment in roads, in particular in relation to the Melbourne City Link Act 1995, and therefore it is completely appropriate for the member in the context of talking about private sector investment to detail where that has been successful for CityLink and where this government has lost \$1.2 billion by not proceeding with the contract.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dixon) — Order! At this stage I will not uphold the point of order. I understand the contributions have been wide-ranging, and I am sure the member will mention the title of the bill in due course.

Mr WAKELING — As I said from the outset with the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016, it clearly relates to the Melbourne City Link Act 1995, and I was referring to the fact that the government is now allowing for the western distributor to be constructed, a road that is going to benefit residents in the western suburbs. But how is the government going to pay for it? The people in the eastern suburbs — residents in my electorate, residents in the member for Mount Waverley's electorate — are going to be required to pay tolls for a longer period of time to fund a road to benefit people in the western suburbs. The CityLink —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr WAKELING — 'If they only used it'. They are going to be paying tolls on CityLink. When they enter at Toorak Road and get off at Punt Road, they are going to be paying tolls for an extra 10 years to pay for a road that is in the western suburbs. They are never actually going to be on that road but they are going to be paying tolls for an extra 10 years.

So people in my community and people in the member for Mount Waverley's community were going to stop paying tolls when the deed was concluded, but under this government it is now allowing that period to be extended for 10 years so they are going to be paying tolls on a road in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne for an extra 10 years — on a road that has already been paid for — to pay for a road for the people in the west. Those opposite are more than happy for that to continue, but let me tell you: people in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne know that this is a government that does not care about people in the east or people in country communities as well.

I will point out one thing, which is the country roads funding, which is being used to upgrade the Monash in Mulgrave. Let me tell you, Acting Speaker, when I lived in the rural suburb of Rowville, I had to drive into the city and past the Monash, where the country bridges are being constructed. The country bridges are going to be built in an area which is further inland from where I live. It is just a disgrace that this government is taking money from country Victoria and spending it on the Premier's own seat. It is an absolute disgrace.

This is a government that stands condemned on a whole range of issues, but with respect to roads, do they listen to Victorians on these issues? Do they apologise to Victorians on this issue? Do they understand that they are hurting Victorians? No, like everything this government does, it says, 'We have made a decision and we do not care what Victorians think. We do not care what the views of Victorian residents are. We will stand up here and we will lecture Victorians about how they think'.

No wonder this government is out of touch. No wonder this government is being held in contempt by Victorians. Those opposite can delude themselves by thinking that Victorians love the way this government is treating them. Go out and talk to rural Victoria. Go and tell the residents of rural Victoria that they should be happy with the fact that their money — money that should have been spent in the western districts of Victoria — is being spent in the Premier's own city seat of Mulgrave. That is an absolute disgrace. It is therefore

imperative that this government start to listen to the concerns of Victorians, whether they are in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne or whether they are in regional Victoria, and start investing in road infrastructure and spending money where Victorians expect them to.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — I am pleased to add my comments in regard to the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. I am pleased to speak as a regional member of this house, being the member for Buninyong. This bill does several things. One thing is: it allows for the procedure of the widening of the CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway and allows a procedure to be put in place for CityLink to undertake that work. That is clearly going to be something that will benefit the people in my electorate, as many of them do of course use the Tullamarine Freeway. As we know, this is a high-demand road, and this bill will provide for the widening of this road.

While I am commenting on roads, I am very pleased to see that this government has committed to roads in my region. The previous speaker, the member for Ferntree Gully, said that this government was not committing itself to roads in regional Victoria and again wanted to raise the issue of bridges, that might be in the metropolitan area, that are being upgraded, but he fails to understand that the program is about getting rural produce to the market. They forget where the markets are. The markets require you to have access to the ports. If you are to get quality produce from wherever it is coming, from across regional Victoria, to the markets, you need to have a good road network infrastructure to get it to the ports.

When I think back to the time before Labor came to office, the worst road in my electorate was the road that leads to the electorate of Polwarth, which was the electorate of the then Minister for Roads and Minister for Public Transport. This was one of the worst roads in my electorate. It was full of potholes. In fact what the former government did was, rather than address the potholes and concerns on the Colac-Ballararat Road, they put up more signage to say, 'Drive slowly. Rough surface'. That was not what the people wanted; they wanted a better road. Under this government they now have a much better road with \$2 million having been expended on a section within my electorate to improve the quality of that road.

We have seen that the Western Highway has been improved significantly with more wire barriers. As the chair of the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee, I am very keen to see that we as a government do the work to make our roads safer, especially in regional Victoria where we know the

incidence of road crashes is higher. The wire barriers that have been extended on the Western Highway are helping to prevent serious injury caused by drive-off-the-road crashes.

The people of my electorate are delighted that in the last state budget this government committed \$10 million to put four additional passing lanes on the Midland Highway between Ballarat and Geelong. That is something that is going to help the traffic flow on that road as demand continues to rise. The people of my electorate know that this government is committed to the roads in my regional area, and it has certainly has taken great steps in ensuring that the roads are not only safer but are of a better quality, allowing people to get reliably from towns in our region to other towns.

This bill, as we know, also looks at the issue of miniaturised motorbikes, otherwise known as monkey bikes. We heard the member for Carrum speaking about an incident that happened in her electorate — an extremely tragic incident — at the hands of a monkey bike rider where a mother was killed in a supermarket car park. This bill helps to address this issue so police can pursue the owner of the monkey bike as well as the rider. If they do not catch them necessarily in situ, they can still be prosecuted.

I am also pleased to see that there are a number of other safety measures undertaken in this bill and that it recognises the issue of cross-border incidents that may happen. If a Victorian driver is apprehended for drink-driving in another state, this bill enables their licence to be removed in the same way as if the offence had happened in Victoria. We have made a number of other changes that help to improve the police's ability to catch up with people who are driving inappropriately.

We are certainly very concerned as a government to ensure that we can lower the road toll. It is too high. We know that again this year we have had a number of misadventure incidents, even one happening overnight — another tragedy in the Denver area in my former electorate. These are tragedies that we want to see avoided. Of course we know that we have a significant publicity campaign that recognises that it is not just about the toll. It is not just about the number, necessarily, who die on the roads, although we want to see that come down; it is also because all those people are family members. When people are involved in crashes, it clearly affects whole families and there are always stories of personal tragedy. This government, with its *Towards Zero* strategy and its action plan drawn from that, is clearly working to try to ensure that we undertake a broad range of measures that are not

just advertising and not just education but also use the penalty system that we have at hand to show that we are tough.

This bill also recognises that if people are booked for drink-driving, breathalyser units will be put in their cars. It strengthens the legislation to ensure that after those devices are installed people will not be able to start their car and drive if they have any alcohol in their bloodstream. We are working in a range of ways to improve the quality of our roads and the safety features on them. We are trying to ensure that through our legislation people will be kept as safe as possible on our roads, and we will continue to promote that. This government will not let up on this approach. We want to ensure that when people drive anywhere on our roads they are not endangering themselves or others but are driving safely on good roads. This is a matter that is so important, because of the stories that we have all heard and been touched by — stories of people who have been tragically killed or seriously injured on our roads. Those issues always flow through our communities, and they are felt very strongly in country communities.

I am pleased to support this bill. It allows for, as I said, the widening of the Tullamarine Freeway and the linking of the West Gate Freeway and Bulla Road. It also enables a number of other elements to be included in the legislation to make it clear that we want safer roads. I commend the bill to the house. I trust that it will be supported by all in this house as just another measure that shows how the Andrews Labor government is working to keep people in our state moving on our roads safely, improving country roads as well as city roads and working to make all road users in this state as safe as they can possibly be.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — It is probably no surprise that I am making a contribution today on a bill which is related to roads, given that I think this is now the sixth time I have spoken about roads in my electorate, which is in western Victoria, in just this sitting week. The bill that we are debating at the moment is the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. I appreciate the comments of the member for Buninyong, the previous speaker on the bill, about how important it is that we look after our motorists and have safe roads, particularly country roads. So it is a constant disappointment that over and over again we see that the things Labor says are not compatible with its actions.

Since this government came to office, we have seen a 17 per cent cut in the road asset management budget last year; this year we have had a 10 per cent cut. The \$160 million country roads and bridges program has been scrapped. This all adds up to hundreds upon

hundreds of millions of dollars cut out of the country roads budget. So it is no wonder that roads in western Victoria are absolutely crumbling and falling apart under the Andrews Labor government, a government that cannot see beyond the tram tracks — to western Victoria in particular. In fact earlier this week the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Premier and the Treasurer proudly said, 'We're giving money to western Victoria. We're giving money to the roads out west'. In fact it was \$1.8 billion for roads between Werribee and Footscray. There seems to be complete and utter neglect of the 400 kilometres of Victoria that extends beyond this area. These roads desperately need to have that funding returned. We need to see a significant country roads package from this Labor government, because enough is enough.

I refer to clause 39 of the bill, where there is an outline of new charges that can be applied by VicRoads. I understand through some of the briefings that I attended earlier this week with the shadow minister for roads and infrastructure, the member for Warrandyte, that this is actually a formalisation within the legislation of charges which are already being applied. However, it is not quite clear which of those charges are already being applied. Perhaps there are some new charges in there. We hope this will be elucidated through information provided during the consideration-in-detail stage on this bill, should it be allowed.

We are seeing from this government additional charges for our motorists. Just last week we heard that Labor has introduced fees for credit card payments of car registration fees. It is extremely hard to understand how Labor can try and make more money out of motorists, particularly in country Victoria, when all that is on offer are roads that are barely fit for cars. The number of contacts I have had from constituents about damage to vehicles and the cost to these families is absolutely unbelievable, particularly the cost of tyres blowing out and broken rims. Last week I spoke to Des Trotter. His company has had seven bus windscreens broken in only the past two weeks. The amount of damage that is being done to local vehicles, whether they are domestic or commercial vehicles, is astonishing.

The cuts that Labor has made to the roads budget are impacting on country people and costing us an absolute fortune. Why Labor cannot see that is absolutely beyond me, but perhaps it is because its members never make it out to my side of the state. I will take that back in part — the roads minister has come out to my side of the state once. He came out to launch the *Green Triangle Region Freight Action Plan*, a plan which really addresses the importance of well-built roads in our local regions because they are such vital arterials in

making sure the products that we grow in our region make it to port safely. They keep Victoria's economy ticking over. We know how important the agricultural sector is to keeping Victoria's gross domestic product ticking along and of course to keeping revenue coming in for the state so that we can hopefully reinvest in important assets like road and rail networks. The roads that lead down to the port of Portland are in an absolutely disgraceful state. They are treacherous in areas. Des Trotter inspected a section of road at the Muntham hills between Coleraine and Casterton on the Glenelg Highway because he had had complaints from his bus drivers. His only assessment was that this section of road should be closed down.

To think that we in Victoria hear that our state is doing really well — we hear this from the Treasurer all the time; he gloats about this enormous surplus that we have got — when, however, the Treasurer refuses to fix our roads and make them safe. Instead we have got major arterial roads between Victoria and South Australia which should be closed because the Labor government will not put the required amount of money into those roads to make them safe. It is an absolute disgrace. It is something that every member of this chamber should be ashamed of, because Victoria is much, much bigger than Melbourne.

I have got the biggest electorate in the state, Lowan. We have got 40 000 square kilometres. It is one-sixth of the size of Victoria, which means I have the most extensive road network. I cannot name an area of my electorate where the roads are up to scratch, but certainly the south-west and the southern area are by far the worst. I note that the Liberal-Nationals federal government have put up \$40 million to repair the roads in that south-west region.

I urge the state government to match that, but that is only the beginning; \$80 million in total will not touch the sides of the amount of work that needs to be undertaken in western Victoria. It is certainly a lot more extensive than that. We need a significant roads package, and I just hope that Labor will start to listen. I hope that it does not take the loss of a life on these treacherous roads, where there is a choice of either going through a pothole and risking significant damage to your vehicle, or going off the side of the road where there are significant drop-offs because the gravel has been washed away by the plentiful rains that we have had over the past month, or otherwise going onto the wrong side of the road and risking having a head-on collision with a B-double or a logging truck.

It is simply not a safe environment, and when you look at who is travelling on the roads, it is not just families,

and it is not just our truck and bus drivers; it is ambulance drivers, and it is police officers, who are often driving at high speed. I was told by a police officer that it is costing our highway patrol \$7500 per highway patrol vehicle due to damage from potholes to rims and the low-profile tyres that you have on the highway patrol vehicles.

The decision by Labor to cut funding to our country roads is costing the government more money, it is costing country motorists, it is costing our freight companies and it must be reversed immediately. Of course these extra costs, whether they be through damage to vehicles or whether they be through credit card fees to just pay your rego, are just another hit that we see from Labor on country people. Recently we have heard of course about the closure of Hazelwood, which is a direct result of Labor's policy to put hundreds of millions of dollars of tax on the brown coal industry. Labor have closed Hazelwood, and as a result, even on their figures, the cost of electricity is going to rise by about 8 per cent.

Now, this is all very well and good, and I have seen comments, particularly from Greens supporters on the internet, saying, 'Well, we can all afford to pay a bit more to shut down the brown coal industry'. Why are we ignoring, yet again, the little people? The pensioners are going to have to pay an additional 8 per cent on their electricity bills. It is the pensioners who have to pay additional credit card fees on their rego. It is the pensioners and the people who can least afford these cost increases who are paying the price for Labor's recklessness in being so quick to shut down the brown coal industry without a proper transition plan to clean energy. This is all at the hands of Labor.

Labor always wave the banner saying 'We are the champions of the little people'. Well, you are not. Look at your actions; you are actually causing more harm than any other government. The number of people who are going to be hurt by this and the number of people who are the so-called 'little guys' in my region is increasing. This is not just the pensioners, it is not just the farmers and businesses who struggled through the last two years of drought; it is also the unemployed. In north-west Victoria we have seen the number of people employed drop by 8500 since this Labor government was elected. We have seen the participation rate fall from 7.3 per cent to 6.1 per cent, which means 10 500 people have either left the electorate or withdrawn from the labour force.

If you are a motorist in western Victoria, if you are anybody who is paying for electricity in so many different areas or if you live in country Victoria, under

the Andrews Labor government you miss out. We need to see an urgent country roads package announced by this government for the roads of western Victoria, and if Labor members refuse to do that, they will see a result which hurts them at the next election, and they will hurt the Victorian economy. It is a shame what they are doing.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. Well, that was nothing different from the member for Lowan — another speech, another rant, another partisan display. Constantly from the member for Lowan we get contributions devoid of facts, devoid of evidence, and you will not hear the member for Lowan say one thing about the federal member for Wannon, not one thing about the federal government or the fact that Victoria gets 9 per cent of infrastructure funding. The member for Lowan can lecture this government about priorities, but in not one of her 300-word-per-minute members statements has the member for Lowan ever put on the record her utter disdain for the federal government's 9 per cent contribution for Victorian infrastructure. Not once — —

Ms Kealy — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I note that the member for Mordialloc is actually making a claim that I have never made mention of the 9 per cent that the federal government commits to Victoria, given that Victoria has 25 per cent of the national population. I actually would like him to correct the record, because in fact I have mentioned that on a number of occasions, in comparison to the state Labor government, which gives less than 3 per cent of infrastructure funding to country Victoria.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dixon) — Order! I thank the member for her point of order, but I rule it out at this stage.

Mr RICHARDSON — Thank you, Acting Speaker. So you will not see the member for Lowan going into the office of the member for Wannon and asking for a proper contribution to infrastructure funding — not once. She does not stick up for the community, and if the member for Lowan was looking to longer term bipartisan policy, then the correct thing to do would be not to put your coalition colleagues first in a partisan rant that is the same stuff over and over again. She picks the same speaking notes up, looks to see if it is the same sort of bill that has got roads mentioned on it, and she goes through it again.

Mr Gidley — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I would ask you to draw the speaker back to the bill.

Whilst the debate has been wideranging, this speaker is clearly here just to give his view about internal political relations. I would ask you to bring him back to the bill, which focuses on road management in Victoria.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Dixon) — Order! At this stage I will not uphold the point of order, but I am sure the member will be addressing the bill very, very soon.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — Thank you. It has been wideranging, but what a rant!

The member for Ferntree Gully's was a remarkable contribution, lecturing this government about projects that we are prioritising. The Tullamarine widening project is absolutely substantial for our state. It is a fantastic project. Our city will grow to 7.7 million by 2051, and the volume of freight movements through Melbourne's container ports will grow by 270 per cent by 2030. We have to do something based on economic rational thinking not pork-barrelling the eastern suburbs, as was the case by starting the eastern section of east-west link, which had a 45-cent return for a dollar invested.

The member for Ferntree Gully suggested that there was some sort of tax on the south-east and eastern suburbs. As a shadow minister, for him to suggest that a dollar should not be invested in the west and that it should be put over to the other side of the city is an indictment. He is not fit to be a shadow cabinet minister. James Campbell reflected as much on the member for Ferntree Gully's contributions as one of the worst low-altitude flyers ever. That the member for Ferntree Gully could suggest that no contribution should be made to the western suburbs because the eastern suburbs have to contribute to it through their taxes is astonishing. What an astonishing contribution from someone that puts themselves forward as a future minister. What an absurd contribution. The statement and suggestion that no investment should be made in the western suburbs is just absurd.

The member for Lowan, the member for Mount Waverley, the member for Ferntree Gully and the member for Warrandyte might reflect on and talk about the east-west link project, but the reality is that to continue down a pathway where you invest a dollar and get a 45-cent economic return puts the state back over the forward estimates for longer into the future. It is less money, less economic benefit and less economic output. To suggest that that is the appropriate way to go is part of the reason why there is so much pressure on road infrastructure and road budgets. When you go down that pathway, you are looking to waste money on

a project that does not stack up economically. When the M80 project was delivering a well over \$2 economic return, you should be prioritising those projects that have the biggest benefit for our state, and that is exactly what the Andrews Labor government is doing.

I will step aside for one second to talk about the member for Carrum's contribution. The member for Carrum gave a fantastic speech about a tragedy that happened in her electorate. Andrea Lehane was hit by an individual riding a monkey bike, a tragedy for her community. Thousands of people turned up to the Carrum Downs regional shopping centre to pay their respects. It hit our community hard. The member for Carrum, along with so many other people, reflected at the time on how tragic that was and completely unnecessary. We need to ensure that we have legislation in place and support for Victoria Police to investigate, to be able to impound and to ensure those tragedies do not happen again.

I know the member for Carrum had a fantastic forum about how you can support young people in the area and get people doing other activities such as sport and education. In that space Carrum Downs has certain challenges, and we need to support young people in that area, but that was a totally avoidable accident, and some of this legislative reform is important to ensure that those changes are made and that tragedies like that are prevented in the future. There are other examples across Victoria. I know the member for Ivanhoe made mention of that as well.

There is another amendment to the Road Management Act 2004, which is really important. In a previous life during my time at university I used to paint lines on roads in the south-eastern suburbs. It is dangerous for people to work on roads, whether they are council roads or freeways, so ensuring occupational health and safety is an absolute must. Something that might seem minor, like vehicles being left on the side of the road or obstructing traffic along the side of the freeway, are risks to public safety and to drivers and pedestrians alike.

I recall a story I heard when I first started working at the business when I was in high school. The current owner had taken over the business from someone who had been sideswiped while working on the road, attending to a particular vehicle. It was an absolute tragedy and highlights just how dangerous it is on the roads. I am pleased to see in that amendment to the Road Management Act that VicRoads, as the coordinating road authority, will be directly empowered to remove vehicles that are unlawfully parked or causing an obstruction from all roads and not just

freeways. That is a minor thing, but very important. I can attest to the dangers on our roads.

Also, there is the streamlining of penalties for drug driving. In researching this bill, I was quite amazed to find that in the past five years approximately 37 per cent of all drivers and motorcyclists killed had drugs in their system. Drug use is an epidemic across our community. We have seen the scourge of ice in our community. When people who are affected by these particular drugs are then getting behind the wheel of powerful vehicles, it is terrifying to think of the dangers they pose to our community. The testing is getting more frequent. We need to do what we can to ensure that that continues and that there are more and more drug and alcohol buses out there keeping our community safe. The streamlining of those penalties is a must. The bill also provides that, regardless of jurisdiction, if someone has committed a drink-driving offence, that that offence is replicated in other jurisdictions, as is absolutely appropriate. It is another amendment, but very important.

It is a wideranging bill covering a range of different areas in these amendments, and some very important and significant ones at the macro level in terms of the CityLink Tullamarine widening project, down to some amendments for local enforcement initiatives such as the amendment with the monkey bikes. I commend the bill to the house, and I look forward to it going into committee.

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — I rise to make a contribution this afternoon on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. I do so with a plea on behalf of the residents, the families, the small and medium-sized businesses, the pensioners — all residents in Mount Waverley district. That plea is for this government to stop, get a hold of itself and reverse the massive tax increases that commuters in my district are going to be left with for not one item of improvement in the road transport network. That of course involves this deal that has been made between the Victorian Labor government and Transurban.

What that deal will do is make it harder for families and households in my district to make ends meet and get ahead. It will mean that there will be less job opportunities for people in my district and the cost of doing business will increase because those businesses will need to pay a tax and a charge through a 10 to 12-year extension of CityLink tolls on the Monash to help pay for the western distributor, whether they use that road or not. It is just another tax and charged to make life harder on the residents and on the small and medium-sized businesses in my district.

That is why today I again put out the plea on behalf of my district to this government: please stop, please think about the people you are hurting as a result of this deal. Take another step, and do not extend tolls for 10 to 12 years on the Monash to pay for the western distributor and increase the cost of living for my residents.

It is very simple. There is no question that residents in my district will pay an extra \$40 000 in tolls over a decade to help build the western distributor, with no net benefit to them. The business case for the western distributor shows that a commuter living in my electorate using the Monash Freeway at Blackburn Road and travelling to the CBD would get no time savings — no time savings at all — yet they will have to pay tolls for another 12 years. That impacts household and family budgets and small and medium-sized businesses who are trying to make a profit and manage their cash flow. Businesses that want to be able to employ people for longer hours, if they have already got a job — or alternatively take on an apprenticeship or take on somebody else — will have less capacity to do that as a result of this decision by this government.

There are other ways to build and pay for that road. The residents in my district should not be made scapegoats for that, and I would call on the government to scrap this plan. I would also call on the government to stop its war on the motorists of the east and the south-eastern suburbs. It is clear the government's own members in those areas will not stand up for them, so today I and the Liberal-Nationals coalition again call on the government to stop their war on those motorists. Whether or not it is taxing and charging them for a road that they may never use, whether or not it is taxing and charging them for a road that they will get no time benefit from, whether or not it is making life harder rather than easier for them, we say: please just stop the war on eastern suburbs motorists.

If you look at what could have been done with the \$1.2 billion that has been flushed down the drain by this government as a result of not building the east-west link, you see that money could have gone to other road projects, whether in country Victoria or in other parts of the state. Again residents in my district are going to need to pay those higher taxes and charges. It is particularly disappointing when it is very clear we do need an east-west link. It is an undeniable fact. I quote the member for Werribee, now the Treasurer, who said:

I have consistently said we can't into the medium and longer term continue our reliance on the M1. It is an unsustainable reliance.

Again, who said that? The Treasurer of this state, the member for Werribee. What has the RACV said?

We ... have too many eggs in the one basket with the Monash-West Gate corridor.

What has the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) said?

The vulnerability caused by relying on one major east-west link, in Melbourne's case the Monash-CityLink-Westgate corridor, was highlighted by an accident in the Burnley Tunnel ...

That is why we need to accept the fact that we need an east-west link. RACV, VCCI and the current Treasurer, the member for Werribee, have all said that we need the east-west link. Yet this government, through this bill, is going to do exactly the opposite. It is going to continue its waste of \$1.2 billion, make life harder for my residents and my small to medium-sized businesses and tax them for a road that they may never use, even though those same residents are paying for infrastructure across the state through appropriate income and indirect taxation mechanisms.

Why should they be double-hit? They should not. I ask this government, in the interests of those residents, to please stop, think, go back and stop the war on residents in my district. It is very disappointing that this government is not listening to the people of the eastern suburbs.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — It gives me pleasure to rise and speak on the Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016. The bill makes some administrative changes to different parts of the principal act. It focuses on some things like bringing Victoria into line with other states on the use of interlocks and some blood sampling issues. I am quite familiar with those issues because I have worked in accident emergency and have seen what happens when large motor car accidents (MCAs) come in and people rely on you to save their lives. At those times it is not smart to be taking two lots of blood when you do not need to and can take one. So these are good things.

The issue that makes me most concerned is the fact that we are talking about roads, and we are talking about the fact that safety is an issue. Recently VicRoads data has shown that roads in my part of the world are the worst in the state. We do not actually need to be told this; we experience it every day. It is great to see that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety is listening today, because I think he has been out and visited and recognised that they are incredibly bad roads. Unfortunately, though, the minister's \$44 million announcement, as he well knows, was actually

repackaged maintenance and was such an insult that the shires themselves have said that it is less than they were getting every year. It was not an announcement at all; it was actually an insult.

These roads are so bad that people are having to cross over double lines to avoid hitting potholes. This is really serious. The safety of people in my electorate is at risk if they have to cross over double lines and face head-on traffic to negotiate the roads. In fact I got an email just yesterday from someone in Gippsland who had recently visited the south west. They said:

Trying to dodge the potholes was a massive job, but alas some you cannot miss and a blown tyre was the result. We were not the only ones affected that day as we saw other vehicles with blown tyres and were told by locals that this is happening all day, every day ...

We were eager to return to see more of this area, but will stay away and spend our money elsewhere in Victoria.

We are from West Gippsland, our roads are not fantastic, but nothing like the Western District.

You really need to seriously take a good look, Minister. I know you were there, so I do not know how you could not have seen it. One road on the way to Bolwarra is the Princes Highway — our no. 1 highway for this country — and one of the potholes there cannot actually be patched. I get phone calls every single day from people saying, 'It's raining and they're out patching the road today, and tomorrow that pothole is bigger'.

I had a phone call yesterday from Sam Wilson of Caramut. He said that they had patched the roads two days ago and there were already holes again. This is actually the government's fault, because the money that VicRoads is getting is just not able to do the job. A bandaid approach to this is throwing good money after bad, so they should take responsibility and give the money required. The government gave \$1.8 billion to the west. Does the Premier think that the west of Melbourne is the west of his jurisdiction? No, this is the state of Victoria, and as a government that is what it is charged to do — look after the Victorian people.

We are talking about safety. I understand that it is not nice to sit in traffic and to get home late, but what about the people in my electorate who may not get home at all? We have had 11 deaths in the last 18 months in the Glenelg area. That is the highest death rate in country Victoria. Just in October we had three truck rollovers. This is most serious. I challenge members to think about what it is like to work in accident emergency and to have your friends come in to see what I have seen, and it is only worse now. It is not pleasant. These people want their children to go to work safely and

come home safely. Our school buses were cancelled a couple of weeks ago because it was not safe to send them to school on the school bus because of the roads.

This is not a Third World country; this is a western country. The government should not forget the west of the state. They should not make announcements that insult us by saying, 'We're funding out west', because they did not fund out west; they forgot the west. I ask the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to come out again. He should prioritise the 'safety' in his title and come out to my electorate.

If I thought that the roads could be avoided, perhaps I could look at the train service and try and get from western Victoria to the city of Melbourne to do business or to come to this place. My son is at Melbourne University, and 100 per cent of the time he has come home in the last year the train has been over 40 minutes late and I am sitting there at the station, which is fine, with other mothers and other family members at 11.30 at night. That is okay for me because I only have to drive another half an hour, but what about the people who have to drive another hour and a half, and they do? Many a night the buffet car has not even been open so people are travelling for 5 hours without anything being available to eat or drink. The toilets often do not function and, guess what, there is not anywhere you can change a baby's nappy — the floor of the toilet is so sodden you could not do it there. It is just not acceptable. Our trains are the worst in the state for being on time. We are the worst in the state and have been that way for two years.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms BRITNELL — No, this is in the last two years. I am talking about being the worst in the state for the last two years. I think what was left was your idea that the state finishes at the tram tracks of Melbourne, and you proved that on Tuesday this week by saying, 'Aren't we wonderful? We are going to fund out west'. Honestly, the Victorian country people have done it before and they will do it again. Ignore us at your peril. The Premier of this state and this Labor government have no idea about the country, and they are proving it day after day.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

*Consideration in detail***Clause 1**

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) — I will look back to see my colleagues, but if there is no-one who has any concerns with any of the clauses up to but not including clause 23, then I am happy to move to that clause.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! We have to put clause 1 first.

Clause agreed to; clauses 2 to 22 agreed to.**Clause 23**

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) — My question goes to comments I made during my contribution to the second-reading debate. I would ask the minister if there was any consideration given to putting division 3 into a separate bill. And during the process of putting this bill together, were the provisions relating to miniaturised motorcycles delayed in coming to this Parliament because the remainder of the bill was being put in place?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — No.

Clause agreed to.**Clause 24**

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) — Minister, in relation to clause 24 and the insertion of the new offence of riding a miniaturised motorcycle on the road or a road-related area, it is already illegal to ride or drive an unregistered vehicle on the road. I would ask you what the current penalties are for someone who rides or drives a vehicle on a road where the vehicle is not registered, and how does the new offence differ to those that are already on the statute books? In addition to that, I would ask you: how is a road-related area defined? The unfortunate incident with Mrs Lehane occurred in a car park on what is essentially private land. I would ask, as I said, how is a road-related area defined, and would a car park be part of that?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — Yes, a car park is part of that. In terms of other offences in relation to driving an illegal vehicle on the road, I would be quite happy to get back to you on that; I do not have the specifics. You are asking about all the penalties and so forth. I am happy to provide you with that.

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) — With respect, Deputy Speaker, and with respect to the minister, it is

very difficult to ascertain whether the opposition is going to support a clause and carry it through the Parliament if the minister does not have answers. The point of the consideration-in-detail stage is to ask the minister for answers and to receive them so that we are in a position to help the passage of the bill through the lower house.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — I would be quite happy to ask the advisers if they have that on them at the moment, but I am not sure they will.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house will pause for a moment.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — In the case of an individual, it is 25 penalty units for the first offence and 50 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence. In the case of a body corporate, it is 125 penalty units for the first offence and 250 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence.

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) (*By leave*) — The other question I asked was: as it is already illegal to drive or ride an unregistered vehicle, how does the new offence differ from the offence that already exists? The minister did answer the road-related question.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — It was thought appropriate specifically to deal with the particular offence of driving a miniaturised motorbike. We specifically decided to do that. That further allowed us to actually provide the capacity for the police to impound and crush such bikes.

Mr R. SMITH (Warranty) (*By leave*) — In relation to subsection (3) of new section 65C, the briefing that I had referred to the fact that under the new offence when a miniaturised motorbike or a monkey bike is involved in an offence, if the person who is riding on that bike is not the owner, then the police will go to the owner and they will be held accountable for the events that happened. How does that work if the owner of the bike does not know that the bike has been used for an offence? What will then transpire?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — There are exemptions for people who are not aware that the bike was being misused in that way. If the owner was not aware that their bike was being misused in that way, the bike will be returned to them.

Clause 25

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) — Deputy Speaker, we are happy to go forward to clause 35, if you want to move this one and then go there.

Clause agreed to; clauses 26 to 35 agreed to.**Clause 36**

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) — Clause 36 refers to the surrender of a motor vehicle. The clause alters the investigation period for police to look at an offence involving a car that is driven off when ordered to stop, increasing the time for investigation from 10 days to 42 days. Given that in the vast majority of cases a vehicle would be followed up by way of its licence plates, can the minister explain to the chamber how this extra time helps police in circumstances where the car that was being chased is either stolen, and therefore the licence plates are not related to the offender, or the car does not have any licence plates at all? I understand police have asked for something of this nature to be put into the legislation. How do the extra 32 days help police?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — It was really just to give police more time to find the car. Sometimes when there is no numberplate they may not be able to find it, but the police requested more time to literally hunt the car down and potentially the individual who was driving it obviously.

Clause agreed to; clause 37 agreed to.**Clause 38**

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) — Clause 38 allows VicRoads to send notices by email or by other electronic communication. Can the minister give the chamber an example of a notice?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — It is very much about VicRoads sending and receiving correspondence and application forms via email — licence renewals and matters like that. It is really just allowing VicRoads to send notices electronically more than anything else as part of the development of the Service Victoria model.

Clause agreed to.**Clause 39**

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) — In relation to clause 39, which formalises some of the fees that VicRoads is charging for services, and new subsection (3F)(a), can the minister tell me what fee

applies to appointments related to the registration of vehicles and when that charge came into effect?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — My understanding is there have been charges for the registration of vehicles for an extensive period of time.

Mr R. Smith interjected.

Mr DONNELLAN — Yes, appointments, which involve coming in and registering a vehicle and getting it checked over. This was very much advice from parliamentary counsel — that we bring in from the schedule the services that VicRoads charges for. The only one that was new in that was the issuing of photo identity documents for proof of age, which is something that VicRoads may do in the future but may not. That is very much up to Service Victoria and whether or not they may provide the age identity document. All those existing services which VicRoads charges for are in the schedule, except for the issuing of photo identity documents.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) — Unfortunately the minister has not answered the question. I asked: what is the charge and when was the charge first introduced? While I am on my feet, can he also tell me the charges for all the items listed (a) through (k) and when each charge was first introduced?

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — In relation to the regulations, they were done in 2009. But I am happy to provide the shadow minister, in a period of time, with the history of when charges were introduced and what charges they are. Obviously the charges are on the VicRoads website, but in terms of when they were first introduced I am happy to provide them to him but we do not have that information here today.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrantyte) (*By leave*) — With respect, it is very difficult to move the clause forward and move the bill forward if the minister is unable to answer questions. The minister is offering to provide information, but his position is that it is very difficult to bring information about the bill to a consideration-in-detail stage in the chamber. I find that quite extraordinary frankly. If we are talking about a clause that relates to charges that VicRoads can impose on people, then it should not be a surprise that we are talking about it. As I say, it is very difficult to support the clause if we are unable to get answers to questions we are asking on it.

House divided on clause:

Ayes, 43

Allan, Ms	McGuire, Mr
Andrews, Mr	Merlino, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms	Neville, Ms
Brooks, Mr	Noonan, Mr
Bull, Mr J.	Pakula, Mr
Carbines, Mr	Pallas, Mr
Carroll, Mr	Pearson, Mr
Couzens, Ms	Perera, Mr
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Richardson, Mr
Dimopoulos, Mr	Richardson, Ms
Donnellan, Mr	Sandell, Ms
Edwards, Ms	Scott, Mr
Foley, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Graley, Ms	Spence, Ms
Halfpenny, Ms	Staikos, Mr
Hennessy, Ms	Suleyman, Ms
Howard, Mr	Thomas, Ms
Hutchins, Ms	Thomson, Ms
Kairouz, Ms	Ward, Ms
Kilkenny, Ms	Williams, Ms
Knight, Ms	Wynne, Mr
Lim, Mr	

Noes, 35

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D.
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr M.
Battin, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Clark, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Crisp, Mr	Smith, Mr T.
Dixon, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Gidley, Mr	Staley, Ms
Guy, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Katos, Mr	Wakeling, Mr
Kealy, Ms	Walsh, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Watt, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Wells, Mr
Morris, Mr	

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 40 and 41 agreed to.

Clause 42

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — I refer the minister to subsections (1) and (2) of new section 56ZO, and I would ask the minister to detail the effect of these amendments and the circumstances under which they would be applied.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — Currently the construction which is going on is enabled through construction licences on Crown land. This is about ensuring that there are no future restrictions and that land can become part of the

CityLink land after the construction process is completed.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — Can I also ask the minister in relation to new sections 56ZO(3) through (6) if he could detail the effect of those particular amendments and the circumstances under which they would be applied? Separately, with new sections 56ZP(1) through (5) if he could do likewise with those — detail the effect they would have and the circumstances under which they would be applied.

Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) — New sections 56ZO(3) to (6) are about carving out land. It is a wider envelope than we actually need specifically at the moment for the construction purposes. That land will be returned to either CityLink or VicRoads after the completion of that. New section 56ZP is in relation to ensuring that CityLink has title to the land it requires so that subsequently it also has operational responsibility, once the construction has finished, for that land and for the management of what goes on on that road.

Clause agreed to; clauses 43 to 53 agreed to.

Bill agreed to without amendment.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

**TRANSPORT INTEGRATION
AMENDMENT (HEAD, TRANSPORT FOR
VICTORIA AND OTHER GOVERNANCE
REFORMS) BILL 2016**

Second reading

Debate resumed from 8 November; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — There are a number of provisions in the bill that I have concerns about and will seek greater detail, clarification and explanation on from the minister, such as concerns with there being no oversight — why the government is seeking such wide,

sweeping powers with no oversight; concerns in relation to the area of staffing, the transfer of staff and what the organisation's structure may look like; and concerns about there being a number of provisions that talk about the retrospectivity of those provisions. That is just to outline those areas that we have some concerns about. For example, in reference to part 1 of the bill, which talks about amending the Transport Integration Act 2010 to improve the overall transport integration in Victoria with the objective of better transport integration, there are concerns about why the government is seeking such sweeping provisions with no parliamentary oversight. There are certainly a couple of clauses that I would be happy to go into the detail of, but in general terms that is a concern of the Liberal-Nationals coalition.

There are a number of changes to staffing and details about how many staff have moved or are moving under the restructuring. And again, why is the government seeking in a number of the provisions some retrospectivity? That in a sense outlines our three areas of concern in terms of the purpose of the bill, and I am happy to elaborate clause by clause. If you want to address some of those, that would be welcomed.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Obviously the shadow minister outlined a range of areas. I will seek perhaps your and his guidance, Deputy Speaker, as to whether you want to go through some of this now or wait until we get to those relevant clauses. Other than that I will just make a general observation about the purpose of what we want to achieve with the establishment of Transport for Victoria.

There are two things we primarily want to achieve: one is to give, if you like, full effect in terms of a governance approach and the structures that sit within departments and agencies to the Transport Integration Act 2010. The shadow minister mentioned that in his introductory remarks. That act was introduced in 2010, and I think it is widely regarded as a strong piece of legislation that seeks to achieve a better integrated transport system, which I think is a universal desire. However, we do not have the operational structures — by that I mean what goes on in departments and the business of government — needed to give effect to that intent, and that is what we want to achieve through the establishment of Transport for Victoria.

We have looked at models like those in New South Wales and London, which are the ones that are most referred to, and this is very much about achieving those aims and very much about wanting to put the user of

the system at the heart of what we are doing, whether they are a public transport passenger, a motorist, a cyclist, a walker, someone who is on a ferry or someone moving goods around the state through our freight network. This is very much about making the best use of our transport assets, putting the best information in people's hands as to how they use the assets and of course, when we go to make strategic capital investments, making sure they are in the right place. As I am sure the shadow minister would appreciate, I could continue on this point at some length, but I am sure he would appreciate the opportunity to go into some of the individual clauses.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — Just to follow up on the point made by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party — and I appreciate the explanation from the minister — I suppose one area of concern he raised was in relation to the purposes and then further on was the breadth of authority that the government is seeking from this Parliament to make changes to the governance structure.

We appreciate the minister saying she wants to make wideranging changes, but it seems to us that in effect this bill is sort of a 'trust me' bill saying, 'Give the government the power to make whatever changes we like to the structure of the governance of transport. We will make the various orders, and once the Parliament has passed this bill, we will just rearrange it from time to time as we like'. We are keen for the minister and the government to address why the government believes that that is appropriate, whether there should be greater accountability mechanisms for the Parliament and whether there should be disallowance provisions so that the Parliament can disallow an order if it believes that it is appropriate to do so.

The second aspect that the deputy leader touched on is the extent of the staffing changes that are involved with that and to what extent, if any, the government has already started making staffing movements on the assumption that this bill is going to be passed. Or is this entirely prospective and in fact no movements of staff have yet taken place?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I gather from that contribution that we will go straight into it ahead of the relevant clauses, and I am happy to. The member for Box Hill has had the pleasure of serving as a minister, as indeed has the shadow minister, so he would appreciate that ministers can already make many changes within structures of departments in particular and with agencies without needing to come back to Parliament.

There are powers vested in ministers under our Westminster system that allow us to make many of these decisions. I appreciate, particularly in the case of our significant transport agenda, they are big and important decisions, whether it is how the department is structured or the agencies that are responsible for many of the operations are structured and relate back into the department, which is indeed what this bill is about. I appreciate they are big and important decisions, but they are very much the responsibility of the minister, and under that there are accountabilities that I have back through the cabinet to the Governor in Council and decisions and outcomes of that are gazetted once they have been through the Governor in Council.

As I said before, in some ways we cannot see this bill in isolation, without looking at what has gone before it with the Transport Integration Act. Many of the issues that are being raised here by the shadow minister and the member for Box Hill actually have their origins in the Transport Integration Act, which allows the minister to undertake many of these issues. So whilst the member refers to it as a 'trust me' bill, as I said, there are many powers that already exist within the minister's responsibilities to do these things. I think the member asked about staffing changes. Indeed the Transport Integration Act does provide the minister with those powers. That is what I said. This bill should not be seen in isolation from that Transport Integration Act 2010. There are existing powers to enable the minister, under that act, to transfer staff and functions within the broader transport family.

That flows on to the following question that the member for Box Hill raised, which was around staffing changes. We have made staffing changes already. Staff from Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and VicRoads in particular have come into the department. They are staff who have responsibilities for planning and policy development areas, and this goes to the heart of what this bill is about. This bill is about having better department structures, having better relationships between those responsible, whether they are responsible for planning a road or planning a train line or looking at a bike path, and making sure they are talking to one another. At the moment the structures we have in place do not facilitate the intent of the Transport Integration Act. We need to change that if we are to achieve those aims, and we need to achieve that because of what I said before. We need to get better use out of our transport assets as a whole. Regardless of your perspective of how you are using it and how you are interacting with it, we have to get better use out of it.

So under those existing powers that are already held by the minister, those staffing arrangements have already been made — there has been a modest number come from PTV and VicRoads into the department. Of course we will not be making future changes until we know of the success of the passage of this legislation. In terms of what the future structure of Transport for Victoria will look like, it will depend on the passage of this legislation.

Clause agreed to; clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — With due respect to what the minister said before, in part 2 of the bill, proposed part 4A, division 1, section 64C, on page 6 proposed subsection (1)(k) says:

perform any function that a sector transport agency has under this or any other Act which is conferred on the lead transport agency under a Transport Restructuring Order.

Can the minister explain why this provision is not subject to parliamentary oversight? I appreciate the comments about a minister having the power to do a number of things within their department. VicRoads, for example, has been with Victorians since the Country Roads Board was established in 1913 — as I said in my original contribution to the second-reading debate. It became the Roads Corporation in 1989. Can the minister explain why this provision is not subject to parliamentary oversight and how it effectively means that the proposed Transport for Victoria could, after a stroke of her pen on an order in council, effectively see the abolition of VicRoads, the Public Transport Development Authority or the Taxi Services Commission?

Again with respect to the comments made before, we are not talking about changes or restructures to the department. I agree that ministers should have the ability and the flexibility to deal with some of those things, but for the stroke of a pen through an order in council to effectively have the power, whether it is used or not, to abolish VicRoads, to abolish the Public Transport Development Authority or to abolish the Taxi Services Commission seems an extraordinary power to have with no parliamentary oversight whatsoever. Similarly, with proposed section 64D on page 8, subsection (2)(g), we have exactly the same concerns. If the minister can respond or explain that, that would be welcome.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I appreciate why those in opposition are concerned about

what I think is wrongly described, should I say, as being fearful of ministers making changes with the stroke of a pen. I appreciate that sounds very dramatic and very troublesome and that in the end the intent is to make people fearful of what a minister may or may not do, but the shadow Minister for Public Transport and the member for Box Hill, who are at the table, as I said before, have both been ministers and both, I think, understand deep down that ministers already have a range of powers and a range of accountabilities.

In the instance of the accountabilities in regard to the powers that would sit with the minister under the legislation we are considering right now, as I said before, those restructuring orders are required to be made through the Governor in Council process. They would be gazetted and therefore made public through that process. There are rigorous cabinet processes — certainly under our government there are rigorous cabinet processes — that need to be followed. The minister needs to make the case through those processes that an order is being made because it is necessary and in line with the Transport Integration Act 2010.

It goes again to that comment I made a few moments ago that these bills need to be seen together. They are twins, if you like. One is operationalising the other. The Transport Integration Amendment (Head, Transport for Victoria and Other Governance Reforms) Bill 2016 is about operationalising the intent of the Transport Integration Act. That is why it has been appropriate to go down this path. It is consistent with what is needed in the Transport Integration Act. It is consistent with the existing powers that a minister has, while noting that there are limitations on that power in the way that I have just described — through Governor in Council processes where the case very much needs to be made for this to be done — and that it is consistent with the rationale of the Transport Integration Act.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — In relation to clause 3 I will just outline some other concerns in two major areas, if you like. I refer to part 2 of the bill, proposed part 4A, division 2, which is headed ‘Transport Restructuring Orders’, section 65A on pages 27 and 28. Proposed subsection (1)(c) is about transfer under proposed restructuring. It is back to the issue of staffing, which the minister made a few comments on in her response to my introductory remarks. Has the transfer of staff already commenced, on what date did it commence and how many people have been transferred? In relation to proposed part 4A, division 3, section 66N on pages 45 and 46, headed ‘Transfer of employees’, again we ask: has the transfer

of staff already commenced, on what date did it commence and how many have been transferred? I guess it just raises some concerns that have been raised with me by our party members in terms of the principle of legislation being before the Parliament and it actually being enacted or actions being taken whilst it is still under consideration by the houses. When there is a bill before the Parliament and these things are going through, some would see that as an abuse of the Parliament, so I seek some clarification around that.

The final two points in relation to clause 3 are proposed part 4A, division 2, section 65B on pages 30 and 31, where subsection (2) talks about the duties of the Minister for Public Transport. Again, in response to the minister’s answer before, we have some deep concerns that effectively a power is given that seems extraordinary — whether it is used or not, the power can be used by the minister. It is a wide and sweeping power, so we again really want to know why there is no requirement for parliamentary oversight for any transport restructuring orders — we think that is a reasonable ask — and no formal mandatory period of, say, community consultation, particularly given proposed section 65F, subsections (1) and (2) on pages 34 and 35 state that existing transport functions of particular agencies, such as PTV and VicRoads, should be discontinued. That is in the bill, hence our concerns.

The final point I will make to the minister in the time I have available is about proposed new section 65G, ‘Transitional Regulations’, inserted by clause 3, on page 36. We ask the question: why is there a need for a retrospective provision? There are sometimes valid reasons for retrospectivity, but alarm bells tend to go off amongst members when legislation comes into this house and there is provision for it to be retrospective. That raises some concerns among our members. I will come back to talk a bit more about retrospectivity around that. Is it that the transfer of staff is already occurring while the bill is before the house and these changes are being implemented — do you need retrospectivity because of that? — or are changes in relation to the agencies already in train while this bill is before the house, and you need retrospective powers because of that?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — There are a few moving parts to that, and I am sure the shadow minister will pull me up if there is something that I have not addressed, but I will do my best to go through the matters that he has raised. If I can go to the issue of staff, obviously this is a matter that the member is wanting to place some degree of scrutiny on, and I understand and appreciate that. Can I be very clear that

there is most certainly no pre-empting the parliamentary outcome of the passage of this legislation in regard to the movement of the staff. Be very clear that these powers already exist; they have existed since 2010 under the Transport Integration Act for the minister to move staff who have had their positions transferred from the department into Transport for Victoria. Those powers already existed. They existed for the four years that those opposite were in government, and they have existed for the two years we have been in government, so there is no change, if you like, to those powers, which has enabled us to make some, can I say, modest change that needed to be made because we most certainly believe in the need to get a far better integration between the various modes of transport.

As I said before, something that I think is universally accepted is that we cannot continue in a siloed way; we cannot continue to build a road, for example, without considering the impacts on cycling or on the public transport network. We cannot upgrade freight lines without considering how that interacts with the road network as well. I hope I have made that point very, very clear to the shadow minister that in no way is this legislation pre-empting the outcome of this Parliament and the passage of this legislation; these powers most certainly already exist.

I think the member wanted me to go into some detail about numbers of staff, when they were moved and how. The announcement that the government intended to introduce this model of Transport for Victoria was made on 27 June this year by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and I at the Furlong Road level crossing site at Ginifer station. We made that announcement and staff were informed on that day. I am advised that what has been done since then is around 240 staff from both Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and VicRoads in those planning and policy functions that I referred to earlier, and under the existing powers that the minister already has to do that, have come together under the umbrella of Transport for Victoria.

In terms of a further breakdown of those numbers, about 180 staff from Public Transport Victoria were transferred across. That represents around 30 per cent of PTV's workforce. An even more modest number of about 55 people was transferred from VicRoads, which represents only 2 per cent of its workforce. I give those numbers in percentage terms with the aspiration that it will allay some concerns about what are the ongoing operations of PTV and VicRoads. I hope this signals that their responsibilities around their role of operating

our network, in terms of what the work that PTV and VicRoads do, will very much continue. But we needed to bring those two agencies much closer together and in better alignment to give effect to the Transport Integration Act.

I will give the shadow minister a comparison. These are the same powers and the same process that were used when the former government actually established Public Transport Victoria and the Taxi Services Commission. So back in, I think it was, 2012 — correct me if I am wrong; I am happy to be corrected — the previous government established Public Transport Victoria. It did so by transferring out department staff from the public transport division within the then Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure using the existing powers that are consistent with what I have described today.

Similarly too, the Taxi Services Commission was created out of the transfer of staff who existed in the taxi directorate. Again, I explain this in the hope that it will allay some of these concerns about the relationship between the movement of staff and the use of existing powers. There will be further changes — as in there will be further integration of staff and functions — but those further changes will only come following the successful passage of this legislation. We have not in any way — nor would we have been able to; it would have been impossible — pre-empted this legislation by moving staff. We have used existing powers that are available to me as a minister.

I think the member raised issues around retrospectivity, and I hope from what I have described around the transfer of staff I have explained that the retrospective clauses by no means apply to those issues of staff. As I have said, we have only moved staff in accordance with the existing powers that I have as a minister, which are vested in me through the Transport Integration act. As I am advised, the issue around retrospectivity is for technical matters that might come about, such as the transfer of property. As you can appreciate, the transport portfolio across all its modes has its own large property portfolio, and from time to time there is the need to undertake some compulsory acquisitions, such as we have already announced — for example, for the Melbourne Metro tunnel project. So that retrospectivity applies to some technical aspects that are needed to be a tool in the hands of government to deliver, particularly when it comes to delivering major transport infrastructure projects.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I appreciate the minister's detailed response to the matters raised by the

Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I want to explore further a couple of aspects of the minister's response, and in particular her argument that government can rearrange departments freely, so why should they not be able to rearrange agencies freely? I take the minister's point that there may potentially be some bureaucratic restructurings that should be able to be done without requiring a huge amount of detailed justification or explanation; they might potentially be extensions of machinery of government arrangements. But this bill seems to be very broad indeed in the powers that it seeks, and as the deputy leader touched on it does seem to go to the power of the government to abolish very longstanding institutions such as VicRoads. I suppose the question is: is it appropriate for a government to have that sort of power in relation to these longstanding agencies, or is that something on which the Parliament should have a greater degree of say?

There was a review undertaken by the commonwealth government some years ago that the minister may be familiar with: the Uhrig review of the structure of commonwealth government agencies. One of the maxims that came out of that was, in effect, if you want to treat an agency like a department, you ought to consider making it a department, because if you want to make sure it is independent, you need to make sure that it is genuinely independent. I am concerned that if this bill is going to give the sweeping powers that it does to the minister to rearrange statutory authorities, is that an appropriate way to go? Or if you are going to have a statutory authority, should it truly be a statutory authority, being a creature of statute?

You could, as well as the analogies the minister gave, refer to legislation and powers such as the State Owned Enterprises Act 1992, which was enacted under the Kennett government. That certainly gave very broad powers of rearrangement of public bodies, but that was a precursor to specific projects, whether privatisation or the creation of state-owned enterprises. It was not a power that was intended to be used from time to time to reshuffle agencies in whatever way might be thought desirable, whereas that does seem to be the specific object of this legislation. It is not to allow a one-off restructuring or restructuring over a short-term period; it is to allow ongoing restructure.

Again, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to, if you look at proposed new section 65B on page 30 of the bill, the restrictions on the minister making a transport restructuring order are quite limited. They are about the minister being satisfied that it is 'consistent with the vision statement and the transport system objectives', that it would facilitate certain matters and

that the minister had consulted with some of the minister's colleagues. So there is no requirement for a broader consultation discussion paper proposal, a matter that could be disallowed by Parliament et cetera. It may well be that at the end of the day the Parliament would consider this an appropriate power, but I think it is worth testing why the government thinks it is appropriate that it should have such sweeping ongoing powers to dramatically rearrange the transport sector rather than bring to this Parliament a bill to make the changes that it wants to make at the moment and then come back to the Parliament if it wants to make further changes in the future.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I will go back a few steps in answering the question. What this bill is creating is an umbrella framework for the better delivery of both transport services and infrastructure, and also assist the government of the day to make better decisions in determining how to deliver infrastructure and services by better coordinating the policy and planning functions. Can I be very clear: this is not about abolishing VicRoads or Public Transport Victoria. Those bodies exist, will continue to exist and will undertake very important operational functions. I want to be very, very clear on that front.

What we are wanting to achieve through these restructuring orders is to give the government of the day — and hopefully this will last into perpetuity, or for a little bit, anyway — the ability to respond to what may emerge. If you think about the rapid change of technology, for example, and how we are now seeing the use of intelligent transport systems and signalling — these are rapid changes. I am not sure if this shadow minister attended the recent conference that was held here in Melbourne a few weeks back, the international transport — —

Mr Clark interjected.

Ms ALLAN — I thought everyone was invited. It was a pretty open invitation. I will correct that for next time. It certainly was not a government event. It was an internationally organised event. It was an international conference held here in Melbourne. Dare I add this to the mix: if you consider the challenges that we face with the way technology has changed the delivery of taxi services, for example, there is a real need again to put tools in the hands of the government of the day to be responsive and to be, if you like, flexible and able to adapt to technological changes. I appreciate the gravity of what sits behind the members' concerns, but I do repeat: they have both been ministers before and they would appreciate the need for ministers to have tools

that they can use to respond to situations that are before them or situations that may arise. There are clear accountabilities of the minister back through the Governor in Council and ministerial accountabilities under the Transport Integration Act 2010.

But also too I can give a very practical example of why we need to have some of these tools in our kitbag as ministers: the Parliament recently passed the Road Management Amendment (Bus Stop Delivery Powers) Bill 2016. I do not know if the house remembers that we passed that legislation at some stage during the course of this year. This bill was modest and addressed an issue about how Public Transport Victoria delivers bus stop infrastructure. Really, when you consider the use of our Parliament's time and those sorts of powers, it probably could best sit with the agencies and within the responsibilities of the minister. So it is about getting a better alignment of responsibilities and accountabilities, and putting in place an umbrella framework to oversight the delivery, as I said, of the department and those agencies that will continue to exist.

As someone from regional Victoria, I am as fond as anyone of VicRoads and the work they do in building roads. They are doing a great job on the Calder interchange at Ravenswood right now. It is going to be a fantastic safety improvement for my community. I think these sorts of things are about making sure that we have a modern contemporary framework to reflect the real challenges we have. We all know the challenge that comes from the growing demand for improvements in road and rail infrastructure. The growing patronage on our rail network in particular is putting significant pressure on the delivery of services and they need to keep the infrastructure.

Mr Clark interjected.

Ms ALLAN — I am getting the wind-up. I thought you wanted the answer.

Mr Clark interjected.

Ms ALLAN — No, that was not the arrangement. I am trying to give you the answer fulsomely. Goodness me, I am being gagged by those opposite! That is outrageous.

Mr Pakula — The question took 5 minutes, too, by the way.

Ms ALLAN — That is right. I am going through this because I am really wanting to impress upon you that this is coming from a desire to modernise the

framework that, as I said, sits over the departments and agencies that are responsible for delivery, and to be consistent with the principles that are contained in the Transport Integration Act.

Clause agreed to; clauses 4 to 14 agreed to.

Clause 15

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — Minister, part 3 of the bill contains clause 15, found on pages 57 to 61. It amends section 79AE of the principal act, entitled 'Functions of the Public Transport Development Authority' by substituting subsection (1)(a)(k):

provide and operate, or facilitate the provision and operation of, ticketing systems used for the public transport system and manage ongoing improvements in the ticketing systems for the public transport system.

Minister, the question has been raised with me as to whether this prohibits the imposition of a surcharge on top of the fares applying today were contactless methods of payment to be introduced despite such a move with technology not being made mandatory in the new contract with NTT Data that commences on 1 January 2017. If I can be so bold as to perhaps reverse clause 15 and just quickly mention clause 51, in case you get time to talk on that, Minister.

In relation to V/Line, I refer to clause 51 in part 4 of the bill on page 83, which inserts new part 11 'Transfer to V/Line Corporation' in the principal act, containing new sections 273 to 293. Has the government ever considered privatising V/Line? It just struck us as odd. In preparing these clauses, did the government take into account that Labor has been in office for about 10 of the 14 years since 2002, when V/Line reverted to being under government ownership? We were in for four years, you have been back in for two and V/Line is still in government ownership. It raises the question as to what the intention was here.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I am going to call for an extension of time. I would love to talk for a long time on the reasons behind the government deciding that it was absolutely necessary to put beyond any shadow of a doubt that V/Line is to remain in public hands. The reason why we have done this is that, through the process of putting together this large and complex piece of legislation, in one of the briefings I was advised by the department that, if you like, the shell company that was set up by the former Kennett Liberal-Nationals government still existed. We all remember in 2012 there were reports in the media saying, 'It wasn't our cabinet table that was considering privatising V/Line; it was those opposite'. There was an

active consideration that V/Line was going to be privatised by those opposite, and it was the public outcry that made, I think, former Premier Baillieu buckle and see the good sense in not privatising V/Line.

In answer to the question, we have absolutely never considered privatising V/Line. In fact we have had to rebuild the organisation from the mess we received it in. I remember clearly being briefed by V/Line in my first weeks as Minister for Public Transport about the savage cuts that were inflicted upon V/Line — \$120 million in cuts inflicted on V/Line. Most certainly you can go back through the annual reports and the budget of V/Line and you can absolutely trace the cuts that your government made and that they had a secret plan to sack 100 people from V/Line. That plan was developed under the government of those opposite.

This bill is about putting the matter beyond any shadow of a doubt; taking V/Line out of the clutches of, heaven forbid, a future Liberal-Nationals government that might want to revisit what those opposite see as the glory days of the 1990s, when they privatised everything in their wake, including V/Line. Their government failed; it fundamentally failed. It let down regional Victorians. We are absolutely determined to build up V/Line, to make it bigger and stronger and to make it into the service delivery provider that regional Victorians deserve. Central to that is rescuing it from the clutches of a future Liberal-Nationals government that might want to privatise it and flog it off.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has arrived, and I am required to interrupt business.

Clause agreed to; clauses 16 to 52 agreed to; schedule 1 agreed to.

Bill agreed to without amendment.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 8 November; motion of Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Circulated amendments

Circulated government amendments as follows agreed to:

1. Clause 11, line 13, omit “or 532”.
2. Clause 11, lines 25 to 32, omit all words and expressions on these lines.
3. Clause 15, page 13, line 29, omit “administering” and insert “working with”.
4. Clause 15, page 17, line 9, omit “administering” and insert “working with”.
5. Clause 15, page 21, lines 1 to 14, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—

“532No interference in individual conciliations

The powers of ACCS to monitor and manage its employees, or to ensure that its employees comply with policies and procedure of ACCS and with any guidelines made by the Minister, do not include the power to direct the Senior Conciliation Officer or a Conciliation Officer as to the exercising of their powers under this Act, or the outcome of a specific conciliation or conciliations.”

6. Clause 15, page 21, line 15, omit “534” and insert “533”.
7. Clause 15, page 22, line 18, omit “535” and insert “534”.
8. Clause 15, page 23, line 1, omit “536” and insert “535”.
9. Clause 15, page 23, line 5, omit “536A” and insert “536”.
10. Clause 15, page 23, line 17, omit “536B” and insert “536A”.
11. Clause 15, page 24, line 1, omit “536C” and insert “536B”.
12. Clause 15, page 24, line 6, omit “, contractors or agents”.
13. Clause 15, page 24, line 13, omit “536D” and insert “536C”.
14. Clause 15, page 24, line 21, omit “536E” and insert “536D”.
15. Clause 15, page 24, line 26, omit “536D” and insert “536C”.
16. Clause 15, page 25, line 1, omit “536F” and insert “536E”.
17. Clause 21, page 34, line 18, omit “536E” and insert “536D”.

*Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.****HOUSING AMENDMENT (VICTORIAN
HOUSING REGISTER AND OTHER
MATTERS) BILL 2016***Second reading***Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of
Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and
Ageing).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.****WORKING WITH CHILDREN
AMENDMENT BILL 2016***Second reading***Debate resumed from 9 November; motion of
Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General).****Motion agreed to.****Read second time.***Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.****The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The time appointed by sessional orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived.**Business interrupted under sessional orders.****ADJOURNMENT****The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Barwon Heads Road duplication**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) — (11 996) My adjournment matter this afternoon is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is the immediate duplication of Barwon Heads Road from Settlement Road through to Lower Duneed Road, including a grade separation in Marshall.

The Armstrong Creek growth area is expanding rapidly. I know there are at least 1300 homes there now and several thousand people already live there. With the growth area increasing in population as it has, these increased traffic volumes over the last two years in particular have really taken their toll on the Barwon Heads Road. To be quite frank, it is starting to fall apart in places. It is really in a disgraceful condition. The intersections of Barwon Heads Road with Reserve Road and Boundary Road are also in urgent need of upgrades, and they are really now struggling to cope with traffic volumes. These two roads are the east–west connectors from the Surf Coast Highway through to Barwon Heads Road and the Armstrong Creek growth area. At present there are no controlled intersections, and if you include Marshalltown Road in that, which also would be upgraded under this duplication, again there is not one controlled intersection where people can do right-hand turns.

With regard to Reserve Road and Boundary Road, I have already raised those matters on a couple of occasions in the house. There are no right-hand turn lanes, it is not signalised and there is no adequate lighting. They are extremely dangerous intersections. Also a grade separation — without sky rail, mind you, although the minister refuses to rule out sky rail on any future duplication of the tracks there — is required — —

Mr Richardson interjected.**Mr KATOS** — Part of this project is in Marshall. The duplication of the road also involves a grade separation, for the benefit of the member for Mordialloc, so it is part of the project.

The government are gloating about their surpluses and how much money they have. There is \$970 million from the sale of the port of Melbourne lease, all available for use in country Victoria, unless of course it is used to build bridges in Mulgrave, which seems to be what this government do — they try to justify Mulgrave as a regional seat. Do not ask me how they do that, but they do. Anyway, I certainly urge the minister to fund this duplication and grade separation of the Barwon Heads Road immediately as the residents

there are growing very weary of the state of the road they have to drive on on a daily basis.

Gerry Green Reserve, Parkdale

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — (11 997) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to consider the Kingston City Council application under the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund for Gerry Green Reserve. Gerry Green Reserve is located in Parkdale and is the home of the Parkdale Vultures, an amateur football club in B grade in my electorate; the Parkdale cricket club; and also the Parkdale tennis club. It is a significant reserve for our local community. Parkdale is the biggest suburb in my electorate, home of almost 20 per cent of the constituents I have the pleasure of representing.

The premises at Gerry Green Reserve are ageing. The community facilities there — the clubrooms — have been there well in excess of 50 years. They have been worn out; they have had their time. They have been of great use to the community, but the facilities need an extra boost, and the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund is the vehicle for that. The City of Kingston in its submission has allocated \$2.4 million towards the project, and it has an active application. It is fantastic to see the council prioritising this project. I would like to see it also prioritising Mentone Reserve in Brindisi Street, the home of the St Bede's Mentone Tigers Amateur Football Club and Cricket Club and of course the home of Luke Beveridge, who successfully took the Western Bulldogs to a premiership for Footscray. Those two projects in our region are of significant priority for two wonderful amateur football clubs, but works at Gerry Green Reserve are long overdue.

I would like to pay tribute to the club and the representatives. Chris Liddell, the president of the football club, has been a fantastic advocate for that community. Shaun Dougherty, the outgoing president of Parkdale Cricket Club, has been a tireless advocate for that region. It is a pleasure to sponsor these sporting clubs and support them. I ask the Minister for Sport to consider funding for Gerry Green Reserve under the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund.

Phoebe Hansdjuk coronial inquest

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — (11 998) I rise this evening to seek action from the Attorney-General to broaden the Coroners Act 2008 to enable the family of Phoebe Hansdjuk to appeal the coroner's findings into her death. I never met Phoebe, nor have I met her family. Save for a few connections to people who were friends

with her, I am a bystander in this case. I rarely raise issues in this place unless they have a direct connection to the people I represent or my responsibilities within the shadow cabinet. I have reflected on this, and in this instance I believe I owe it to Phoebe — a woman of my own age — to put my reservations about the investigation and findings into her death on the record.

I, like thousands of others, have been reading and listening to the powerful investigatory work undertaken by Richard Baker and Michael Bachelard. I want to acknowledge the *Age's* investigative team for continuing to pursue this case. I respect the Coroners Court. I believe in the separation of the judiciary and the legislature as a central tenet of our democracy, but I cannot accept the decision of Peter White to make a closed finding that Phoebe's death was a bizarre and tragic act of suicide. I think that many Victorians pondering this case cannot accept that finding. Why was seemingly crucial evidence never gathered? What of Antony Hampel's connections to some of the most powerful within the judiciary? Why did the coroner take the not unprecedented but unusual step of going against the advice of counsel assisting?

This case extends beyond just the death of Phoebe; it goes to the far more troubling issue of confidence within our justice system. We cannot and we should not turn away from this. Victorians need to have confidence that our judicial system judges us without fear or favouritism.

The shadow Attorney-General has pledged to amend the Coroners Act to broaden the grounds of appeal, and I urge the Attorney-General not to wait for others to take this step. As legislators we have a responsibility to open the way for a review of this decision. We owe it to the Hansdjuk family, we owe it to the Victorian public, and most of all we owe it to Phoebe. Phoebe and I do have one thing in common: we are the same age. But I still have a life to live and a future in front of me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Before the honourable member sits down, I indicate that *Rulings from the Chair* is quite clear in terms of not asking for legislation. I ask the honourable member to ask the Attorney-General to look at options available to assist for this case to be re-examined.

Ms RYAN — Certainly, Deputy Speaker. I would ask the Attorney-General to examine options to review this case.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Thank you very much. It then negates the position of directly asking for legislation, so I can rule it in order.

Fawkner police resources

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (11 999) I appreciate the opportunity to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police, and the action I seek is that the minister join me on a visit to the Fawkner police station to meet with local police personnel and to see the great work being done on the ground to make the Pascoe Vale district a safer place to live and work. The Fawkner police have many local challenges, from family violence to drug crime to gun crime, but they are doing great work trying to build a cohesive community across the Moreland area.

Earlier this year the Andrews Labor government announced that more frontline police, expanded anti-gang and gun crime squads, and the latest equipment and technology would be made available to Victoria Police to allow them to keep cracking down on serious crimes. In April this year the Andrews government also announced a \$596 million public safety package, delivering on its promise to give police the necessary resources to respond to gang-related crime, gun crime, terrorist threats and family violence. I ask the Minister for Police to accompany me on a visit to the Fawkner police station.

Camberwell and Surrey Hills gas supply

Mr WATT (Burwood) — (12 000) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The action I seek is for the minister to ensure safe and reliable supply of gas to my constituents in Camberwell and Surrey Hills, who have been experiencing frequent interruptions to their supply. Camberwell and Surrey Hills are leafy suburbs in the electorate of Burwood, with beautiful parks and good local amenities, but their residents have been experiencing trouble with their gas supply. I have spoken to residents in Camberwell, including people in Callanish Road, who are on a low-pressure spur line, which becomes waterlogged when it rains, interrupting gas supply. This has happened on numerous occasions this year. Surrey Hills residents have also bent my ear to the problem, including those who reside at the northern end of Pine Street. They do not have a consistent supply, and they have told me the most recent outage was on the morning of Monday, 24 October. This should not be happening in 21st century Melbourne. Another local has been informed by the contractor that the problem is a very old gas reticulation system which fills with water during wet-weather events and has to be pumped at a number of locations on a daily basis.

The residents have phoned the supplier on this matter many times, and I do sympathise. My staff have tried to contact Multinet Gas for further information — and I do emphasise ‘tried’ — but their customer service is quite poor, and after waiting for over 14 minutes, being duckshoved from one operator to another, they were suddenly disconnected. My concern is that if the gas pipes are filling with water during rain events, then this must mean that there is a large number of holes in the line, with gas escaping during dry spells. This is particularly disturbing, not only in terms of the gas leaching out of the ground through Camberwell and Surrey Hills and the financial cost of wasting such an important resource, but in terms of the safety aspects as well. If the gas lines are in such a poor state and the gas is leaking, then what is the chance of it being ignited, either by accident or by design?

I ask the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to provide the necessary assistance to my constituents of Surrey Hills and Camberwell by ensuring all efforts are made to rectify the gas leaks and to provide them with the same gas pressure that other people living in First World economies like Melbourne take for granted.

Carrum Downs youth engagement

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — (12 001) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children in the other place, and the action I seek is for the minister to visit my electorate and, with me, meet with newly elected councillors on Frankston City Council to discuss youth engagement issues in Carrum Downs. This will not be the first time the minister has visited Carrum Downs, nor the first time we have worked together on youth engagement issues. Last year the minister participated in a forum on youth engagement in Carrum Downs, which I convened not long after the tragic death of Andrea Lehane following the monkey bike accident at the local shopping centre.

It is crucial that we do all we can to make sure our young people are supported, engaged, educated and mentored to help them make good decisions and to help them reach their full potential and become positive role models and contributing members of our local communities. I am keen to further explore issues around youth engagement, particularly in and around Carrum Downs, and to look at existing youth services and facilities to consider what we can do to improve upon them. We need to ensure that our young people are given the best opportunities. It is crucial that both local and state governments contribute to this important conversation and strategy. I look forward to welcoming the minister back to Carrum Downs in the near future.

Police numbers

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — (12 002) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Police, and the action I seek from the minister is to immediately replace the 16 police officers that have disappeared from Boroondara police station from 2014 until now. That is the short-term commitment I am seeking from the Minister for Police. The long-term commitment I am seeking from the minister is 95 further police at Boroondara police station by 2022, which is what the Police Association Victoria is calling for.

There has been a 23.5 per cent rise in crime in Boroondara this year, and I have received a lot of feedback from my constituents that they are feeling scared and that they are concerned. Thefts and assaults have been the major driver of this increase in crime. We also had some fairly high-profile cases where the police, who do a wonderful job, need further resources to track down criminals. One such example is the individual, or individuals, who have been laying tacks on Yarra Boulevard. Now, whoever has done this still has not been brought to justice, and quite frankly it is getting beyond a joke. This has been going on for two years, and my community expects whoever has been doing this to be caught.

The issues with regard to policing are well known, but I would add that with Melbourne growing at 100 000 people a year, we certainly do not have enough police, and the number of police is not growing with that immense population growth. Law enforcement, like other key state services, must relate to and be directed to relate to population growth. Indeed, the number of police must grow as the population does.

Never would I have thought that two years into my time as an MP my constituents would be coming to me to say that they are scared. They are scared because crime is clearly on the rise in Boroondara and in Kew in particular — a 23 per cent rise. We need a response from the government, and we need a response now in the form of the 16 police that we have lost, and then in the long term a further 95 police to reassure my constituents and the constituents of the members for Burwood, Hawthorn and Box Hill — the four state members that represent the local government area of Boroondara — that this government takes the safety of Boroondara residents seriously and it is doing something about it.

Broadmeadows

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — (12 003) My adjournment request is to the Treasurer. The action I

seek is a mechanism for a whole-of-government strategy for new industries, jobs and affordable housing for Melbourne's north, particularly its capital, Broadmeadows. The strategy would aim to help the so-called postcodes of disadvantage become postcodes of hope. It is vital and urgent during deindustrialisation, and the strategy would fit within the Victorian government's big-picture approach to providing new industries, new jobs, better transport and better opportunities — particularly in blue-collar areas which are hard-hit by deindustrialisation for and the families who live in those areas in this time of transition when you can lose your livelihood.

It would also align with Infrastructure Victoria's view that it makes sense to direct growth where there is capacity. Melbourne's north has some of the best capacity and opportunities of anywhere in the state of Victoria. One in 20 Australians is expected to live in Melbourne's north in the next two decades. The population is already more than four times the size of Geelong and is predicted to grow by another 500 000 people in the next 20 years, making it the size of Adelaide. Melbourne's north is home to the highest concentration of advanced manufacturing in Australia and the highest proportion of undeveloped industrial land in Melbourne — about 60 per cent — defining it as the most sustainable and affordable region to cope with population growth.

My proposal is for a practical and coordinated strategy to deliver a new vision to regenerate Melbourne's north and Broadmeadows and to find gainful employment and Australia's unifying value of a fair go for the 21st century by turning adversity into opportunity, developing industries for the future, creating new jobs for the next generation, addressing housing affordability and replacing anxiety and fear with hope.

Another part of the strategy that I am looking for is: what is the mechanism of getting a better deal from the Australian government? Because their approach has only been one of managed decline for Melbourne's north. While they were willing to invest \$50 billion in submarines in Adelaide where there were marginal seats to help the replacement of the automotive industry there, they denied Melbourne's north access to almost \$1 billion during this critical and vulnerable time.

We have to rise above this partisan approach and make sure that we have a mechanism within the Victorian government itself, and we have to deal with the Australian government to make them see the importance, particularly for blue-collar workers and particularly at this time of globalisation and transition, of there being a future that people can transition to. I

know the Victorian government has got a wholehearted commitment and practical approach to doing that. We need the Australian government to be a partner and to be a participant, not a bystander.

Apollo Bay tourism

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — (12 004) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The action I seek is that the minister ensures emergency funds are provided to the Apollo Bay Chamber of Commerce for its Discover the Short Cut to Apollo Bay campaign.

The Apollo Bay community gathered last Thursday to initiate a campaign to promote the vibrant seaside town located in the middle of the Great Ocean Road. Apollo Bay food and accommodation businesses have suffered greatly this year in the wake of the Christmas bushfires and the winter landslides. In a community that relies heavily on the Great Ocean Road, over 40 premium tourist days have been lost this year due to both man-made and natural closures of the road. The local chamber of commerce, headed by John Gorman, is showing great initiative, and as a business community they are rallying to develop a social media and digital campaign aimed at bringing back visitors to their town. Unlike some other communities on the Great Ocean Road, Apollo Bay relies heavily on the full opening of the road. When disruptions are visited upon the road, many of the alternative routes can make access by day tourists very difficult.

The campaign is aimed at last-minute domestic tourists who want a good value Victorian coastal holiday experience this Christmas. The Apollo Bay community should have its initiative and entrepreneurial spirit rewarded by this government with the government acting quickly to ensure that some of the funding that they have made available to the Great Ocean Road area is available to this group. The chamber has only weeks before people's Christmas plans will be finalised, and the minister and the government have no time to delay in helping this initiative get off the ground.

East Keilor Leisure Centre

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — (12 005) I raise a matter for the attention for the Minister for Sport. The action I seek is that the minister join me on a visit to the East Keilor Leisure Centre to see firsthand this facility and the plans for its much-needed upgrade, including meeting the newly elected mayor and CEO of Moonee Valley council. On 20 July last year I wrote to Moonee Valley City Council following the release of its preliminary plans for the redevelopment of the East

Keilor Leisure Centre. Unfortunately the plans did not include the 50-metre pool being retained. I have personal experience of the 50-metre pool and appreciate what an asset it is, having spent much of my youth at the pool and having been a regular user of the pool.

Following the release of the draft plans, an article by Linh Ly appeared in the *Moonee Valley Leader* of 2 July 2015. Headed 'Plan to remove East Keilor Leisure Centre's 50-metre outdoor pool raises ire', it states:

A plan to remove the 50-metre pool at East Keilor Leisure Centre has raised the ire of swimmers.

I am very happy that since the release of the draft plans and my advocacy Moonee Valley City Council has released further plans which do include the retention of the 50-metre pool. On 1 October 2015 I wrote to the Minister for Sport and advised him:

The East Keilor Leisure Centre was originally built in the 1960s, and the 50-metre outdoor pool is now almost 50 years old. As a local, I have fond memories of spending many summers at the pool ...

I informed him of how important it is for me and my constituents that this pool is retained. Very importantly, I want to thank the president of Pools4all, Michael Gallus, who played a critical role in gathering over 400 signatures that were collected to oppose the demolition of the outdoor pool. In response to my letter of 1 October the minister advised of the Andrews government's \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, including the Better Pools program.

It is very important that Moonee Valley council have since endorsed the East Keilor Leisure Centre redevelopment including the 50-metre outdoor pool. A media release of 24 August 2016 states:

Moonee Valley council last night gave the green light to one of the largest ever construction projects in the city's history ...

This will be a massive investment in the City of Moonee Valley. There was an article headed 'Revamp for pool centre a hot topic — \$37.5 million option signed off' in the *Moonee Valley Leader* of 31 August 2016.

It is vital that I bring the newly elected mayor and the CEO of Moonee Valley council to meet with the Minister for Sport to discuss this iconic project in East Keilor, in the heart of the Niddrie electorate, that could one day be the jewel in the crown of community facilities in East Keilor and the broader City of Moonee Valley. It is a vital project. It is important with low

interest rates that the project is managed well and that the newly elected council also agree with the project.

Responses

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Ten members raised matters for various ministers, and they will be forwarded to those ministers for their action and response.

House adjourned 5.26 p.m. until Tuesday, 22 November.

