

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

**Tuesday, 3 May 2016
(Extract from book 6)**

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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

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Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
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Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D'Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
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Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
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Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
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Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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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

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

¹Elected 31 October 2015

²Resigned 3 September 2015

³Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴Elected 14 March 2015

⁵Elected 31 October 2015

⁶Resigned 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 Elasmar 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, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed. (*Council*): Mr Finn.

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

TUESDAY, 3 MAY 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	1715	Easter Rising centenary	1730, 1735
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	1715	Penalty rates	1731
ABSENCE OF PREMIER	1715	Australia First Party	1731
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS		Luke Johansson	1731
STATEMENTS		Shepparton mother-baby unit	1732
Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining		Women and Mentoring	1732
agreement	1715, 1716, 1717	Gippsland South electorate sporting facilities	1733
Ministers statements: Melbourne Metro rail		Alex Paterson	1733
project	1716	Nunawading Swimming Club	1733
Ministers statements: economy	1717, 1718	Forest Hill Football Club	1733
Bail laws	1718, 1719, 1720	Parkmore Primary School	1733
Ministers statements: medical research	1719	Dandenong High School	1734
Ministers statements: regional rail services	1720	Arthurs Creek commemorative garden	1734
RULINGS BY THE CHAIR		Maindample community park	1734
Constituency questions	1720	Saul Same	1734
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS		Essendon Fields Expo	1735
Rowville electorate	1721	South-West Coast electorate roads	1735
Bundoora electorate	1721	Warrnambool rail services	1735
Morwell electorate	1721	Warrnambool May Racing Carnival	1735
Dandenong electorate	1722	McKinnon Secondary College	1735
Ringwood electorate	1722	Geelong Women in Business	1736
Carrum electorate	1722	Geelong technical school	1736
Prahran electorate	1722	North-eastern suburbs rail services	1736
Macedon electorate	1722	STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS	
Forest Hill electorate	1723	AMENDMENT BILL 2016	
Pascoe Vale electorate	1723	Statement of compatibility	1736
LAND (REVOCATION OF RESERVATIONS —		Second reading	1739
REGIONAL VICTORIA LAND) BILL 2016		APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016	
Introduction and first reading	1723	Second reading	1741
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION		ADJOURNMENT	
AMENDMENT BILL 2016		Disability support case review	1794
Introduction and first reading	1723	Bendigo West electorate schools	1794
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE		Goulburn-Murray Water bridge tenders	1795
Notices of motion	1724	Woodend Primary School	1795
Program	1725	Sandringham Hospital	1796
PETITIONS		Yarrabah School	1796
Special religious instruction	1724	Pigeon control	1797
Prahran electorate rail services	1724	Melbourne Metro rail project	1797
Sandringham Hospital	1724	Maroondah Hospital	1797
ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE		Ballarat Secondary College	1798
Conduct of 2014 Victorian state election	1724	Responses	1798
SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS			
COMMITTEE			
Alert Digest No. 6	1725		
DOCUMENTS	1725		
ROYAL ASSENT	1725		
MEMBERS STATEMENTS			
Highlands Movie Night	1728		
Anzac Day	1728, 1730, 1734		
Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining			
agreement	1729, 1732		
Moe (Albert Street) Primary School	1729		
Neerim District Secondary College	1729		
Burnside Children's and Community Centre	1729		
Bon Thomas Reserve	1729		
Gurmat Samagam and Sports Event	1729		

Tuesday, 3 May 2016

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) took the chair at 12.04 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER — Order! We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, to their culture, to their elders past, present and future, and to elders from other communities who may be here today.

On behalf of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and members, I am honoured to welcome to the house today elders and other distinguished members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. They have witnessed our acknowledgment of country, which the Legislative Assembly commenced early this year.

This ancient tradition of Aboriginal people is now part of our tradition here in the Victorian Parliament. By making this acknowledgment of country each sitting week, we demonstrate our respect for the traditions of Aboriginal people, we honour their enduring culture and we strive to ensure that their voices will always be heard here.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! On behalf of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and members I would like to welcome in our gallery the whips from the Fijian Parliament and the Clerk of the Nauru Parliament. Also in the gallery are members from the Japanese Diet, led by Mr Keisuke Suzuki. Welcome.

ABSENCE OF PREMIER

Mr MERLINO (Acting Premier) — The Premier will be absent from Parliament this week. I will answer any questions on his behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Acting Premier. The Stretton royal commission, the Jones report, the 2009 bushfires royal commission and the fire services review all state that the safest firefighting model in Victoria is an integrated approach for all Country Fire Authority (CFA) firefighters. Why will the government not rule out

agreeing to the United Firefighters Union's enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) demand that would see this integrated chain of command broken for the first time in 70 years?

Mr MERLINO (Acting Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As the Leader of the Opposition would know, or should know, the negotiations are continuing. There is no agreement, and I can say to the Leader of the Opposition and all of those opposite that the outcome will deliver a fair and responsible agreement that will benefit career and volunteer firefighters.

We will not be lectured by those opposite, who cut \$41 million out of the CFA budget. They spent four years — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is unable to hear the Acting Premier advancing a response to the question put by the Leader of the Opposition. Members will allow the Acting Premier to continue in silence.

Mr MERLINO — We will not take a lecture from those opposite, who spent four years denying presumptive rights — —

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, I asked the Acting Premier a question about ruling out a part of an EBA which the government is still considering. The Acting Premier has not come back to any part of that question in the minute he has had to answer this question, and I ask you to bring him back to the question which I asked him.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, in asking you to rule the Leader of the Opposition's point of order out of order, I refer to the fact that the Acting Premier very clearly at the outset answered the question that was put by indicating that there was nothing to rule in or out because negotiations are still underway, and I think that clearly — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — It is quite appropriate for the Acting Premier to provide additional information about this government's support to the CFA.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Acting Premier, to continue.

Mr MERLINO — As we have consistently said, the services are not going to merge, and what we will not do is cut \$41 million from the CFA and \$25 million

from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. What we will deliver is an EBA negotiation that will deliver a fair outcome for both career and volunteer firefighters.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Where a fire incident controller is a volunteer, as is the case in the vast majority of CFA operations, is it a fact that the government has not ruled out agreeing to an EBA requirement that would see paid firefighters unable to report to these incident controllers, therefore risking lives and property by duplicating the chain of command?

Mr MERLINO (Acting Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his supplementary question. What we will not do is negotiate an EBA across the table in this chamber — I mean, for goodness sake. The truth is best put in the words of the acting chair of the CFA, who on Friday said this:

... there are meetings taking place almost on a daily basis at the moment, but there is no agreement at this point of time ...

...

... the Premier is quite right on this: this has been going on for a long time, it's time there was an agreement.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, the supplementary question was very clear. It was around whether the government has or has not ruled out supporting an EBA that would see those paid firefighters unable to report to volunteers. Maybe you would like to bring back my little friend to answering that question.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Pakula — On the point of order, Speaker, very simply the Acting Premier answered the substance of the supplementary question with the first words that came from his mouth when he said, 'We won't be conducting negotiations across the table of the chamber'. That is the substantive answer to the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does not uphold the point of order. The Acting Premier, to continue.

Mr MERLINO — The EBA negotiations have been going on for 1000 days, and that is too long. We will not go to war with the firefighters. We will deliver an outcome that will be fair and beneficial for both career and volunteer firefighters.

Ministers statements: Melbourne Metro rail project

Mr MERLINO (Acting Premier) — I am very pleased to advise the house of the new government achievement of fully funding Melbourne's new \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro tunnel. Last week the Andrews Labor government announced that it would undertake the biggest transport infrastructure investment in our state's history: fully funding the western distributor, Melbourne's second river crossing; widening the Monash and easing congestion on arterial roads across our suburbs; upgrading the Ballarat line for more trains and more reliability; duplicating the notorious section of the Hurstbridge line, something the member for Ivanhoe has campaigned hard for; giving people in our growing north access to world-class public transport — it started with South Morang and now, under our government, will go all the way to Mernda; and fully funding the new Melbourne Metro tunnel.

The Melbourne Metro tunnel is the biggest and most important transport project in Australia, and the Andrews Labor government will provide every dollar needed to get it done. Our population is booming, but we cannot get enough trains because the city loop is full. The Melbourne Metro tunnel will free up the loop by taking three of our busiest lines through the tunnel, with five underground stations and 65 new high-capacity trains. It will create an international turn-up-and-go system, and it will create 3700 jobs. This is the centrepiece of our job-creation budget, a budget described by the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry as:

... a pro-business budget that backs Victorian business by lowering costs, creating jobs, delivering productivity-enhancing infrastructure and opening doors to international markets.

Getting it done.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, the Acting Premier just made a quote. Can he provide that quote to the house?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is happy to supply that to the Clerk.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Country Fire

Authority (CFA) brigade administrative support officers support volunteer firefighters with day-to-day administration of CFA stations. Clause 15.1 of the United Firefighters Union's proposed enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), which her government is still considering supporting, plans to give the United Firefighters Union (UFU) a veto position over the hiring of all administrative support officers. Will the minister rule out sacking any of these trusted staff in favour of the new UFU hand-picked appointees?

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — I thank the member for his question. Unlike those opposite, we are not in the business of sacking thousands upon thousands of public servants when we come to office; quite the opposite. It has been repeatedly stated in this chamber and outside it that there is no agreement reached and there will be no agreement that does not respect the wonderful work our volunteers do.

Supplementary question

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — I ask the minister: is it a fact that, with her government still considering adopting the UFU's EBA proposal, the government has not ruled out stripping the hiring of CFA brigade administrative support officers from each local CFA region and handing that choice straight over to the UFU?

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — Just so we are really clear for those opposite, no agreement has been reached. There will not be any agreement, there will not be — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The opposition will allow the minister to respond in silence. Members of the opposition have asked a question of the minister, the minister is entitled to silence and the Chair is entitled to hear the response as put by the Minister for Emergency Services.

Ms GARRETT — There has been no agreement, and there will not be an agreement that does not respect the work of all of the firefighters who keep Victoria safe.

Ministers statements: economy

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to inform the house about the achievements of the Andrews Labor government in securing the finances of our state. Last

week the government brought down the 2016–17 budget, which showed surpluses of \$9.2 billion over the forward estimates period. Net debt is falling to 4.8 per cent, down from the high of 6.2 per cent that we inherited from those opposite.

And of course the good news does not stop there, because Moody's and Standard & Poor's both reaffirmed our AAA credit rating last week. Standard & Poor's noted that Victoria's budgetary performance and our debt levels remain consistent with such a rating. This is a boon for our economy, and it underlines our financial stability. Our credit rating has been achieved because we are spending wisely, spending on what Victorians voted for, to ensure that we get the visionary investments that maintain our livability, help us deal with population growth and enhance productivity.

We are lifting investment in infrastructure to an average of \$7.4 billion a year over the forward estimates. Over \$2 billion is being invested in infrastructure in regional Victoria — the highest on record. We are delivering a record \$2.45 billion boost to our health system, and following on from our budget we are investing \$924 million into schools. We are also undertaking all these investments while maintaining strong surpluses and keeping our own source revenue growth to 5 per cent, which is well below the 5.4 per cent seen under the previous government.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Clause 16.1 of the United Firefighters Union's (UFU) proposed enterprise bargaining agreement will see the UFU gain a veto right over the position description of all Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer support officers. Will the minister rule out supporting this clause, which would require the CFA to sack all current volunteer support officers?

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — I thank the member for his question. I think the time of this house would be better spent reading the budget out line by line rather than the United Firefighters Union log of claims, as fascinating as it is. Again, there is no agreement and, as the minister, I can assure the house there will be no agreement that disadvantages volunteers in this state.

Supplementary question

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — The UFU took the CFA to court to stop the introduction of volunteer

support officers, a court case the CFA won. Can the minister confirm that her government is now considering adopting all of the UFU's demands around volunteer support staff — demands that would completely reverse the Federal Court ruling, unionise all of these positions and sack all of the current volunteer staff?

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — I thank the member for his question. There is a reason that there is no agreement being reached, because we do not accept the UFU log of claims. We will work through it, but there will not be an agreement that does not value and respect the work of all firefighters in this great state.

Ministers statements: economy

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I want to talk about the budget; I really want to talk about the budget. I rise to update the house on the achievements of the Andrews Labor government in delivering economic growth to all Victorians. Last week I delivered the Andrews Labor government's second budget. It is good to see that the Leader of the Opposition thinks the budget is tonight. So far as Victorians are concerned, there is nothing in it for us.

When I delivered our second budget we received an enormous response — a true marker that demonstrates that Victoria is in safe hands so far as stakeholders are concerned. The Australian Industry Group has welcomed the 'significant increase in infrastructure spending, which will be an important growth vehicle'. The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has noted that the Andrews Labor government has 'delivered a pro-business budget that backs Victorian business by lowering costs, creating jobs, delivering productivity enhancing infrastructure and opening doors to international markets'.

Organisations all over the spectrum, whether it be the Master Builders Association of Victoria or the Brotherhood of St Laurence, have been united in their praise of this budget. Perhaps the most interesting one is the Property Council of Australia, which put it best when it said the budget 'invests decisively in the growth management challenge'. Even the Victorian Farmers Federation has warmly welcomed this budget, our payroll tax changes in particular, where 36 000 businesses have benefited.

Even the *Herald Sun* recognises the importance of the payroll changes, calling it 'a tax cut aimed at boosting employment'. The tidal wave of positive comments from stakeholders is best summed up by the words of

Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, which said the government had 'delivered a strong, ambitious and positive infrastructure agenda ... that has been welcomed by the nation's infrastructure sector'.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer also referred to some quotes. Could he also provide his notes to the Clerk?

The SPEAKER — Order! Did the Treasurer quote? The Treasurer will provide the page which contained the quote to the Clerk.

Bail laws

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — My question is to the Attorney-General. I refer to Labor's changes to bail laws, and I quote the Chief Commissioner of Police:

It's something we lobbied against and certainly advised against, but we don't write the laws.

The Attorney-General has since told the media that Victoria Police supported the changes to this legislation, and I ask: who should Victorians believe — the Attorney-General or the Chief Commissioner of Police?

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I thank the member for Hawthorn for the question. I was starting to wonder what I had to do to get one.

Mr Pesutto interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hawthorn asked a question and will allow the Attorney-General to continue in silence.

Mr PAKULA — I dealt with many of these matters in comments yesterday in the media, and I am happy to take the opportunity to put a number of things on the record today as well. There have been a number of comments made about the nature of this legislation that are false. The first has been that police would not have the opportunity to arrest rather than summons. That is not correct.

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question is not about the merits. The question is about why the Attorney-General slapped down the Chief Commissioner of Police on radio yesterday. Was he right, or was the Attorney-General wrong?

Mr PAKULA — On the point of order, Speaker, I have been going for 46 seconds. I can assure the member for Hawthorn that if he exercises some patience, I will come to the substance of his question.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, it was a very specific question. If the Attorney-General wants to give a more general explanation to the house about bail law changes, he can make a ministers statement. When he is asked a question, he needs to answer that question. I ask you to direct him to do so.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does not uphold the point of order. The Attorney-General, to continue in silence.

Mr PAKULA — As I was saying, there have been some misconceptions about this legislation. The second misconception — and it has been put in the public domain — is that there is no consequence for breaching bail for children. That is completely incorrect.

The third misconception is that Victoria Police did not support this legislation when it was introduced into the Parliament in November. The fact is that we said at the time that we had the support of Victoria Police, and we did have the support of Victoria Police, as has been reported on radio this morning; the Department of Justice and Regulation went through a long set of negotiations with Victoria Police. There were various iterations of the bill. Victoria Police asked for certain things to be inserted. Those things were inserted, and the bill that went before the Parliament had the support of Victoria Police, as conveyed to the government and to the Department of Justice and Regulation by Deputy Commissioner Shane Patton.

Supplementary question

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — Given Victoria Police has made it clear that it opposes these bail changes, which legalise breaches of bail conditions by juveniles, will the minister now change this law and tighten these conditions, as is clearly the position of Victoria Police?

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — The member for Hawthorn asks whether we will now change these laws. I point out that we are now going to have to change their community correction order laws, as I outlined yesterday, and we are going to have to change their baseline sentencing laws because they were struck down in the Court of Appeal. Let me say to the member for Hawthorn once again: these laws, when they were introduced to the Parliament, were introduced after a long set of negotiations with Victoria Police and confirmation by Deputy Commissioner — —

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question is very simple: will the government reverse these changes to bail laws which legalise breaches of bail by juveniles?

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. The Attorney-General, to continue.

Mr PAKULA — In the 27 seconds left, let me very succinctly say this to the member for Hawthorn: it does not do what the member for Hawthorn says it does; it is still open to Victoria Police to take any breacher of bail before the court and have an application for that bail to be revoked heard by the court. I discuss these matters with the chief commissioner regularly, and I will continue to do so.

Ministers statements: medical research

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I rise to inform the house of a new government initiative in the field of medical research. The house would be aware that in last week's budget we invested a further \$19.8 million to support Victoria's world-class health and medical research sector. We did this because Labor governments are very passionate and always invest in medical research.

This new funding will help involvement in clinical trials; it will provide more postdoctoral fellowships to help keep our best researchers here in Victoria; and it will help the sector leverage support from funding partners and develop pathways for the commercialisation of the very many important discoveries that are made in our state.

Trials and research like that, which will be conducted at the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery at St Vincent's Hospital, will put Melbourne and Australia at the forefront of research when it comes to the very important groundbreaking biomedical engineering and biotechnology engineering that is done.

We committed \$60 million to support this important project in last year's budget. The project partners have already committed \$60 million, and the project is shovel ready. All that is waiting is for the federal government to stump up its \$60 million. This is a project that is estimated will generate over 10 000 jobs in its first 15 years of operation.

Today I had the benefit of visiting the site of this future centre with the acting leader of the government and also the Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research to ensure that when Malcolm Turnbull lays bare his so-called commitment to innovation and medical research we will have a fantastic and fabulous project. We certainly hope that in tonight's federal budget the federal Liberal Party can see its way to making this incredibly important investment. We want the federal government to match the rhetoric with the funding. This

is a fantastic project. It will deliver important medical discoveries and generate thousands of jobs.

Bail laws

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Acting Minister for Police. Can the minister inform the house exactly how many members of the Apex gang who terrorised families at the Moomba festival and were arrested and charged are now back in our community having been released out on bail?

Mr SCOTT (Acting Minister for Police) — I can provide some information, and I would be happy to provide information on notice to the member. Taskforce Ares has concluded its investigation. A total of 41 people have been charged — 30 people in relation to offending on that night, 7 are on summons to appear and 4 others have been charged, with warrants issued for their arrest. Thirty-three of those charged or due to be summonsed are under the age of 18. Ten of those under the age of 18 have suspected links to the Apex gang, and I will provide some further information to the member on notice.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Noting that the minister has said that 33 of those persons were under the age of 18, I ask: is it not a fact that if any of those gang members breach any condition of their bail, they will now no longer be charged with breaching bail because of this government's new soft-on-crime changes to bail laws?

Mr SCOTT (Acting Minister for Police) — The question in detail actually relates to an area for the Attorney-General, but I am happy to respond. As the Attorney-General outlined, they can be remanded on application, as has been the case since prior to 2013.

Mr Pesutto — On a point of order, Speaker, firstly, if the minister has not concluded his answer, then on relevance, the question is: is it a fact that they cannot be charged any longer with breaching their bail conditions? If he has concluded his answer, then you, Speaker, should direct him to provide an answer, which the government is now too timid to actually admit — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hawthorn will resume his seat. He knows well how to make a point of order, and that is not a good example. Has the minister concluded? The minister was responsive. The minister has concluded.

Ministers statements: regional rail services

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Last week the Treasurer handed down a fantastic budget for public transport, and particularly for regional public transport, where we announced an additional \$1.3 billion to improve public transport. I am delighted to provide new information to the house about the response to the announcement last week, particularly in the communities of Ballarat and Maryborough.

I was so pleased on Thursday to travel to Ballarat, firstly, and meet with the member for Wendouree to discuss the \$518 million investment in the Ballarat line. This is a great project that is going to improve the capacity along the line — a massive infrastructure program that will be underway from next year and will provide in the longer term more services not just for the growing Ballarat community but also for communities like Bacchus Marsh and Ballan along that very important corridor.

To quote from the Ballarat *Courier*, which reported the Committee for Ballarat's Janet Dore as saying:

This is a substantial commitment from the state government to the region as a whole, and in particular, regional rail infrastructure ...

And:

The moment is now, now is our time.

The member for Warrandyte is more than welcome to have that document.

I went on to Maryborough. Can I say how proud I was to stand on the Maryborough station platform, returning to the place where in 2010 Labor reopened the rail line to Maryborough, to be back there to announce more services for the Maryborough community. The Maryborough community members that I spoke to were so pleased and understood that it was a Labor government that returned rail services to Maryborough, and that it is only a Labor government that is giving them the services they need in the very important community of Maryborough.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Constituency questions

The SPEAKER — Order! The time for questions without notice and ministers statements has expired, and the Chair will make a statement in relation to constituency questions.

On 14 April 2016 the member for Thomastown took a point of order regarding the constituency question asked by the member for Morwell, and the member for Eltham took a point of order regarding the constituency question asked by the member for Caulfield. Also on 27 April the member for Warrandyte took a point of order regarding the constituency question asked by the member for Eltham and the member for South Barwon took a point of order regarding the constituency question asked by the member for St Albans.

I have reviewed all constituency questions asked on 14 and 27 April 2016. I do not uphold the points of order raised by the members for Thomastown and Warrandyte. I do uphold the point of order raised by the member for Eltham on 14 April 2016. The member for Caulfield asked the Treasurer for an update, which is an action. Therefore I rule the question out of order.

I also uphold the point of order raised by the member for South Barwon on 27 April 2016. The member for St Albans asked the Minister for Roads and Road Safety for an update, which is an action.

I also rule the constituency question by the member for Narre Warren South on 27 April 2016 out of order, as the member asked the Minister for Education to provide information to a local school, which is an action.

I remind all members that where a constituency question requests that a minister provide an update or perform an action, the Chair will rule the question out of order. I remind all members of my previous rulings on how to ask constituency questions.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Mr M. O'Brien — On a point of order, Speaker, in relation to the constituency question I asked on 24 March of the Minister for Public Transport, question 7028, regarding when the government will commence removing the level crossing on Toorak Road, Kooyong, the response was due by 23 April 2016. The minister has indicated across the chamber that it has been signed and it is in the mail. Well, Speaker, we have all heard that before, so I look forward to receiving it, but I would ask you to follow up with the minister to make sure it does reach me in time, given it is already significantly late.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair will happily follow the matter through for the member for Malvern.

Mr T. Bull — On a point of order, Speaker, I have raised this twice in the past in relation to two questions to the Minister for Education asked on 9 February that are yet to be responded to, and you have agreed to take

it up on both occasions. I am yet to receive a response, and I would encourage you to further pursue answers.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair will continue to further the matters for the member.

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — (Question 7521) The constituency question I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services. I have been contacted by a number of Rowville and Scoresby Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers who are deeply concerned about Dirty Dan's deal with the United Firefighters Union (UFU) over the latest round of the enterprise bargaining agreement. CFA volunteers play a significant role in keeping Victorians safe and have done so for more than 70 years. Volunteers provide essential search capacity in bushfire season and at a time of highest demand. Yet clauses in the proposed agreement, such as clause 21, the 'veto clause', will allow for CFA management decisions to be vetoed by a consultative committee dominated by the UFU. I therefore ask the minister on behalf of concerned volunteers in the Rowville electorate when she will give a guarantee that she will not hand control of the CFA over to the UFU by accepting this dirty deal.

Bundoora electorate

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — (Question 7522) My question is to the Minister for Education. It has recently been announced that the Andrews Labor government will begin planning for an upgrade of Bundoora Primary School. It is a great local school, but some of the buildings are past their use-by date, despite the efforts and care of the school community. I ask the minister: how will the planning process for an upgrade of Bundoora Primary School proceed now that it has been identified in the budget?

Morwell electorate

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — (Question 7523) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport. My question is: what is the latest information with regard to the government's proposed sky rail project and the subsequent impact this will have upon Australian Paper (AP) and its transport of freight in both the construction and completion stage?

Australian Paper is one of our largest regional employers based within the Morwell electorate and is Australia's leading manufacturer of paper products. It exports to approximately 75 countries. The transport of

its products to port via rail is an important element of its business, and many constituents have asked me what impact sky rail will have on AP's freight transport operations. These freight trains are enormous in terms of their length and weight, and local concerns have been expressed about how these trains will interact with sky rail.

Quite rightly, questions are being asked on what the state government is doing to support the company, given there will be massive upheaval and disruption with respect to sky rail. I therefore ask the minister for this latest information, as it is critically important to Australian Paper and its employees.

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — (Question 7524) My constituency question is for the Minister for Industry. I ask: how will the Local Industry Fund for Transition, known as LIFT, support workers, communities and businesses affected by the closure of large-scale passenger manufacturing in this state? In particular, how will the \$10 million LIFT-Melbourne's South-East help to create sustainable jobs and contribute to the economic development in my electorate and those surrounding it?

Ringwood electorate

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — (Question 7525) My constituency question is for the minister for higher education in consultation with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Will apprentices who are enrolled in the certificate III in landscape construction course receive the trade apprentice registration discount from VicRoads, as applies to other listed approved qualifications such as bricklaying, general construction and stone masonry, where apprentices have purchased vehicles and need them to carry tools and travel between job sites, and when will these apprentices receive equality with other apprentices?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I suggest to honourable members that when they are asking a constituency question, they ask one question, not two questions.

Carrum electorate

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — (Question 7526) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. When will the upgrade to the intersection of Wedge Road and Frankston-Dandenong Road in Carrum Downs be completed? As the minister knows, this intersection has been at the centre of too many

accidents. The upgrade is well overdue. It is wholly regrettable that years of inaction by the previous government left members of the local community feeling voiceless in their campaign for these important safety upgrades. I am proud that the Andrews Labor government is getting on with improving the safety of my local area. I know my local community is very keen to hear when this important upgrade of the Wedge Road intersection will be completed.

Prahran electorate

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — (Question 7527) I recently asked Prahran residents to submit constituency questions for me to ask in Parliament, and planning and development was a common issue raised, so my constituency question to the Minister for Planning on behalf of residents is: what is the government's plan to address the pressures brought by development in the Prahran electorate? Residents are concerned about how infrastructure will cope and how the community will remain livable. The rapid growth of the Forrest Hill area and lack of investment in South Yarra station is just one example of where investment is not keeping up with population growth, with the same issues around local school capacity, community services and open spaces.

The government's bottom line is benefitting from stamp duty thanks to development. It is only reasonable that the community expect some of that to be returned in investments. Residents are concerned that neighbourhood character is maintained and that local planning laws are respected by both the government and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. There have been a number of outstanding planning amendments before the minister that have not been approved. How the government responds to increased development is essential to keeping Prahran livable.

Macedon electorate

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (Question 7528) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Earlier this year pedestrian lights were installed on Main Road, Romsey, fulfilling an election commitment and providing a much-needed safe crossing, especially for children on their way to Romsey Primary School. I was also pleased that the minister for roads committed to a study of the Main Road and Barry Street intersection in Romsey to determine the most effective traffic management solution for this notorious intersection. I know that this commitment is a priority for delivery in 2016–17, and my question for the minister is: when will this study start?

Forest Hill electorate

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — (Question 7529) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. The state government has on numerous occasions announced with much fanfare that it is funding and proceeding with asbestos removal in all state schools. One of my state schools, Vermont Primary School, has buildings that contain asbestos and even has signs on the front of the buildings denoting this fact. However, the school has heard nothing in relation to the asbestos removal and nothing has been done since the 2014 election. My community is anxious to know what the government is doing to deliver on its election promise and what, if anything, the school needs to do in order to have the asbestos removed from the school. My question is: when will the asbestos be removed from Vermont Primary School?

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (Question 7530) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and the question I ask is: what is the status of St Oliver Plunkett Primary School's application for a capital grant under the Victorian government's capital funding program for non-government schools?

The Andrews Labor government has committed \$120 million to help build and upgrade Catholic and independent schools in Victoria, with the funding going to non-government schools which have the greatest needs. Last year in an adjournment debate I asked the Minister for Education to accompany me on a visit to St Oliver Plunkett Primary School and to meet with the principal, Mr Alan Sweeney, parents and, most importantly, students to discuss the urgent need for their facilities, particularly their school hall, to be upgraded. I also invited Stephen Elder, director of the Catholic Education Office, to join me on this visit, which he did.

As was demonstrated during our visit, there is an urgent need to upgrade the facilities at this school, particularly the school hall. This is indeed a fabulous parish community and a fabulous school community that is in desperate need of assistance.

Ms Ward — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I seek your guidance. I am curious to know what your thoughts are on the constituency question from the member for Ringwood, where she directed her question to three ministers — being the Minister for Education, the minister for higher education and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety — in addition to asking two

questions within that question. It seems a bit like a one-for-three deal, and I seek your guidance on that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The honourable member directed the question to the one minister but said in her contribution that that should be done in consultation with the other ministers. The constituency question is in order.

LAND (REVOCATION OF RESERVATIONS — REGIONAL VICTORIA LAND) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to revoke permanent reservations of certain land at Burkes Flat, Campbelltown, Lake Charm and Walpeup and to revoke a related Crown grant and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I ask the minister to provide a brief explanation further to the long title.

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water) — The purposes of the bill are to revoke the permanent reservation and related Crown grant of certain mechanics institute land at Burkes Flat, to revoke permanent reservations of certain watering purposes land at Campbelltown, to revoke permanent reservations of certain mechanics institute land at Lake Charm and to revoke the permanent reservation of certain agricultural research station land at Walpeup.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

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

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992, the Domestic Animals Act 1994, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, the Public Administration Act 2004, the Veterinary Practice Act 1997 and the Wildlife Act 1975 and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I ask the minister to provide a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — It is challenging to provide a brief explanation for this bill. The bill makes a number of amendments to various acts that are the responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture and go to the ongoing work around dogs that are declared restricted breed, further work around the Game Management Authority, issues around the use of chemicals and the appropriate use of those chemicals, and further amendments around improving protection for the prevention of cruelty to animals. There are a number of elements to this bill that obviously will be provided in further detail when the bill is second read.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of motion

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Notice of motion 2 will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their notice to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2.00 p.m. today.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Special religious instruction

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents in the Eildon electorate draws to the attention of the house that the government has scrapped special religious instruction (SRI) in Victorian government schools during school hours.

Prior to the last election, Daniel Andrews and Labor said they would not scrap SRI during school hours in Victorian government schools.

Daniel Andrews and James Merlino have announced that they will break their promise and will only allow SRI to occur outside of school hours or during lunchbreaks.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reverses its broken promise and allows students attending government schools to attend SRI during school hours.

By Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (11 signatures).

Prahran electorate rail services

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the users of Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale train stations draws to the attention of the house:

ongoing problems with overcrowding, reliability and lack of peak-hour services at Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale stations;

a temporary timetable has been introduced, as part of the level crossing removal project, increasing train services to approximately every 5 minutes during morning and afternoon peak; and

the temporary timetable is due to expire in mid-2016.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria permanently retain the current peak-hour service levels for Hawksburn, Toorak and Armadale stations.

By Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (250 signatures).

Sandringham Hospital

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of Bayside, Kingston and metropolitan Melbourne draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the possible plans to cut back emergency department services at the Sandringham Hospital.

The petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls on the Victorian government to maintain the vital 24-hour emergency department services at the Sandringham Hospital to meet the health needs of the local community and the southern region of Melbourne.

By Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (7250 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Sandringham be considered next day on motion of Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham).

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

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Prahran be considered next day on motion of Mr HIBBINS (Prahran).

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Conduct of 2014 Victorian state election

Ms ASHER (Brighton) presented report, together with appendices, extract from proceedings, minority report and transcripts of evidence.

Tabled.

Ordered that report, appendices, extract from proceedings and minority report be published.

**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Alert Digest No. 6

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented *Alert Digest No. 6* of 2016 on:

- Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016**
- Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016**
- Education and Training Reform Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2015**
- Infant Viability Bill 2015**
- Justice Legislation (Evidence and Other Acts) Amendment Bill 2016**
- Land (Revocation of Reservations — Metropolitan Land) Bill 2016**
- Local Government (Greater Geelong City Council) Bill 2016**
- Public Administration Amendment (Public Sector Communication Standards) Bill 2016**
- Road Management Amendment (Bus Stop Delivery Powers) Bill 2016**
- Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Community Safety) Bill 2016**
- Victorian Funds Management Corporation Amendment Bill 2016**
- Witness Protection Amendment Bill 2016**

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Operation Ord: An investigation into the conduct of officers of the Department of Education and Training, in connection with the use of ‘banker schools’ and related activities — Ordered to be published

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 — Notice under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rule 31 (*Gazette G17 28 April 2016*)

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Bail Act 1977 — SR 26

Building Act 1993 — SR 31

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 — SR 27

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Act 2003 — SR 28

Subdivision Act 1988 — SR 30

Transfer of Land Act 1958 — SRS 29, 30

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 28, 29, 30, 31

Wildlife Act 1975:

Wildlife (Prohibition of Game Hunting) Notice (*Gazette S99 17 April 2016*)

Wildlife (Prohibition of Game Hunting) Amendment Notice (*Gazette S111 24 April 2016*).

The following proclamations fixing operative dates were tabled by the Clerk in accordance with an Order of the House dated 24 February 2015:

Justice Legislation Further Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act (except ss 4, 5, 6 and 8 and Part 5) — 1 May 2016 (*Gazette S114 26 April 2016*)

Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (Safe Access Zones) Act 2015 — Whole Act — 2 May 2016 (*Gazette S114, 26 April 2016*).

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent to Health Complaints Bill 2016.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

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

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 4 May 2016:

House Contracts Guarantee Repeal Bill 2016

Land (Revocation of Reservations — Metropolitan Land) Bill 2016

Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

In making a few comments on the government business program that is before the house, obviously we have had to have a slightly changed week this week in order to accommodate the sitting last week for the budget. This week is a two-day week — today and tomorrow — and the three bills which were commenced last Wednesday when the house sat for the budget will be completed by 7.00 p.m. tomorrow evening.

I indicate to the house, and I have already indicated this to the opposition, that we would also be seeking that a lot of

today and tomorrow be set aside for debating the budget bills, particularly the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I have no doubt that there will be much interest and debate from members of the house on that bill. Also, part of tomorrow will need to be devoted to dealing with the motions I have just given notice of, including one establishing the arrangements for a special sitting of the house to deal with the significant issue of addressing the apology for those who were affected by the law at the time around the criminalisation of homosexuality.

Secondly, there is the sessional order change. It may seem to be a minor change in going from ringing the bells for 3 minutes to ringing them for 4 minutes, but that is to accommodate the changed arrangements we now have in the Parliament for members accommodation, now that the beloved chook house has seen its last days. There are building works afoot and alternative accommodation has been made available, and we need to provide a little bit of additional time so that members are able to participate in their duty as members of Parliament and vote on bills or procedural matters before the house. I hope that is something that can be supported, and we will have that matter dealt with tomorrow. As I said, in the meantime the balance of time will be devoted to debate on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — This motion for a government business program is yet another illustration of the folly of the way in which the government handled the rearrangement of the sittings of this Parliament following the announcement that the commonwealth budget would be delivered today. Instead of following the logical and sensible course of bringing forward the whole of this sitting week to last week and then operating a normal sitting week, as we know, the government decided to sit for just one day last week and two days this week. That had the consequence that it was impossible for the government to bring in a government business program that straddled the two weeks because standing order 94(2)(a) provides for a government business program to relate to matters to be completed in a particular sitting week.

So we now have the rather absurd situation of a government business program to deal with three bills, the vast bulk of which were already dealt with last week. That is assuming that the government continues to breach its own election promise about making consideration in detail a standard part of every bill. The upshot is that, from what the Leader of the House has indicated, although this is what is being proposed on the government business program, the government's intention is in fact to devote the vast majority of today

and tomorrow to consideration of the budget, potentially including the Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016.

Obviously on this side of the house we are keen to get on with debating the budget and exposing its flaws and its failures. We got off to a flying start with that last Wednesday, and we on this side of the house are keen to continue to expose to the community of Victoria the many failings of the budget: its high taxation and, notwithstanding that, its lack of provision of many essential services; and the failures of many of the infrastructure projects that are contained in it. We are keen to get on and debate the budget and hold the government to account over it. It is regrettable that the government did not act in the most sensible way and bring forward the entirety of this sitting week to last week so that the government business program would bear some relationship to the main business of the house for the week.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — It is a delight to be able to stand up and debate the budget. The Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016 is the main bill to be debated in this house this week, and what it goes to is the big picture that the Andrews Labor government is providing. We are going to redesign the face of the world's most livable city through our transport initiatives. We have initiatives where families can see where they fit into the big picture. Business supports it, and individuals support it.

This is what the government brings to this Parliament. The budget also has a fair go for people, and it is wrapped up with a AAA rating. This is the debate. We hear the manager of opposition business saying it is absurd. This is one of the most critical opportunities that we have — that we are able to speak on behalf of the big-picture proposition and the strategy and vision of the Andrews government and also speak on behalf of all of our constituencies. This is one of the greatest responsibilities and opportunities that members are given in this Parliament — a 15-minute contribution on these debates. Let us not have any more sophistry or any more manufactured outrage.

Can you imagine what Scott Morrison would give to have the response that the Victorian government has had to its budget, right across the various stakeholders and even the critics? Let us get it right. It is much more exciting to be a Victorian. That is the call.

There are also the other bills that we have had contributions on, which will continue. That includes the Treasury and Finance Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill is important because it includes the

proposition of increasing the maximum penalty for a corporate body found guilty of an offence of reckless endangerment. The budget involves the principles, the vision and the goals of the government, and then there are the different pieces of legislation that underwrite those values. That is what we have the opportunity to continue the debate with today.

There is also the Land (Revocation of Reservations — Metropolitan Land) Bill 2016. The Minister for Planning gave the big picture on how this can help transform the inner city. We can put together a package for public, private and social housing — a redevelopment that is important — and there can be a sporting hub as well. What do we want? We want our kids to be involved in teams, not gangs. That is the opportunity that we are giving to people. Here is another way that can be done.

Then there is the House Contracts Guarantee Repeal Bill 2016. We also have a motion for a special sitting regarding the apology for the criminalisation of homosexuality in the past. Here again is the big picture being played out by the Andrews government. People in Victoria can see that here is the financial management, here is how we are going to redesign the world's most livable city through transport and here are the various initiatives right across each electorate and how people can be part of them.

I say to the opposition: it would be a change, and it would be welcomed by the people of Victoria, if we did not just have fear every time — if we did not just have contributions in question time based on fear, as we had again today. Can we have a little bit of fairness? Can members see the bigger picture and see where they can make a contribution on behalf of their constituency? I know people did not get everything they wanted. That is the nature of what happens. We know and understand that. But if we keep driving, as the government will, on issues of showing families, individuals and businesses where they fit into the big picture and how they can be a part of it, that is what the community wants, and that is the leadership that Labor is giving. I commend the government business program to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — The Greens will not be opposing the government business program in this instance. We did not oppose it last week, so when it is revisited this week we will again not oppose it. Three bills are up on the government business program, and then there will be debate on the budget. I will save my remarks on the budget for when it comes time to debate it. A number of motions have been put forward by the Leader of the House, including one regarding changing the sessional orders and one for an apology regarding

the criminalisation of homosexuality in the past, which I welcome. As I said, the Greens will not be opposing the government business program.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a few contributions in relation to this week's government business program. As the Leader of the House has indicated, we will be allocating some time tomorrow to discuss the additional time required for the ringing of the bells as a consequence of the fact that those of us who are refugees from the chook house have been spread to the seven corners of this great institution. Some of us are quite close to the back door and some of us are not, and it is important that those of us who are further away and might not be nimble or fleet of foot have the opportunity to make their way to the chamber in an orderly time and not risk a workplace injury.

I am surprised in relation to today. Traditionally today would be the day when you would normally expect that the shadow Treasurer would lead the response to the government's budget. I am quite surprised that the member for Malvern is not speaking today. Indeed I am quite surprised that for the first question time after the budget was handed down there was not one question from the member for Malvern — not one. It is interesting that in his previous contribution the member for Malvern talked at length about the need to scrutinise the budget, to hold the government to account and to hold the executive to account, and the fact that there was a need to properly scrutinise the budget. Yet when provided with an opportunity to provide his response to the budget, he went off like a rocket at that very first moment.

The member for Malvern did not really look at the budget papers; he did not do any forensic analysis of the budget papers. Bang, off he went like a cracker. But he fell flat, and those of us who have to sit here on chamber duty should really be paid danger money when we have to sit here and listen to the drivel and the tripe that comes out of the mouth of the member for Malvern. It was just clichés and platitudes writ large, and it totally ignored the fact that there was a substantive piece of work that had been placed before the Parliament in relation to the budget papers. I was surprised that the member for Malvern did not take the opportunity to work his way diligently through the budget papers and to provide us all with a great opportunity today to listen to his response. Instead it was just the sort of raving histrionics from the Costello school of political theatre that we were subjected to last week.

But leaving that to one side, like many other members I am thoroughly looking forward to making a contribution in relation to the great budget that was handed down last week. If you look at the shambles that is the federal budget and the federal government, you realise that this budget is a great budget. I think all of us will be quite interested to see ScoMo when he gets to his feet tonight to deliver his budget to find out what on earth the federal government is going to come up with now and how it will short-change Victoria, as it consistently does.

Leaving that to one side, we will have a great opportunity today and tomorrow to talk about this budget. I am heartily looking forward to listening to those opposite welcome this great piece of financial stewardship in action — a AAA credit rating, a strong budget surplus — delivering on the promises that the government took to the election in 2014 but coming up with sensible policies that will expand and grow the economy and create a fairer and more just community as well.

We have three bills on the government business program. Most of those bills were dealt with last week, as those opposite would know, but there is still an opportunity for other members to make a contribution if they feel so inclined. It is a very good, solid business program. It demonstrates this government's credentials and that it is getting on with it. As I said, I am surprised that the member for Malvern is not here. He appears to have gone into the witness protection program. I am not sure if we will see him for the rest of the week. I hope we do. I do miss him. I do like it when he gets a bit carried away. It is a bit of colour and movement for all of us to sit back and enjoy. I commend the government business program.

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I rise to speak on the government business program for what has been a very disjointed and disorganised sitting. Three bills were debated last week, and debate on those bills has been largely finished. This week we will concentrate on the budget and on a number of motions with regard to sessional orders and to an apology.

As far as the budget goes, the member for Essendon waxed lyrical about the budget, as did the member for Broadmeadows. I can tell members I certainly will not be doing that. For two years running communities in my electorate have not received a dollar of funding in the state budget, and I will touch on that in — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr KATOS — The member for Essendon says, 'Rubbish'. I find the motion about ringing the bells for 4 minutes curious. Perhaps the member for Essendon should talk to the member for Ripon and the member for South-West Coast about where their office is and try to get over the dome in high heels in 3 minutes, as they used to. The offices that have been put in the car park are not as far away as the chook house was. It is a very similar distance. I know you have to get through control headquarters downstairs, but I do not see why we need 4 minutes instead of 3 minutes. I am sure we will debate that, considering there are members in the building who are further away than some of the members of the government who have been moved, but obviously they have sooked and cried to the Leader of the House that they need their 4 minutes. We look forward to debating that motion. But as we said, we will not be opposing the government business program on this occasion.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Highlands Movie Night

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — I rise to congratulate the Highlands Community Residents Group and Mount Ridley P-12 College on this year's Highlands Movie Night. The executive and members of the Highlands Community Residents Group and local Mount Ridley students work tirelessly every year to make each annual movie night bigger and better for our community, and this year was no exception. Despite wet weather delaying this year's movie night, around 300 locals turned out to Highlands Lake Reserve on 16 April to enjoy a wide range of free family entertainment and view the film *Pixels*.

Events like this are a great way to bring residents of our growing community together for both family-friendly entertainment and to raise funds in support of Mount Ridley College and the Highlands residents group. I would like to acknowledge the significant efforts of Stuart Hodgson, president of the Highlands Community Residents Group, and the work he does to make this event such a success. I am delighted that this year's movie night was such a success, and I look forward to continuing to support this event for many years to come.

Anzac Day

Ms SPENCE — On another matter, congratulations to Craigieburn State Emergency Service unit, the Epping RSL Sub-branch, community leader Kevin

O'Callaghan and everyone involved in this year's Anzac Day service. Thousands of local residents turned out in a significant show of respect for those who fought for our country. It was fantastic to have local World War II veteran Bert Foster attend and to lay the veterans wreath. I look forward to the service moving to its new home at Craigieburn Park in 2017, where I hope even more local families will participate.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — The Premier must not overrule his Minister for Emergency Services and agree to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) enterprise bargaining agreement in its current form. To do so would completely undermine the tremendous work of the 60 000 CFA volunteers across Victoria. In many cases the CFA is a volunteer group that underpins the fabric of many small towns by providing the opportunity for locals to get together, train together and protect their community in times of need. If the Premier hands control to his mates at the United Firefighters Union, it will be a complete betrayal of country Victoria.

Moe (Albert Street) Primary School

Mr BLACKWOOD — Albert Street primary school in Moe has once again been ignored by the Andrews government. The staff, parents and students have been battling with substandard conditions and poor security, and this year's budget provides no hope that the Andrews government has listened to their concerns. Many classrooms have poor ventilation and leaking roofs, which means the students and staff are putting up with mildew and the smell of rising damp. The students and hardworking staff deserve far more from a government that claims to be making Victoria an education state.

Neerim District Secondary College

Mr BLACKWOOD — Neerim District Secondary College has been ignored by the Andrews government, which has failed to provide funding for a much-needed upgrade to its facilities. Many classrooms are part of the original build from back in the 1960s and are in desperate need of replacement. The former coalition government provided \$300 000 for a new science and technology wing in 2012. The Andrews government has done nothing to continue the upgrade of the facilities at the Neerim District Secondary College.

Burnside Children's and Community Centre

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) — Last month I had the pleasure of attending the opening of Burnside Children's and Community Centre in my electorate of Kororoit. This brand-new facility offers two new community spaces which can be hired for community activities. It also provides much-needed child care for City of Melton residents through three-year-old and four-year-old kinder and occasional child care. There are also services for new parents, with maternal and child care parenting groups, playgroups and early childhood intervention services. It was wonderful to be able to attend the opening of such vital community infrastructure. I know the residents of Burnside and the City of Melton will be able to access bigger and better community and childcare facilities as a result of the new centre.

Bon Thomas Reserve

Ms KAIROUZ — On another topic, I recently attended the Bon Thomas Reserve to announce a \$100 000 Community Sports Infrastructure Fund grant to deliver the Bon Thomas sports change rooms. The Labor government's Community Sports Infrastructure Fund is giving communities all over Victoria the state-of-the-art sport and recreation facilities we promised. This grant will help build a new change room facility, including sports change rooms for players, officials and spectators; amenities; storage space; and outdoor seating and shade for spectators. Grassroots sport is the lifeblood of Kororoit suburbs, and it was delightful to be able to be there to announce this much-needed funding.

Gurmat Samagam and Sports Event

Ms KAIROUZ — I also congratulate Gurdarshan Singh and the organisers at the Sikh temple in Plumpton for organising their annual sports and cultural event on Sunday, 1 May, and I thank them for their contribution to the multicultural fabric of our society.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — The well-publicised enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) negotiations with the United Firefighters Union (UFU) and the proposed changes that will impact on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and its 60 000 volunteers have sent a shiver down the spine of the members of my local brigades. In the past fortnight I have been contacted by many brigade representatives from Glenaladale, Mallacoota, Bemm River, Lakes Entrance,

Maffra, Paynesville, Heyfield, Sarsfield, Woodglen, Bairnsdale and Hillside. More often than not it has been either the captains or senior brigade members. Their commentary has been quite similar. They want no transfer of any powers from the CFA to the UFU, they want no diminishing of responsibilities and they want no changes that will impact on their ability to protect their communities. If any of these areas are compromised by the current negotiations with the UFU, large numbers of volunteers, many long-serving, have threatened to walk away from the organisation.

This would be a tragedy for country communities, as our local brigades do so much more than defend our assets from fires. They are involved in servicing our country communities in many, many other areas. They are members of a very proud organisation that has served our communities well for generations and which does not want to be dictated to in any way, shape or form. When we have raised questions on the EBA clauses that directly relate to the transfer of powers or the diminishing of CFA powers, the Premier and the minister's only comments have been that no agreement has been reached and that negotiations are continuing towards a fair deal. We want the comment added that we will not entertain the transfer of any responsibilities or anything that will diminish the decision-making powers of the CFA.

Easter Rising centenary

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — A lone piper laments Yeats's birth of a terrible beauty as four children representing Ireland's provinces place daffodils on the steps of Dublin's bullet-riddled GPO, a centrepiece of the centenary commemorations for the seminal event in the country's independence — the Easter Rising. President Michael D. Higgins lays a wreath on behalf of the Irish people in honour of all who died. Earlier he described the rebels not as 'abstract or mythical figures' but as:

... city clerks and shopkeepers; rural farmers and labourers; Catholics and Protestants, whose voices made the call for a new and reimagined Ireland.

Under an icy blue sky contested history is set aside at a cemetery, where the British ambassador's handwritten note accompanying his wreath offers:

... respect and admiration for Ireland, and thankfulness that a turbulent past has been transformed into a settled friendship as befits good neighbours.

The Irish government invited me to Dublin for the centenary commemorations. Meeting President Higgins I suggested he come to Australia. Sure enough his office is keen for a state visit next year. A presidential

address to a joint sitting of this Parliament would befit such an occasion, honouring our economic and cultural development and the exchange of our most valuable asset — our people. One of Australia's greatest gifts to the world is the opportunity provided to so many families, including my own, for the pursuit of happiness beyond the burden of history. Former Prime Minister John Howard described Australia as:

... the most spectacular component of the Irish diaspora.

His predecessor Paul Keating declared:

... Australia without the Irish ... would be unimaginable ... Australia without the Irish would be unthinkable, Australians without the Irish would be unspeakable.

Thankfully they were both right.

Anzac Day

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — Last Monday, 25 April, I had the incredible honour of attending Anzac Day commemorations in Gallipoli along with the member for Buninyong, Geoff Howard, and Khalil Eideh, a member for Western Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council. You read many books and newspapers and you watch documentaries and news reports, but it is not until you are there that you realise the impossible task the Australians and New Zealanders faced when they arrived on the shores of Gallipoli to take on the might of the Turkish army perched high on top of the hills. You also do not realise the involvement of other countries in the Gallipoli battle, such as involvement from France, England and India, which had units from what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Turkish government, army and police did an exceptional job in welcoming us, keeping us well informed and keeping us safe. There is a real friendship between our two countries.

The dawn service near Anzac Cove was a moving experience and so very well done. The keynote speech by Australia's Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Honourable Dan Tehan, was exceptional; it was a speech his mother would have been very proud of. The strong involvement of the New Zealanders reinforced the bond between our two countries. We laid wreaths on behalf of the Victorian Parliament, which was a fitting tribute to the brave soldiers who fought at Gallipoli. Special thanks must go to the Australian ambassador to Turkey, James Larsen, and his hardworking staff, who made sure the dawn service was well presented and respected.

Penalty rates

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government) — I rise to talk about penalty rates and how the workers in my electorate may be affected into the future. Branimir Rozankovic is a local resident of Sydenham who works in a local retail shop at Watergardens. He relies on his penalty rates to support himself in day-to-day life and particularly in his quest to go to university. Penalty rates compensate people like Branimir for working unsociable hours during weekends, on public holidays and on shift work whilst the rest of us spend valuable time with our family and friends.

A reduction in penalty rates is likely to hurt our award-reliant, low-paid workers, including young workers and women, who make up more than half the workforce in the retail and hospitality sectors. If Sunday penalty rates were to be cut to the Saturday rate, then workers could lose up \$105 a week. This would make it very difficult for those workers to make ends meet or for this particular resident to continue to support himself through university.

This is why the Andrews Labor government has made a submission to the Fair Work Commission on penalty rates, because we stand up for Victoria's most vulnerable workers. Retail, hospitality and accommodation workers should not be treated any less favourably than workers of other sectors, creating an unfair, two-tier system of entitlements and an underclass of Australian workers. Victorians do not need any more cuts from the Turnbull government; they need a government that protects their working conditions.

Australia First Party

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — The Australia First Party has applied to register the Eureka flag as its logo for the upcoming election. It is from Sydney. What on earth does it know about Ballarat, the Eureka Stockade or the Eureka flag? How dare it attempt to appropriate the flag of the goldfields for its grubby political extremist purposes? In my inaugural speech I talked about the significance of Eureka. Peter Lalor's words continue to inspire:

If democracy means opposition to a tyrannical press, a tyrannical people or a tyrannical government, then I have ever been, I am still, and will ever remain, a democrat.

I note in passing that after Eureka Peter Lalor became a member of the Victorian Legislative Council — in fact President of that place. He was not on the Labor side of the aisle.

A contemporary account of Eureka by Raffaello Carboni stressed the importance of Eureka and its flag:

I hate the oppressor, let him wear a red, blue, white or black coat. [And so I call on you] all my fellow-diggers, irrespective of nationality, religion and colour, to salute the Southern Cross as the refuge of all the oppressed from all countries on earth.

The Australia First Party rejects this. It rejects multiculturalism, it opposes immigration and it is behind the violent protests in Bendigo against the building of a mosque. Its website promotes United Patriots Front rallies — rallies such as the anti-Islam rally. Eureka is a story of democracy, of representation, of Australia. Australia First is none of these things and must not be allowed to use the flag on ballot papers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Just to let the member for Ripon know, the Honourable Peter Lalor was a Speaker here in this chamber, not the upper house.

Luke Johansson

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — I take this opportunity to acknowledge the life and very sad passing of Luke Johansson. While I did not have the opportunity to meet Luke, it was through an outpouring of grief and love from so many local residents that I came to know his story and how he would brighten up the lives of those around him. Recently I met the Johansson family and spent some time with Luke's parents, Debbie and Walter, and his siblings, Matthew and Petera, along with Luke's friends Erin Glover and her partner Stephen, who reflected on the many memories they shared.

What was clear to me was the warm and loving family environment that underpinned Luke's upbringing and the remarkable person he came to be. Luke attended Nola Barber Kindergarten, Aspendale Primary School and Mordialloc College. From a young age he showed a quick wit and cheeky attitude that would carry him all his years and that endeared him to others. Luke took an interest in the issues of the day, and friends and family would know they were in for a marathon debate on a particular issue. As one of Luke's mates said, 'Every time I saw Luke he would make me feel good about being me and engage me in the deepest of intellectual conversations that he loved having so much. The man had a huge brain and an even bigger heart'.

What was truly amazing was the outpouring of love and support from the wider community. In a fortnight hundreds of people raised over \$20 000 in support of the Johansson family. On the day that Luke was

farewelled, over 600 people came together to reflect on a young man who left such an impact in his 26 years of life. This is a deeply sad time for the Johansson family, but I hope that there is comfort and pride in the knowledge that their son and brother was loved by so many.

Shepparton mother-baby unit

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — On 19 April I and other advocates from the Shepparton region travelled to Melbourne to visit the Tweddle Child and Family Health Service. This service provides assistance to families during pregnancy and with their school-age children who are facing multiple challenges and are in urgent need of therapeutic support. Tweddle is a public hospital with the goal of supporting families and children by providing a range of services from a sleep school through to frontline in-home and residential intervention for babies, toddlers and their families.

There has been strong advocacy for many years for the establishment of a mother-baby unit such as this in Shepparton. The visit to Tweddle provided us with a vision of how such a unit might look in a rural community such as Shepparton. The evidence is that in our region access to services is delayed, interventions are delayed and critical infant brain development time is wasted as infants wait for a professional parenting assessment before stable parenting or care arrangements can commence. Travelling to metropolitan centres creates considerable hardship and results in many people not seeking the support they need.

The need is great. We have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Victoria. We have low levels of breastfeeding. We have high levels of disadvantage. Mothers and babies leave hospital usually only one or two days after delivery, and many find themselves unsupported and unable to cope. We need a service like Tweddle in Shepparton. We will renew our business plan and keep knocking on the door of government to contribute to the recurrent funding required to run a best practice child and family residential service.

Women and Mentoring

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — It was my great pleasure to attend the launch of Women and Mentoring (WAM) in the western suburbs on Wednesday, 30 March. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of chief executive Mary Latham and chair Ann Polis that went into organising this event and ensuring the smooth rollout of the

Women and Mentoring program as it expands from the City of Yarra to the western suburbs.

I was joined on the day by an executive director of the Department of Justice and Regulation, Dr Peter Ewer; the vice-president of the Western Bulldogs Football Club, Susan Alberti; my predecessor in the seat of Niddrie, Rob Hulls, now director of the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT University; as well as WAM mentors and supporters from the philanthropic sector, including Patricia Burke from the Melbourne Women's Fund, an organisation which engages Melbourne women in philanthropic causes for the benefit of the community. Victoria Police was also very well represented on the day.

This event was held at the Whitten Oval in Footscray, and there could not have been a more iconic venue at which to launch the expansion of the Women and Mentoring program into Melbourne's west. I have been following Women and Mentoring's work for several years now, and I was fortunate enough to meet Mary and Ann as well as board member Sam Payne in February this year. Never has their work been so relevant in our community, with record numbers of women coming in contact with the justice system.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence handed down its findings just the day before, and I was very pleased to say that the Andrews Labor government will be accepting all 227 recommendations. This was a landmark moment for Victoria. It is important to remember that many of the women who are coming in contact with the justice system are victims themselves. In fact around 70 per cent of the women that have participated in the Women and Mentoring program have experienced family violence. With this in mind, imprisonment should be a punishment of last resort. I would like to congratulate Mary and the WAM board on the leadership their team is showing with the expansion of WAM into the western suburbs.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — Few issues have generated as much commentary against the government in the electorate of Gippsland South as the Premier's support for the United Firefighters Union (UFU) over volunteer firefighters in the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The coalition supports the work of all firefighters in Victoria, both career and volunteer, but the Andrews government is insulting volunteers as a result of the deals made prior to the 2014 election, and now the Premier has undermined his own minister by cutting her out of the loop to make further secret

backroom deals with the UFU. The UFU demands that a new enterprise agreement include, among other things, a UFU-run veto board, handing, in effect, control of the CFA to the United Firefighters Union. A UFU takeover would infringe on the rights of volunteers and ultimately put in jeopardy CFA volunteerism and the safety of Victorians — something even the minister knows. Victorians deserve a Premier who will govern in the best interests of the state, not in the best interests of his union mates. I stand in support of volunteers and a strong, independent CFA. I implore the Labor government to do likewise.

Gippsland South electorate sporting facilities

Mr D. O'BRIEN — It was great to recently attend the opening of two excellent local projects funded by the former coalition government. The first was the new R. W. May Pavilion at the Yarram Recreation Reserve. The pavilion has a new function room, change rooms and much-improved facilities for women and is a wonderful facility for local user groups, including the football and netball clubs, the cricket club, the agriculture society and the camp draft association.

On Sunday we officially opened new soccer lights and netball courts at the Walter Tuck reserve in Mirboo North, where the Tigers A-grade netball team unfurled its 2015 flag on the new court. It was a great day for the whole community, with all eight clubs involved in the recreation reserve committee of management there to celebrate these improved facilities.

Alex Paterson

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am delighted to rise today to recognise the extraordinary contribution to my local Carrum Downs community by a very modest and humble man, Alex Paterson. Among other things, Alex runs the Carrum Downs Auskick clinic. He has done this for years. The support he gives local families, many of whom struggle financially, is immeasurable. He has grown this clinic over many years, and families go there because of Alex. Parents love Alex, and the kids especially love Alex.

In the 2016–17 state budget more than \$1 million will go towards a new sports and community pavilion at the Carrum Downs Recreation Reserve. The new pavilion will be home to Carrum Downs Auskick as well as a whole host of other local sporting and community clubs, but for Alex and Carrum Downs Auskick this is special. This club does not have money like other clubs. This club is full of young children from young families who just want to get involved in their local community and who want their kids to participate in the great sport

of Aussie Rules football. So I am delighted to be able to work with Frankston City Council to make sure that Carrum Downs Auskick and all of Alex's little Auskickers will get the opportunity to share in and be part of a wonderful new sporting facility in Carrum Downs.

When I told Alex the terrific news about the state government's \$1 million for the new facility at Carrum Downs, he said it brought tears to his eyes. I told him that he was an inspiration for my trying to secure the money for the new facility, and he told me, 'I give it my best. I'm just a dad that enjoys seeing others happy. I wouldn't change it for the world'. Well, Alex, your best is incredible, and the Carrum Downs community is very fortunate to have you.

Nunawading Swimming Club

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — I wish to congratulate the Nunawading Swimming Club on its recent success at the Olympic trials in Adelaide. In particular I congratulate swimmers Travis Mahoney, Josh Beaver and Belinda Hocking and coach Rohan Taylor on their inclusion in the Australian swim team for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. It will be the third Olympics for Belinda, the second for Rohan and the first for Travis and Josh. Well done also to all the other swimmers and coaches who competed at the trials. Congratulations also to club CEO Gary Barclay and all the staff and volunteers at the club who work so hard to enable the swimmers to compete.

Forest Hill Football Club

Mr ANGUS — Congratulations to the Forest Hill Football Club, which recently kicked the highest score in the Eastern Football League since 1971, kicking a massive 54.26.350 in the club's first home game this year. Forest Hill forward Matthew Carnelley kicked 22 goals and 3 behinds as part of this huge win. I wish Forest Hill Football Club and all its players and supporters well for the 2016 season. I also thank the tireless committee members and other volunteers who work so hard week in and week out to ensure that the club continues and that all the teams can take the field on the weekend.

Parkmore Primary School

Mr ANGUS — I recently had the pleasure of visiting Parkmore Primary School in my electorate of Forest Hill and catching up with the grade 5 and 6 students. As part of their studies I spoke to the students about my role and answered the many and varied questions that they had. I thank teacher Daniel Clark

and all the grade 5 and 6 students for the opportunity to come and visit their classroom and wish them all well for the rest of the year.

Anzac Day

Mr ANGUS — I was honoured to again attend the Anzac Day dawn service at Blackburn RSL and lay a wreath on behalf of the residents of the Forest Hill electorate. As usual it was a well-attended service and was followed by a hearty gunfire breakfast back at the clubrooms. Congratulations to all those hardworking club members and other volunteers involved in organising this important event. Special congratulations and thanks go to outgoing president Athol Wells, who has done an outstanding job serving as branch president for a remarkable 16 years.

Dandenong High School

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — I rise today to share with the house the achievements of Dandenong High School students who last month competed at the VEX world championships in Louisville, Kentucky. The tournament included 1072 teams from 31 different countries. The 2016 VEX Worlds was the largest robotics competition ever held in the world.

The Dandenong High School team members got the opportunity to compete against the world's best. They placed a commendable 83rd, which is a truly great achievement, given they were competing against teams that have consistently attended the world championships for the past five years. Gaining entry to the tournament was itself a massive achievement, with the team earning the right to represent Australia after being named champions at the Australian national championships in December last year.

Members may recall the students' visit to Parliament House earlier this year, when they showcased their robot in Queen's Hall alongside leading manufacturers and innovators of Melbourne's south east. The skills they are learning are valuable and have exciting real-world applications, and importantly these opportunities exist in their own backyard. It is great to see such passion for robotics, engineering and the technologies of the future. The school and students have done Australia and Dandenong proud on the world stage. I am told team members are already planning their next robot, as they aim to defend their national title, and I cannot wait to see it in action.

Arthurs Creek commemorative garden

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — I was delighted to join the Arthurs Creek community on Sunday, 17 April, for the opening of the Arthurs Creek Mechanics Institute commemorative garden project. I took great pleasure in unveiling the plaque dedicated to local community members who were involved in World War I. The large rock with a bronze plaque holding the names of the World War I honour board takes pride of place in the garden at the mechanics institute. This is offset by the wonderful addition of ceramic doves and poppies which were crafted by the students at the Arthurs Creek and Strathewen primary schools. This really brings the garden to life. I was delighted to listen to the entertaining stories behind the names on the plaque, which had been diligently researched by the committee. The committee is to be commended for its great work in researching war history and remembering those who attended the Great War. I commend Peter Nankervis and Collette Apled for their leadership roles. I thank them and the committee for their efforts.

Maindample community park

Ms McLEISH — I was honoured to join the Maindample community for the dedication of a soldier memorial on Sunday, 24 April, at the Maindample community park. I was humbled to unveil the commemorative plaque. The community park is a wonderful example of a community that has pulled together over the last six or seven years to create a beautiful and valuable space from the old school grounds and horse paddock, which were neglected and heavily overgrown. The work done to date is to be commended, and I look forward to new trees being planted for the avenue of honour once the drought breaks.

Anzac Day

Ms McLEISH — Following the unveiling I headed to Bonnie Doon, where I joined some 20 other community members to make wreaths to lay at the dawn service the following day. Never have I laid a wreath that I have made, and never has the pressure to perform been so great. This is a wonderful initiative, great fun and very engaging for the community.

Saul Same

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I rise today to acknowledge the great life and wonderful contribution of Saul Same. Saul Same was a prominent businessman in Melbourne's Jewish community, and he built Gloweave into a Melbourne household name. I seem to

recall when I was much younger than I am today wearing Gloweave shirts when I was working my way through high school and university.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr PEARSON — They were light blue. After serving with the Royal Australian Air Force in World War II, Saul went to work in his father-in-law's clothing business after he had suffered a stroke. From 12 employees Saul created an iconic brand that featured prominently on Graham Kennedy's *In Melbourne Tonight*.

I particularly want to single out Saul's contribution to the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party. After the Labor Party split in 1955, state Labor went on to lose nine successive state elections. One of the few corporate supporters who supported our great party in its most desperate hour was Saul. Just think about that: he knew the party was a lost cause, but he never wavered in his belief in the cause.

Saul also played a pivotal role in building modern Melbourne Labor's relationship with the Jewish community in Israel, from which we have all been beneficiaries. There can be no better epitaph than that which was bestowed by Bill Shorten, who said, on Saul's passing, 'Saul Same walked with kings but never lost the common touch'. Vale, Saul Same.

Essendon Fields Expo

Mr PEARSON — I would also like to thank Chris Cowan and Rod Gurry, who were instrumental in arranging the open day on the weekend for Essendon Fields, when 6500 people went through Essendon Airport.

Easter Rising centenary

Mr PEARSON — I also would like to acknowledge the Irish patriots who lost their lives 100 years ago in the Easter Sunday uprising. Tone, Pearse and Connolly struck a blow against English imperialism, and that led to the foundation of the modern free Irish state, for which we should all be terribly grateful.

South-West Coast electorate roads

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — How on earth could this government again ignore the parlous state of roads in south-west Victoria? Not one line was mentioned in last week's budget for roads projects west of Geelong, despite countless lobbying efforts by communities and local leaders. Only last week I visited Grasmere Primary School, and the teacher, Jodie

Mackrell, asked grades 5 and 6 pupils what issues were important to them. Unanimously they responded, 'Roads'. This issue is so profound that even the children are concerned as much as the adults. That is truly a telling revelation. Every day residents and tourists in my electorate put their lives at risk on roads that are crumbling under the increasing freight volumes of primary product going to domestic and export markets, making billions of dollars for Victoria.

Warrnambool rail services

Ms BRITNELL — It is pleasing to see the budget allocation for extra rail services to Warrnambool. We need this now. We also need new rolling stock. Passengers continue to endure uncomfortable trips on dirty carriages dating back to the 1950s. This week, one of the busiest weeks in my region's calendar, shows why we need this now. I am told the Melbourne to Warrnambool service is crowded with passengers this week and many of them are standing in the aisles. I am saddened that this is how our visitors to the region will start their stay.

Warrnambool May Racing Carnival

Ms BRITNELL — Our visitors are coming for the spectacular Warrnambool May Racing Carnival being held this week. I commend the club committee and chief executive, Peter Downs, for their work. The carnival is a most important event, generating millions of dollars for our local economy, and the community are proud of this event. More than 25 000 fans watch the three-day spectacle trackside.

McKinnon Secondary College

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — Congratulations to the students and staff at McKinnon Secondary College for completing the sixth 24/7 Relay Challenge. The 24/7 relay is a charity event in which over 190 teams of students and staff run, jog or walk around the school oval in a relay format. The event raised more than \$60 000 for three very worthy causes. They are State Schools Relief, the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation and the McKinnon Secondary College building fund. I congratulate the students for organising yet another fantastic event. Through their selfless volunteerism the values that have been instilled in them by their teachers and families were on display for all to see. It is particularly important to acknowledge their good work as we head into National Volunteer Week. Well done to all involved.

McKinnon Secondary College is well into another big year for the school community. The new \$9 million

Victorian certificate of education centre, funded in the Andrews Labor government's first budget, is in the detailed design stage. Construction work is expected to begin this year. The centre will mean better facilities and greater capacity, which is particularly important for McKinnon, with its school population now at more than 2000. The Andrews Labor government has handed down yet another significant education budget, demonstrating its strong commitment to making Victoria the education state.

Geelong Women in Business

Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — Recently I was invited as a special guest to the Geelong Women in Business launch at the Empire Grill in Geelong. It was a fantastic night and a wonderful opportunity for women to come together from all different backgrounds, industries and experience to provide a setting for women to share, help and support each other in the business world. It is important that we do our part to ensure we are supporting women in many avenues, particularly business. I thank Samantha Krajina and the team for inviting me to be a part of the night, and I wish them all the best in engaging and encouraging more women to become involved.

Geelong technical school

Mr EREN — Also recently there was an exciting day for Geelong with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, the Minister for Training and Skills, the member for Geelong and I officially announcing Gordon Institute of TAFE in Geelong as one of the sites of the innovative tech schools. The tech school initiative is part of the Andrews Labor government's vision to inspire and train students in science, technology, engineering and maths — or STEM, as they are otherwise known — subjects so that they will have the skills needed for future jobs.

The Geelong tech school, which will open in 2018, will have its own industry focus on professional, scientific and technical services, health care, social assistance and construction with links to advanced manufacturing, robotics, agriscience and business. It will be fitted with the latest technology and hands-on experiences, giving an extra 1700 students access to the skills and training they need to flourish into the future from the new site. Congratulations to Lisa Line, the CEO of The Gordon, along with members of the board, and everyone who has been involved for all the hard work they have put in. Congratulations one and all.

North-eastern suburbs rail services

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — Can I say that the \$140 million investment on the Hurstbridge line in the Ivanhoe electorate to duplicate the 1.2 kilometres of track between Heidelberg and Rosanna will end for all time a century of delays and a century of an old rail system that does not meet the modern demands of the growing north-eastern suburbs. It is only an Andrews Labor government that delivers that significant investment that will provide for extra services between Greensborough, Eltham and Ivanhoe and the city. This has been a long time coming. It is a great project. Anyone who has grown up in Ivanhoe, Heidelberg or other north-eastern suburbs understands this project absolutely. It is always the Labor government that invests, as it has in the rail duplication between Westgarth and Clifton Hill, extra stabling yards at Eltham and public transport in the north-east.

STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Statement of compatibility

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, (the 'charter'), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016.

In my opinion, the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview

The State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016 (the bill) introduces budget measures and makes a number of technical amendments to the following taxation and other laws administered by the commissioner of state revenue (commissioner) — the Duties Act 2000, the Land Tax Act 2005, the Payroll Tax Act 2007, the Taxation Administration Act 1997, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The bill amends the Duties Act 2000 (Duties Act) to increase the rate at which foreign purchaser additional duty will be calculated, to clarify the intended scope of the definition of 'residential property' used to apply the foreign purchaser additional duty, and to enable the commissioner to register a charge on land where there is an unpaid duty liability arising from a dutiable transaction in which a foreign purchaser has obtained an interest in residential property.

Amendments to the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 (FSPL act) clarify the definition of 'farm land' for the purposes of the single farm enterprise exemption and extend the \$50 levy concession to additional classes of concession card holders. Amendments to the FSPL act and the Planning and Environment Act 1987 clarify the methodology used to calculate the CPI adjustments needed for the annual calculations of the fire services property levy fixed charge, and metropolitan planning levy and growth areas infrastructure contribution rates and thresholds.

An amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 1997 (Taxation Administration Act) allows the commissioner to disclose tax-related information to a municipal council in certain limited circumstances where leviable, but non-rateable lands are located outside any municipal boundaries, and a council requires this information to perform its functions under the FSPL act.

The bill strengthens the framework for the recovery of payments made under the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 (FHOG act) by empowering the commissioner to recover the grant from third parties and permitting substituted service of documents in recovery proceedings. The FHOG act will also be amended, consistent with existing provisions in the Taxation Administration Act, to enable the commissioner to disclose protected information to the Victorian Ombudsman, where a FHOG applicant makes a complaint to the Ombudsman and the commissioner has information relevant to this matter.

There are amendments to the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to provide an exemption for wages paid or payable to a displaced apprentice or trainee and to vary the payroll tax thresholds.

The Land Tax Act 2005 (Land Tax Act) is amended to increase the rate at which the land tax absentee owner surcharge is charged and to extend the land tax exemption for primary production land (PPL) in an urban zone to land owned by certain family superannuation trusts. Technical amendments are also made to the Land Tax Act to clarify the operation of provisions relating to land held by absentee trusts and to give effect to the increased surcharge rate.

The bill also amends the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 to vary the royalties payable in respect of lignite (brown coal).

Human rights issues

Recognition and equality before the law

Section 8(3) of the charter provides that every person is equal before the law and is entitled to the equal protection of the law without discrimination. Discrimination, under section 6 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, includes discrimination on the basis of race, which is defined to include differentiation based on a person's nationality or national origin.

Duties Act (part 2 of the bill)

The foreign purchaser additional duty was introduced in 2015 to improve the affordability of housing for Victorians by increasing the entry cost for 'foreign purchasers' in the Victorian residential housing market. The charter implications of these measures were addressed in the statement of compatibility accompanying the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015.

Amendments to the provisions governing the foreign purchaser additional duty engage section 8(3) to the extent that they apply to foreign purchasers who are foreign natural persons. Under the Duties Act, a 'foreign purchaser' includes a 'foreign natural person', defined to be a person who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia (including a citizen of New Zealand).

Foreign purchasers, including foreign natural persons, will be liable to pay the additional duty on property included under the amended definition of 'residential property'. The definition of 'residential property' is being amended to expressly include short-term accommodation and other activities that may be indicative of 'residential purposes'.

The amendments to the definition of residential property used to apply the additional duty therefore engage and limit the right to recognition and equality before the law because differential taxation consequences are imposed on a taxpayer who is a foreign natural person on the basis of their nationality.

In my view these limitations are reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter because such differential treatment is central to the purpose of the additional duty, being to improve the affordability of housing for Victorians by increasing the entry cost for foreign purchasers in the Victorian residential housing market. These amendments clarify the parameters for the additional duty and are, in my view, necessary to ensure the additional duty operates as intended.

The increase in the rate of additional duty will similarly apply only to foreign purchasers. To the extent that this amendment does no more than vary the rate from 3 per cent to 7 per cent in accordance with the intended operation of the additional duty, it is arguable that such a variation was contemplated and provided for under the existing legislation. On this basis, this amendment does not limit the section 8(3) rights of foreign purchasers who are foreign natural persons.

If, however, the increased rate and the resultant increase in tax liabilities could operate to limit the section 8(3) rights of foreign natural persons, in my view any limitation on those rights would be reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter, because it implements the underlying purpose of the foreign purchaser additional duty provisions.

The amendment to the Duties Act enabling the commissioner to register a charge on land where there is an unpaid liability in respect of a residential property acquisition by a 'foreign person' also limits that person's rights under section 8(3).

The purpose of this amendment is to provide a method ensuring recovery of unpaid duty where the legal interest in land has already transferred to the purchaser(s), and the commissioner subsequently finds that a tax default — such as a failure to indicate that the transfer involves a foreign person and the surcharge is payable — has occurred. Since title in that residential property will have already passed to the foreign person, placing a charge on that land is an appropriate and effective method of protecting the revenue by ensuring that the foreign owner cannot deal with the residential property without first discharging their tax default. This is particularly important where the foreign person is not a resident in Australia.

It should also be noted that the charge will apply to residential property where a foreign person co-owns that land with an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Therefore, the effect of the charge registered on the land will apply equally to the foreign owner and Australian citizen or permanent resident, the co-owner. This reflects an intention that the limit on the right under section 8(3) resulting from the introduction of the power to register a charge has been imposed in the least restrictive or discriminatory way possible.

In my view, the limitation of a foreign natural person's rights under section 8(3) is reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter.

Land Tax Act (part 5 of the bill)

The provisions imposing the land tax surcharge on lands owned by absentee owners were introduced in 2015 to address the impact of absentee ownership of land on the affordability of housing in Victoria. The 2015 amendments provided that absentee owners, as defined in the Land Tax Act, were to be liable for a land tax surcharge at rates prescribed in the Land Tax Act. Absentee owners were defined to include a natural person who is not an Australian citizen or resident and who does not ordinarily reside in Australia. The charter implications of these measures were addressed in the statement of compatibility accompanying the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015.

The land tax surcharge rate for absentee owners will increase from 0.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent effective from 1 January 2017. The current amendments to the Land Tax Act alter the rates payable by absentee owners to give effect to the rate increase.

To the extent that the current amendments do no more than vary tax rates in accordance with the intended operation of the absentee owner land tax provisions, it is arguable that such variations were contemplated and provided for under the existing legislation. On this basis, the current amendments do not limit the section 8(3) rights of those absentee owners who are natural persons.

However, if the increased rates and the resultant increase in tax liabilities could operate to limit the section 8(3) rights of an absentee owner who is a natural person, in my view any limitation on those rights would be reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter, because it implements the underlying purpose of the absentee owner surcharge provisions.

Right to privacy and reputation

Section 13 of the charter provides that a person has the right not to have his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with.

Amendments to the secrecy provisions of the FHOG act and the Taxation Administration Act engage this right to the extent that they enable the disclosure of personal information that would otherwise be subject to the restrictions imposed under these laws and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

FHOG act (part 4 of the bill)

The bill amends the FHOG act to authorise the disclosure of protected information to the Ombudsman. The purpose of this amendment is to enable the commissioner to provide

information to the Ombudsman, where a FHOG applicant has made a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman and the Ombudsman requests relevant, protected information from the commissioner in order to consider that complaint. Currently, the secrecy provisions in the FHOG act prevent the disclosure of protected information except to the persons authorised or for the purposes specified in the act.

To the extent that the information disclosed is personal information, the right to privacy is engaged. The disclosure contemplated by this amendment will not be arbitrary because it will be limited to the information relevant to the complaint. Disclosure in these circumstances will be lawful, being expressly permitted under, and in accordance with, the FHOG act. Use and disclosure of material provided to the Ombudsman is also governed by the Ombudsman Act 1973.

Taxation Administration Act (part 9 of the bill)

Under the FSPL act, local councils are the 'collection agencies' responsible for the imposition and collection of the levy, which is separately itemised on council rates notices. There are some leviable lands, however, that are not 'rateable' lands. The FSPL act empowers me to appoint councils to be the collection agencies for these lands. Because these lands fall outside municipal boundaries, the designated councils do not have the information needed to calculate the levy applicable to these lands. Accordingly, the Taxation Administration Act is amended to authorise the disclosure of tax-related information to a local council that I have appointed to collect the levy on non-rateable leviable lands located outside their municipality (such as the alpine regions and French Island).

To the extent that taxpayers' personal information is disclosed, it engages the right to privacy. However, in my opinion the disclosure contemplated by this amendment is not arbitrary because it will be confined to information a council requires in order to calculate and collect the levy. Further, it will not constitute unlawful interference because the disclosure of this information will be expressly permitted for a specific purpose under the Taxation Administration Act. The Taxation Administration Act prohibits the secondary disclosure of such information except with the commissioner's consent and where that on-disclosure is to enable a person to exercise a function conferred by law for the enforcement of a law or the protection of the revenue.

Right to property

Under section 20 of the charter a person must not be deprived of his or her property other than in accordance with law.

The Duties Act amendment allowing the commissioner to place a charge on land where a foreign person has acquired an interest in residential property engages the property rights of a natural person who is an owner of that residential property. The placing of a charge will engage that owner's property rights because it limits their ability to deal with land encumbered by the charge.

As noted above in relation to section 8(3) of the charter, the purpose of the charge is to ensure the recovery of unpaid duty where a default arises in relation to a transfer involving a foreign person. In my view, the imposition of a charge on the property is a reasonable and justified limitation on the natural owner's property rights, because the charge is placed on the property that has been the subject of the transfer and, where

an owner resides outside Australia, this action is likely to be the most effective method of ensuring payment of the debt. Furthermore, that person will not be deprived of his or her property other than in accordance with the law.

Further, to the extent that the amendments which revise the definition of residential property and/or the rates of the foreign purchaser additional duty and the absentee owner surcharge have tax consequences for affected taxpayers who are natural persons, these amendments may engage the right to property under section 20 of the charter. However, the liabilities arising from these amendments will be assessed and administered in accordance with the Taxation Administration Act, which establishes the commissioner's powers and obligations, taxpayers' rights of objection, review, appeal and recovery, and provides a framework to protect the confidentiality of tax-related information. Therefore, a person will not be deprived of his or her property other than in accordance with the law.

In my view, the limitations on property rights under section 20 are reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter.

FHOG act (part 4 of the bill)

I have considered whether the amendment empowering the commissioner to recover a person's FHOG debt from a third party (a lessee, mortgagee or occupier) engages the right to property of any affected natural person. This amendment operates similarly to a 'garnishee' arrangement. It is based on similar provisions in the Taxation Administration Act and the Land Tax Act.

In my view, this amendment does not engage the FHOG applicant's right to property. As the recovery action is founded on the fact that the FHOG applicant is not legally entitled to the amount of the debt, the right to property is not engaged because it does not result in the FHOG applicant being deprived of their property.

Where the third party is a lessee or occupier, the bill provides that the commissioner cannot require the lessee or occupier to pay an amount greater than the amount of rent owed to the FHOG applicant, or to pay that amount before the day on which that amount would be due to the FHOG applicant. The effect of this provision is that the lessee or occupier pays the commissioner the same amount, and at the same time, as they would pay the FHOG applicant. A third party lessee or occupier's right to property is further safeguarded because the amendment clarifies that where they pay an amount to the commissioner, the lessee or occupier is taken to have paid an equal amount of rent to the FHOG applicant under the lease or agreement or under any applicable tenancy law.

In my view, while the amendment may engage the property rights of a third party lessee or occupier who is a natural person, it does not in practice limit those rights within the meaning of section 7(2) of the charter.

In relation to a third party mortgagee, the mortgagee will be required to pay the amount of the FHOG debt to the commissioner. That amount is then added to, and secured under, the FHOG applicant's existing mortgage. The mortgagee's security mitigates the impact of this amendment on a mortgagee's property right, because the mortgagee has secured the amount under the mortgage.

This amendment is modelled on similar powers provided in the Taxation Administration Act and the Land Tax Act, where the mortgagees are typically not natural persons. However, where a mortgagee is a natural person, this amendment will limit their right to property.

It is envisaged that recovery action will be taken against a third party where the commissioner has not been able to recover the amount directly from the FHOG applicant. In these circumstances, recovery from the mortgagee is justified because the purpose of this action is to enforce payment of a debt for the protection of the revenue. Furthermore, the least restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose of the limitation has been adopted because any payment by a mortgagee to the commissioner to discharge the FHOG applicant's debt will be secured under the mortgage.

In my view, the limitation on the property right of a natural person mortgagee is reasonable and justified in the circumstances.

I consider these limitations on property rights provided under section 20 of the charter to be reasonable and justified in the circumstances.

Tim Pallas, MP
Treasurer

Second reading

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Speech as follows incorporated into *Hansard* under sessional orders:

The State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016 makes amendments to the Duties Act 2000, Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012, First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, Land Tax Act 2005, Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, Payroll Tax Act 2007, Planning and Environment Act 1987 and Taxation Administration Act 1997.

The amendments in this bill give effect to the state taxation measures announced in the 2016–17 Victorian budget and make minor amendments to support the continuous improvement of Victoria's revenue laws.

As a result of the sound economic management of the Andrews government, Victoria is in a strong economic and financial position. Our economic growth is the strongest in the nation and our employment growth led the nation in 2015. The state taxation budget measures in this bill reflect this government's commitment to strong and disciplined financial management that will continue to grow Victoria's economy and create jobs, support the delivery of critical government services and drive an infrastructure program to prepare Victorians for the future.

Small businesses play an important role in the Victorian economy by providing jobs and vital goods and services to the community. As part of the Andrews government plan to reduce the burden of regulation on small business, this bill will progressively raise the \$550 000 payroll tax threshold by \$25 000 per year over the next four financial years to \$650 000 in 2019–20. Businesses below the payroll tax

threshold do not need to register or pay payroll tax in Victoria. Approximately 36 000 individual businesses in Victoria pay payroll tax. Increasing the payroll tax threshold will benefit all of these Victorian businesses by reducing their taxation burden and will also encourage new businesses, thereby fostering growth and innovation in our community. In addition, approximately 2800 grouped Victorian businesses will no longer be required to pay payroll tax.

This government has been committed to getting Victorians back to work. Since the Andrews Labor government was elected, over 110 000 jobs have been created in the Victorian economy. In line with our continuing commitment to job creation, the budget announced a new payroll tax exemption for wages paid or payable to displaced apprentices and trainees. From 1 July 2016 when an apprentice or trainee ceases their employment, and is re-employed by another employer to finish their apprenticeship or traineeship, their wages will be exempt from payroll tax. This measure will act as an incentive for subsequent employers to re-employ displaced apprentices and trainees, supporting a strong future workforce for Victoria.

In the 2015–16 Victorian budget the Andrews government introduced surcharges on foreign purchasing of Victorian property. To put Victorians in a more competitive position, this government introduced a duty surcharge of 3 per cent on the purchase or acquisition of residential property by foreign purchasers from 1 July 2015. At the same time, the government introduced a 0.5 per cent land tax surcharge on land owned by absentees from 1 January 2016.

The 2014–15 Foreign Investment Review Board annual report suggests that foreign investment in residential property continues to be strong, with a total of \$26 billion of investment in Victorian real estate approved in 2014–15, compared to \$14 billion in 2013–14. This is backed up by strong receipts from the existing 3 per cent foreign stamp duty surcharge, which is showing no signs of slowing foreign demand for Victorian property.

This bill will increase the foreign purchaser duty surcharge from 3 per cent to 7 per cent and the land tax absentee surcharge from 0.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent. These modest increases will generate an additional \$486 million revenue for the state over the forward estimates period and helps to ensure that foreign property owners contribute their fair share towards Victorian infrastructure investment, which ultimately benefits all Victorian property owners. Victoria continues to be highly attractive to foreign investment, and the Andrews Labor government is keen to ensure that foreign investment continues to flow to Victoria whilst ensuring appropriate contributions to the amenity and liveability of Victoria.

Foreign property owners continue to benefit from strong Victorian property price growth, driven in part by government investment in services and infrastructure. According to the Real Estate Institute of Victoria, median house prices in Melbourne have grown by 8 per cent over the past year, with growth concentrated in the inner suburbs, where median prices have grown by over 16 per cent.

The Andrews government is a strong supporter of the agricultural sector in Victoria and is proud that Victoria is now the nation's biggest exporter of food and fibre. In line with this government's commitment to agriculture, the 2016–17 Victorian budget announced that the primary

production land tax exemption for land in the urban zone will be extended to land held by family superannuation trusts.

Allowing farmers to maintain the exemption where farmland is transferred to a family superannuation trust will provide greater flexibility to genuine farmers who seek to provide for their retirement through a family superannuation trust, and bring the treatment of family superannuation trusts into line with other types of family trusts and companies.

As announced in the 2016–17 Victorian budget, this bill also increases the lignite (brown coal) royalty rate from 1 January 2017. Victoria's lignite royalty rate has not increased since 2005, and Victoria's rate is well below that of other Australian states. This measure is expected to generate approximately \$252 million over the forward estimates period and will help to ensure that the state receives a fair value for the use of Victoria's non-renewable resources. The proposed increase is not excessive or punitive — it will bring Victoria into line with other states such as New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

The proposed amendments clearly express that the changes to coal royalty calculations will only apply to coal produced after the commencement of the bill. This will ensure that there is no retrospective application of the rate.

In addition to implementing the state taxation measures in the 2016–17 Victorian budget, this bill also makes a number of amendments aimed at improving the general operation of Victoria's revenue laws by correcting technical or drafting defects, removing anomalies and inconsistencies and addressing unintended outcomes.

The foreign purchaser duty surcharge only applies on the purchase or acquisition of residential property. This bill clarifies the definition of residential property in the Duties Act 2000 to put beyond doubt that residential property includes short-term accommodation, such as serviced apartments, student accommodation, hotels and retirement villages. The amendments also clarify that residential property includes vacant land purchased for residential land development even if it is sold prior to development, as well as the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential buildings. These amendments will provide certainty to taxpayers and their representatives and make it easier for foreign purchasers to comply with their tax obligations.

To maintain the integrity of the taxation system and protect the revenue, the State Revenue Office (SRO) has access to a suite of recovery powers to assist in the collection of unpaid taxes. This bill makes amendments to the Duties Act 2000 and the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 to provide greater consistency in the recovery powers available across the legislation administered by the SRO.

The Duties Act 2000 will be amended to provide that unpaid duty owed by a foreign purchaser will be a first charge on the land. The SRO has found that it can be more difficult to recover outstanding debts where a taxpayer is based overseas. This amendment will ensure that the SRO has a robust mechanism for securing these debts, in the same way that it can already secure debts for other taxes such as land tax.

This bill also makes amendments to the recovery provisions in the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000. These amendments will allow the SRO to recover the first home owner grant (FHOG) from third parties that hold money on behalf of the

grant claimant, such as mortgagees using a garnishee arrangement. This power will apply in cases where the SRO has found a person was not eligible for the FHOG and they fail to repay the grant amount. Similar third party recovery provisions already exist for most other state taxes administered by the SRO.

This bill also amends the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 to introduce substituted service provisions. Currently the SRO is required to serve documents relating to recovery proceedings in person. This is out of step with other legislation administered by the SRO which allows for the service of documents by post or email. This amendment is expected to reduce administrative costs and make it easier and simpler to collect outstanding FHOG amounts and protect the revenue.

The bill makes two minor amendments to the Fire Services Property Levy 2012. Under the single farm enterprise exemption, farmers that own multiple parcels of farm land are only required to pay the fixed charge once. The definition of farm land is currently limited to farm land which is subject to council rates. This bill amends the definition of farm land to clarify that the exemption applies regardless of whether the farm land is rateable or non-rateable. This aligns with the intended operation of the exemption and reflects the way the exemption has been administered by municipal councils since its introduction in 2013.

The Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 is also amended to provide a concession to prisoners of war and extreme disablement adjustment veterans. The act already provides a \$50 concession to certain other concession card holders. This concession reduces the amount of fire property services levy paid by pensioners who own their own home. This amendment will extend the availability of the concession to prisoners of war and extreme disablement adjustment veterans, bringing it into line with the council rates concession and making this benefit available to more Victorians.

The state revenue legislation contains secrecy provisions to protect taxpayer information. However, these provisions also allow for the disclosure of information required for the administration of revenue laws and in certain circumstances for integrity and law enforcement purposes. This bill amends the Taxation Administration Act 1997 to allow the disclosure of information by the SRO to municipal councils, to assist councils appointed to collect the fire services property levy on properties which fall outside their own municipal boundary fulfil their functions under the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012. This bill will also amend the secrecy provisions in the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 to permit the SRO to disclose information to the Ombudsman. This will bring the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000 into line with the secrecy provisions that apply to other taxation laws and make it easier for the SRO to assist the Ombudsman in investigating complaints.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 is amended by this bill to clarify the formulae for calculating CPI-adjusted thresholds and rates for the metropolitan planning levy and growth areas infrastructure contribution. Similarly, the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 is amended to clarify the formula for calculating the CPI-adjusted fixed charge. These amendments address an anomaly caused by consequential amendments introduced in 2014 to reduce the impact of future changes to the Australian Bureau of Statistics'

reporting periods. The amendments do not increase the amount of levy or contribution payable by Victorian taxpayers.

This bill also makes various miscellaneous amendments to the Land Tax Act 2005 and Taxation Administration Act 1997 to correct minor drafting defects and keep the provisions of Victoria's state revenue laws up to date. These amendments do not make any changes to government policy but are important to make sure our existing laws are operating effectively and ensure the integrity of our state revenue legislation is maintained.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern).

Debate adjourned until Tuesday, 17 May.

APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 27 April; motion of Mr PALLAS (Treasurer).

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Industry) — It gives me great pleasure to rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016, the second under the Andrews Labor government. In doing so I would like to congratulate the Treasurer and his team on delivering a very important Labor budget. Our first budget was about getting on with it and delivering in full on our election commitments, and we did that quite proudly. This budget is about getting it done, and this is exactly what we are doing.

This is a fantastic budget that is all about delivering the things that Victorians need the most — good hospitals and schools, reliable roads and public transport, and secure jobs in growing industries in Melbourne and across regional Victoria. This budget ensures that our AAA credit rating will be maintained, with an operating surplus of \$2.9 billion. Our economy is forecast to grow by 3 per cent in 2016–17, above the 2.75 per cent forecast in last year's budget and up from the 2.5 per cent achieved in the government's first year in office.

Importantly unemployment is falling. For the first time more than 3 million people are employed in Victoria and there are 112 600 more people with jobs than when the government was first elected, with 71 000 of those full time. Under the previous government, the unemployment rate rose from 4.9 per cent in 2010 to 6.9 per cent by the end of 2014. In stark comparison this government is getting Victorians back to work, with the unemployment rate already falling to 5.7 per

cent and projected to fall further to 5.5 per cent in 2018–19.

This budget showcases our commitment to all Victorians, with a strong focus on families, businesses and communities, particularly in regional and rural areas. This is reflected in our continued investment in education, health and safety, and a steady pipeline of infrastructure projects that are boosting business confidence and business conditions throughout the state.

Against this backdrop today I want to speak about the areas that are my key responsibilities, most particularly industry, energy and resources. I also want to mention a number of key outcomes for my electorate of Mill Park. I will start with industry. The Andrews Labor government is creating the next generation of jobs and driving investment and opportunities in Victoria's future industries. This budget will boost Victorian industry and jobs, with extra funding for the Future Industries Fund, a new transition plan for jobs and economic growth in the Latrobe Valley and continued support for the government's strong industry participation policy.

The Future Industries Fund will be boosted by \$111.4 million. That is extra money for those growth industries, creating greater investment opportunities and growing the jobs of the future. This will fund projects in the high growth sectors of medical technology and pharmaceuticals, new energy technologies, food and fibre, defence and construction technologies, transport technologies, international education, and professional services. This is an investment in the jobs of the future for all Victorians.

This budget looks after all Victorians right across the state. We know communities in the Latrobe Valley are not doing very well; they are struggling. That is why we reopened the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry to address their concerns about health and mine rehabilitation, concerns that were ignored by the former coalition government. We listened to the community, and this budget delivers over \$50 million to implement the recommendations of the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry board. That includes more than \$12 million for a regional strategy for rehabilitation of the coal mines in the Latrobe Valley. In total our government has now invested \$80 million to support the Latrobe Valley community and in implementing the recommendations of the 2014 Hazelwood mine fire inquiry report.

We will work side by side with communities in the valley to improve the health and wellbeing of current and future generations. They deserve no less. That is

why we did not stop with our comprehensive response to the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry. This budget goes even further, with \$40 million for a Latrobe Valley transition program. This will support the growth of existing and future industries, economic diversification and long-term growth in the Latrobe Valley region. We will deliver an accelerated investment attraction grants program, which will build investment in future industries and create long-term, sustainable jobs. We will be establishing a high-tech precinct in Morwell that will bring together industry and education initiatives to help diversify the local economy and grow new industries and jobs.

Under this budget Victorian auto workers will be given more support to transition into new jobs, with a \$10 million boost to the Back to Work scheme specifically for them. This is in addition to the Andrews government's \$46.5 million automotive transition plan announced last year. The opposition may have stood by and watched as its federal mates abandoned Victorian auto workers and shut down our auto industry, but we are a government that stands by Victorian workers and Victorian industry with this budget and with our industry policies.

The Andrews Labor government has the strongest industry participation policy in the country. We are using the government's purchasing power to set minimum targets for local content on major government projects such as the new schools, hospitals and level crossing removals. This budget continues and strengthens the Victorian Industry Participation Policy with a further \$12 million in investment. This is in addition to the \$5.6 million put aside from last year's budget. This is expected to create more than 4000 new jobs over the next four years by ensuring that local businesses have the opportunity to participate in Victoria's record infrastructure program and major projects. That is what this government is about. It is about creating jobs, boosting industry and driving economic growth, and that is what this budget delivers.

Moving on to energy and resources, I am very, very proud to say that this is a budget that is growing jobs and saving energy for all Victorians. Victorian households and businesses will be able to save money on their energy bills through new programs to increase energy efficiency and create new jobs. We can do both, and that is exactly what we are committed to doing. Under the former coalition government electricity and gas bills increased for Victorians by hundreds of dollars. They actually went up. Sixty thousand Victorians had their power disconnected in 2013–14 alone. That was a record high. Under our government electricity prices have fallen by up to 5 per cent, and

this budget will help Victorian households and businesses save even more.

A Labor government looks after all Victorians, including the most vulnerable and those most at risk. This budget includes a \$10 million program to retrofit public housing stock and homes for Victorians with complex health needs. This will make their homes not only more energy efficient but also more comfortable, and help reduce their energy bills. It includes installing more energy-efficient hot water, heating and cooling systems, as well as insulation and draught-proofing. The Andrews Labor government will also invest \$3 million in rolling out Australia's first home energy efficiency rating tool. This has been specifically designed to help Victorians save on their power bills. We are a government that puts Victorian households at the heart of our energy policies.

This budget also helps businesses to reduce their energy costs. Why is this important? Well, the more we can help businesses reduce their energy costs, the more productive they can be; and the more productive they can be, the more competitive they can be. That is important in terms of growing further opportunities for investment and creating more jobs. Small and medium size businesses will be able to reduce their energy costs through a new \$3 million energy efficiency assessment program.

We have also funded the expansion of the Victorian energy efficiency target scheme (VEET) with more than \$8 million in this budget. The VEET scheme supports more than 2000 jobs right across Victoria, many of which are in regional Victoria, and the scheme has helped thousands of households and businesses reduce their energy bills. The opposition went to the last election declaring that it was going to scrap this scheme and of course axe the thousands of jobs that were supported by the scheme. We saved the scheme and those 2000 jobs when we came into office, and now we have expanded it to include businesses with this budget.

This budget will also drive growth in renewable energy generation, with a \$12 million investment. It includes support to transition Victoria's wholesale electricity generation stock to renewable energy, encourage more households to install solar energy and battery storage systems and help community renewable energy projects get off the ground. We are also modernising Victoria's mining regulator to give the community and industry confidence in how our earth resources are managed. This is essential so that we can grow jobs, particularly in regional Victoria, and of course investment in the sector.

Finally, I am absolutely thrilled to talk about the important investments being made by this government in my electorate of Mill Park. The Victorian budget invests more than ever in the outer suburbs, including those in my electorate of Mill Park in Melbourne's north. It delivers the services families need, the roads and the public transport they rely on, and the quality schools and hospitals they deserve.

The outer northern suburbs of Melbourne are growing faster than almost any other area in this country, but public transport services have not kept up with growth, and locals of course have been missing out. People living in Melbourne's booming north will be connected to train services for the first time through the Andrews Labor government getting on with the Mernda rail extension. The 2016–17 Victorian budget provides \$588 million to fully fund and deliver this project. The project will build around 8 kilometres of duplicated track between South Morang and Mernda and stabling facilities for trains north of Bridge Inn Road. A new premium station will be built in Mernda, a second station will be built near Marymede Catholic College and bidders have been asked to price a third station near Hawkstowe Parade in South Morang.

The Mernda rail extension is being delivered by the Level Crossing Removal Authority and is due for completion in the first half of 2019, fulfilling a key election commitment of the Andrews Labor government. The new rail services will be bolstered by a new bus network, which will be better coordinated with trains and provide more extensive, frequent and direct services in South Morang, Doreen and Mernda. Our community has fought for this rail line since the former Labor government extended the line to South Morang. The Liberals did not listen; we have.

This budget will also cut travel times for residents in Melbourne's north who commute along Plenty Road. This means more time with family and less time stuck in traffic. The Andrews government has committed up to \$139.4 million to upgrade and widen key sections of Plenty Road. Lighting along Plenty Road will also be improved, and safety barriers will be installed to reduce the number of accidents. This is a very big win for the community and yet another example of the Andrews Labor government getting on with making Victoria great.

More than \$100 million has been committed in this year's state budget to acquire land for new schools in Melbourne's outer suburbs. In addition to the land acquisition, money has been set aside to start building a number of new schools throughout Melbourne, including \$12 million for stage 1 of the construction of

Edgars Creek Secondary School in Wollert, in the electorate of my good friend the member for Thomastown, and the people who live in the other part of Wollert are certainly very much looking forward to being able to send their kids to that new secondary college once it is built. I really do want to commend the member for Thomastown for her very, very strong advocacy for growing communities in our part of the world. Congratulations.

We of course desperately needed this secondary school in the region to support families moving into the area and to reduce traffic on the already congested roads. Last year's budget provided funds to purchase the land; this budget provides funds to build the school, with the completion date set for the first half of 2018.

It is absolutely the case that we are getting it done on all of the commitments we have made. Every promise that we make — every commitment that we make — we will deliver, and we will get it done. That is why I am so excited, and I want to commend every single member of the caucus for doing a fantastic job in advocating for their communities right across a whole range of portfolios. The ministers have been able to deliver a fantastic budget with so much growth and so much investment on the understanding that, when all Victorians share in the benefit of a fantastic budget such as the one that we have here, we all grow and we are all the better for it. With that, it is a fantastic budget for Victoria, and certainly this is one that I am proud to commend to the house.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. The way I would couch this budget is as the budget of broken promises. The Premier was on the record unequivocally saying there would be no new taxes and no new tax increases under his government. If you go back to the eve of the election in 2014, he stood out on the front steps of Parliament, and he was interviewed by Peter Mitchell from Channel 7 news. He said to Peter Mitchell:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

How wrong could that promise have been? How could he have broken that promise and broken faith with all Victorians about what he has actually done in the budget last week.

If we think about what has happened in the budget, state taxes are up \$3.7 billion, or 20.7 per cent; insurance taxes are up \$1.2 billion, or 6.3 per cent; stamp duty on property is actually up \$1.6 billion; land tax is up \$2.2 billion dollars, or 28.3 per cent. I do not know how you compare that with the promise the

Premier made that there would be no new taxes and no tax increases under a government that he led.

If you look at the fire services levy, the fire services levy has gone up 15 per cent over the last two years. That means that everyone who owns a property in Victoria and pays the fire services levy to help fund our fire services is going to pay an extra 15 per cent over those two years. The key thing with this, though, is that that is before the United Firefighters Union (UFU) actually cashes in its IOU with the Premier. When the UFU cashes in its IOU with the Premier, all those conditions that are in that enterprise bargaining agreement will have to be met, because I think there is no doubt that the Premier will win on this. The Premier will roll his Minister for Emergency Services, and he will give the UFU the sweetheart deal. He will give it the sweetheart deal. He will give the UFU the right of veto over management decisions; he will give it the staffing requirements it wants. The government will cave into all of this, and the fire services levy will go up again.

This is a high-taxing, high-spending budget that actually does not deliver much for regional Victoria at all. There is no economic plan to grow regional Victoria. There is no jobs plan for regional Victoria — there is no jobs plan for all of Victoria, but from a regional Victorian's point of view there is no jobs plan for regional Victoria.

If we go back to the eve of that same election, the Premier said that he would create 100 000 new full-time jobs in the first two years of his government. If you look at what has happened and if you look at my area of Victoria, north-west Victoria, there are more than 12 000 full-time jobs that have actually been lost in that time. It is not a matter of creating new jobs; there have actually been jobs lost. There is no clear vision, no economic plan and no jobs plan for country Victoria in this budget. The saying that I have started to use to frame this budget is: the further you live away from Melbourne, the less you get out of the Andrews government. I think that says it all about this particular budget.

On top of the record tax increases that I have already spoken about, the Andrews government has reached further into the pockets of all Victorians. It has actually introduced a new electricity tax — a \$250 million tax on electricity in this state. Every household power bill will go up because of this. The cost-of-living pressures are well known to people, whether they be in Melbourne or whether they be in country Victoria. This will impact on those cost-of-living pressures. More importantly, not only are they putting electricity costs

up but you also have the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water stopping firewood collection. So for a lot of those people in country Victoria who have the alternative of bottled gas, electricity or firewood, electricity is going to go up and firewood is going to be hard to get, because they are stopping the collection of firewood. It is going to make it more expensive for people to heat their houses, and again on top of that in the budget there is actually less money for energy concessions. So for those people who used to get concessions, there is less money for concessions as well. Power bills will go up for every household in Victoria.

It is also a tax on business. If you think about the dairy industry, it has a high-energy requirement. The dairy industry has been suffering from drought, and it has been suffering from low world prices. We know the issues in the dairy industry very well, and the recent announcement by Murray Goulburn is that it is going to downgrade its prices because of the impact of the global price of dairy products. The power bills of that company are going to go up, whether it be because of running the dairy or cooling the milk. For irrigators, it is running the pumps to irrigate; their costs are going to go up. It is a tax on their particular business. It is similar with the horticulture industry, which uses irrigation — pumps again. Large cool stores use a lot of electricity. This is a tax on that particular sector of the agriculture industry as well. So this electricity tax is effectively a tax on our exports. It is a tax on those people who are actually creating the wealth of this country over that time. Every Victorian will be hit with this new tax, and every business in Victoria will be hit as well.

In the last budget the regional infrastructure spend was only about 3 per cent of the total spend of infrastructure in Victoria. With a few exceptions this year, not much has changed at all. Most of the things that have been announced for country Victoria are actually on the never-never; it is 5 or 10 years before anything will happen.

I read with interest that Yarrawonga gets \$625 000 for an artist's impression of the Yarrawonga bridge. That is about all it will get. There is nothing in the budget to build anything in Yarrawonga in the future, so it is a very small promise to get an impression done. It will probably be a little bit like sky rail — it will look fantastic on paper but there is nothing there to actually fund the bridge anything over that time.

Funding for the Echuca bridge is still in the budget as it was included by the coalition government and it is still there, but there is no time frame for that money to be spent. The Minister for Roads and Road Safety was at

the despatch box a couple of weeks ago saying, 'We will get on with this project. We will build this project. We are not going to stuff around' — the minister can be very colourful in his language — but if you look at the budget, you see it is vacant. There is nothing to say when that project is actually going to start. I remind the Minister for Roads and Road Safety that it is not a bird-brained idea to build the Echuca bridge. The money is there, and the federal government is willing to come in and pay its share. All we are waiting for is a business case from the Andrews government to put in its share. The Echuca bridge could be started almost immediately if the Andrews government showed some common sense on this particular project.

In terms of the Ballarat rail line upgrade, the Minister for Public Transport was waxing lyrical about it during a ministers statement in question time, but if you drill into the budget, only 6 per cent of that project is funded in the budget. The minister would have the people of Ballarat and Maryborough believe that somehow their transport service is going to improve in the foreseeable future, but if you actually look at the budget papers, it is not planned to be finished until well into the 2020s. It is a long time before that project will be finished, and in the meantime it will not be delivering much at all.

Turning to some of my portfolio areas, the agriculture sector in Victoria is an \$11.6 billion export industry for this state, but if you take the last two budgets, in the last two years there has been a drop of \$36 million in funding for the agriculture sector in the budget. It is a key economic driver for all of Victoria but particularly for regional Victoria and it involves \$11.6 billion worth of exports, but there is a \$36 million cut in the budget over the two years of the budget. The Treasurer is bragging, with his high-taxing budget, that he has these surpluses — lots of money — and can actually spend \$11 billion of taxpayers money to build the Melbourne train tunnel, but he cut the agriculture budget by \$36 million, one of the key sectors that is actually a driver that creates jobs, particularly in country Victoria.

In the same budget there is funding for the wild dog program and for the fox bounty. The Minister for Agriculture made a lot of fuss about the fact that this was new funding and it was doubling the amount of money for aerial baiting, but it is actually just putting back the money that was taken out previously.

On the issue of jobs in country Victoria, one of the key things in getting a job is getting training if you need it, but the training budget shows that the government is actually cutting money from training here in Victoria. Apart from not meeting the 100 000 full-time jobs over that time, it has actually cut the training budget. In 2015

Labor trained 65 856 fewer students through the training system. That is a huge cut to the training budget and to training outcomes. There are 800 000 fewer subsidised enrolments here in Victoria, and the government has reduced subsidised training by 27 million hours. That is 27 million contact hours that have been taken out of the training budget. If you lived in country Victoria and wanted to get trained for a job and help the government fulfil its promise of 100 000 new full-time jobs, which is not being met, you would find it very hard to get a training place in country Victoria.

Looking at the water portfolio, the government has continued some of the good programs that the coalition started. If you look at the issues in South Gippsland, the coalition government did a great job sewerage the towns of Loch, Nyora and Poowong, and there was a continuation of that program with the northern towns project connecting water to some of those towns, but it is a continuation of what all governments have been doing over time — improving the water services here in Victoria.

It is the same with the south-west Loddon project. It was already being planned under the coalition government and has partly been funded by the money that GWMWater had left over from the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline project, which was a great coalition project when it was instigated. As much as the other side wants to rewrite history, I again put on the record the great job done by the then federal member for Mallee, John Forrest, in making sure that that project was funded and has happened. With the tough seasonal conditions that we have had, that has really meant the difference for north-west Victoria over that time.

If you look at the issue of law and order in country Victoria, despite the record tax income that this government has had and all those huge tax increases that I have spoken about, there has been no real change or increase in frontline police services. There has been money for additional police for task forces but not for frontline services, and I can go right across my electorate and see stations that are undermanned. Some of the smaller ones are not manned at all now because police are being drawn into the regional towns to backfill positions there, so no real increase has occurred in funding for frontline police services.

In my last few minutes I will address what has and has not been funded in the electorate of Murray Plains. As the local member in that area, I have worked very hard with some of my community groups to enable them to get funding for some particular projects. If you look at

the Echuca regeneration project, the Echuca West, Echuca South and specialist schools are to be merged into one site.

The previous coalition government actually bought the land for that particular merger, and it allocated \$200 000 to do the detailed planning. There has been \$11 million for stage 1 of that — not quite half the funding for that particular project. Particularly for the specialist school, that is very important, because the specialist school in Echuca is all portables. There is growth in the numbers there, but it is effectively a cluster of portables, so they are desperate to get this new school up and going. Funding of \$11 million is a good start, but I would have liked to have seen the \$23 million that is needed to do this whole project, particularly so that the specialist school could have a new school.

In my response to the family violence royal commission I raised the issue of the Echuca courthouse and the fact that there is one entrance that the court shares with the Shire of Campaspe. I raised the need to have a separate entrance for the Shire of Campaspe and a separate one as well, particularly for when there are issues around family violence or around ice and drugs, so that people can come and go without necessarily bumping into other people who are in court. Again the community fought very hard to get that particular money.

One of the things that is not funded in the budget that I think is an absolute crying shame is Kyabram P–12 College. The Kyabram P–12 school has been to hell and back. Its A wing is absolutely riddled with white ants and is going to be pulled down. The Minister for Education tried to take away its year 9 portable classroom 18 months ago. The community got a reprieve for that building, but there is no funding in the budget to help the school to rebuild any of those particular facilities. And there is no funding in the budget to fix up the issue of a deficit it has from a previous principal under the previous Labor government, when the school was rorted for a whole heap of money. That money now has to be repaid out of the school budget. There is nothing there to help the Kyabram school, which I find very disappointing.

As I said at the start, this is a budget of broken promises because it increases taxes and does not deliver for all Victorians, as the Premier said it would.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. This is a great Labor budget, and it is an outstanding piece of public policy. I would like to commence my

comments by acknowledging the great work of the lead line ministers who crafted this budget: the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, the Special Minister of State and of course the Premier. I would also like to single out for mention Alison Currie, who was the Treasurer's budget adviser. Alison's fingerprints have been over virtually every single Labor budget in this state going back many, many years. I know how hard Alison and her colleagues worked in pulling together this great piece of public policy.

In relation to the broad metrics, this is a budget that Scott Morrison would love to hand down tonight. He would love it. If you are looking at net debt to gross state product, the actual figure was 6.2 per cent in 2014–15 and it is trending down across the forward estimates — 5.9 per cent for this year, 4.7 per cent and then back up to 5 per cent. This is a very prudent budget strategy. We basically looked at paying down the debt that we inherited from the former coalition government, and we are ensuring that across the forward estimates there is the capacity for us to really be in charge of our own destiny, as opposed to being a mendicant state going cap in hand to the federal government consistently.

If you look at the economic forecasts provided in budget paper 2, page 16, the actual figure for gross state product in 2014–15 was 2.5 per cent, and it is forecast to grow to 3 per cent for the next two financial years. When you are looking at that level of economic expansion coupled with the recent state final demand figures, really what you are looking at is a very healthy, vibrant economy. You have got people working, you have got people paying taxes and you have got investment occurring across the private sector, which is driving that level of growth.

If you look at the unemployment rate, it was 6.4 per cent actual in 2014–15 and it is projected to fall to 6 per cent this year, to 5.75 per cent for the two subsequent years and then 5.5 per cent in the two out years across the forward estimates. A great driver of this has been population growth. The actual population growth figure was 1.7 per cent for 2014–15, and it is projected to stay stable at 1.8 per cent. That feeds into the state final demand figures that we saw recently. Basically, if you have got people voting with their feet, coming to this state either as interstate migrants or migrants from overseas, they need housing and they need to be able to procure goods and services, to live and to raise their families, and that therefore generates a significant amount of that wealth. In the states which are in a more parlous budgetary situation, I suspect that would be overwhelmingly as a result of not having the level of population growth that we have.

The budget surplus is predicted to be \$2.869 billion in 2016–17 and more than \$9 billion across the forward estimates. This gives us enormous freedom and capacity to be able to fund the projects that we as a state deem appropriate, responsible and a priority, rather than being captive to and dependent upon the whim and will of Canberra. It is also important to note that infrastructure spending will be at \$7.4 billion a year over the course of the budget and forward estimates, and this compares to \$4.9 billion over the preceding 11 years. That is in budget paper 2, page 31. Again, when you have got the state entering into the market, spending money and investing, that provides the degree of confidence for the private sector to similarly look at making those investments as well.

We have got a strong economy, but I think it is reasonable to argue the fact that the economy is not white hot, so it is not going gangbusters. If it was, you would not want the state going in and bidding up the price for the private sector to bid against, eroding the profits and profitability of those private sector companies. But where you have got an economy that is chugging along — it is motoring along nicely at 3 per cent — you want to make sure the state is in there investing. You want to make sure the state is turning around and investing in critical economic infrastructure that will underpin population growth across the forward estimates and beyond, and you want the state to be going in there confidently, basically saying to the private sector, 'Look, we're prepared to invest. We're prepared to put our money where our mouth is. We have got a plan. We have got an agenda'. So the private sector can read those signals, tool up and respond appropriately as it sees fit.

There has also been talk recently in relation to asset recycling and the fact that the 2014–15 state budget of the then Abbott government indicated that proceeds would be made available to the state that embarked upon asset recycling. This is money that is basically a recognition of the fact that where you have a state-owned enterprise it pays dividends to the state government, to its shareholder. When you privatise state-owned entities, they no longer pay dividends to the state but they start to pay company tax to the federal Treasury. The reality is that asset recycling is a recognition by federal Treasury that it will be receiving proceeds as a consequence of privatisation, so this notion that somehow Canberra can dictate the way in which those proceeds are to be allocated and spent by the state government is laughable and ludicrous.

Budget paper 2 at pages 37 and 38 refers to value capture. This is an important revenue initiative because effectively it will allow for under-utilised land and

assets adjacent to major infrastructure projects that will come online to be used for a higher purpose at a higher value. If you consider the Arden-Macaulay precinct in Kensington, which will be the site of a Metro rail station, you realise that that land is low rent. There is an asphalt plant there, a bit of warehousing, low employment and dilapidated infrastructure, I think it would be fair to say. The reality is that once the government looks at building the Metro tunnel and you have the portal there at Arden-Macaulay close to the Parkville precinct, close to Melbourne University —

Mr Wynne interjected.

Mr PEARSON — Two minutes away, the minister at the table says. He is absolutely right. A massive uplift in value will occur, and of course it would be entirely appropriate for the state to be able to capture some of that value to pay for those projects. Where you have a portal, an outlet for a Metro rail station, the rents surrounding that portal go up significantly. If you have any doubts about that, just go and talk to the owners of, for example, 101 Collins Street. When the super-stop was built out the front of 101 Collins Street, rents went up because there was a realisation that a destination for commuters was being created.

The budget is also important because the payroll tax exemption will be raised by \$25 000 per year over the course of the next four years from \$550 000 to \$650 000. This will result in a significant gain for a number of smaller businesses because it will provide them with a degree of reprieve. It will enable them, if they see fit, to make further investments in their businesses in terms of property, plant and equipment, and they will be able to expand their businesses well.

From a local perspective, I was delighted that in the budget funding has been allocated for master planning for Strathmore Secondary College. This is one of the best premier government schools in the inner north-west. It is bound by Pascoe Vale Road, the Tullamarine Freeway, the Moonee Ponds Creek and the Craigieburn rail line. The school has significant enrolment growth projected over the next decade, and it is on a constrained site. The allocation of funds for master planning for the school will ensure that we will have a 21st century school for the 21st century. I particularly acknowledge the great work of Anne Kershaw, the school council president; Darren O'Connor; Jim Kounetas; and Jill English, the principal.

As I mentioned earlier in my contribution, one of the great things when you are prudent and you have a strong and disciplined fiscal strategy is that that enables

you to decide to spend money on the projects that matter most to you. That is why we are able to say quite confidently that we will be able to fully fund the Melbourne Metro project. This is going to be a massive employment generator. It is not just going to be a sugar rush to the economy that is gone in 5 seconds. We are going to be looking at a major piece of critical infrastructure that will be built over many years and will have a ripple effect right across the economy. More broadly, once it is completed it will make a huge difference to our economy. It is a nation-building project, and we simply cannot afford to wait for Canberra.

Again, from a local perspective, once this project is built there will be a turn-back facility built at Essendon railway station, which will enable a shuttle service to operate between Essendon and the city loop. This will occur as a result of capacity being freed up in the existing loop. It will ensure again that people will be able to access high value-added jobs close to where they live in the city.

The budget also indicates that there will be \$875 million for 28 new high-capacity trains. These will be used on the Cranbourne-Dandenong lines as well as the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. There is also \$105 million for five additional X'trapolis trains. I am delighted that \$19.9 million has been allocated to the railway station car park fund. Enabling people to park their car at a station and making it easier for them to use public transport rather than getting in their car and driving to the city is a critically important piece of public policy.

I was delighted yesterday to join the Minister for Employment at the announcement of the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, which will provide in the first round \$25 million worth of grants for specialist employment providers to help them connect disadvantaged job seekers with job opportunities and support them once they are employed. This is going to be particularly important because it is going to target people who are really struggling to find work — people such as refugees, retrenched workers, the long-term unemployed, disengaged young people, people with disabilities, public housing tenants and Indigenous Victorians. This is a really important initiative. From my perspective I have two very large public housing estates in my electorate, and I want people to look at public housing as a safety net which they use to pause and consolidate and eventually get out. It will give them an opportunity to try to ensure that they can get a job and start earning money and raise their families, create some wealth and leave those public housing estates.

The budget also allocates \$10 million for rooming houses. Again this will benefit my electorate, which has two rooming houses. What you are really looking at doing is converting these rooming houses from premises with standalone bedrooms and common areas to self-contained units. When you have families fleeing family violence and people with complex needs, the ability for them to have a safe and secure place in which to live and not socialise unless they want to is a very good initiative.

I am delighted with the fact that the budget also includes funding for the heritage grants program. There is \$4 million for community heritage assets, which members will be able to bid for on behalf of their electorates. There is \$3 million for heritage assets on public land and \$22.2 million for major building grants.

More broadly, some of the other initiatives that have been announced include the National Centre for Proton Beam Therapy at Parkville. There has been \$50 million allocated for that. We do three things well in this state: we do health care well, we do education well and we do food and fibre well. We can look at promoting the excellence that exists within the Parkville precinct, which goes back to Bio21, which was announced by the previous Labor government. I know Steve Bracks and John Brumby pursued that rigorously when they were in power. It is a very good thing. There is also \$3 million for the planning of the Parkville biomedical precinct. In terms of children's health, there is \$258 million allocated to the Monash Children's hospital.

This is a sensible budget. It goes to show what you can do when you get your house in order. It is a great Labor budget, and I am absolutely delighted that we have been able to do the things we said we were going to do. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) — I rise to give the budget reply on behalf of the Victorian Greens and the residents of Prahran and not only to give our response to the state government's budget but also to outline our vision and our plan for Victoria. Victoria really is a great place to call home. That is why so many people from interstate and around the world are moving in and coming to Victoria. Now is the time to have the vision and courage to take the next big steps for Victoria: to make the transition to an economy powered by clean energy; to shift to mass transit with a public transport system you can rely on, away from traffic and clogged roads; and to create the new jobs of a 21st century economy to ensure our communities remain livable. It is clear from this budget, just as it has been clear from

previous budgets, that Victorians cannot trust the Labor Party or the Liberal Party to deliver on that transition.

There is absolutely no reason why we cannot make this transition. Despite ongoing slow growth in the global economy, and despite a federal government that is stuck in its own rhetoric of a budget emergency that requires spending cuts, as well as the clear dawning reality that the commonwealth has a revenue problem that needs to be addressed, Victorian economic numbers look good. You have got your multibillion-dollar surplus. You have got your low ratio of debt to gross state product (GSP). You have got room to borrow. There is every reason why the government should be taking those necessary steps to fix overcrowding on our trains and trams and to tackle climate change, but unfortunately the government has again squibbed it. Instead, investment in public transport has not kept up with what is required. There is just a handful — a modest amount — for renewable energy.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HIBBINS — I will just point out we have got money out the door that could be better spent. We have got another multibillion-dollar toll road — the western distributor, which will be full by 2031. We have got a grand prix that will cost this state half a billion dollars over the next eight years. We have got \$5 million to promote hunting. We have got a government continuing to prop up VicForests to log our native forests while it runs at a loss. We have got the government raking in pokies revenue, proving once again that its precommitment scheme is an absolute sham. All this is occurring whilst local governments have been hit by a Kennett-era rate cap.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HIBBINS — I will just point out that I did actually listen to the Treasurer's budget speech, just as I did with the replies by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals, and I did not interject. I ask for the same respect from members opposite. I am sure they will make good contributions themselves.

Unfortunately our local governments are hampered from delivering those high-quality services, those essential social services and that high-quality local infrastructure that our communities need to keep them livable. I was surprised to hear recent comments from the opposition that it is now against rate capping, which is disappointing because opposition members voted for it. If they had joined us in voting against rate capping, we would not be complaining about how bad it is. It would not be in place.

The government is pursuing another Kennett-era policy of an aggressive privatisation agenda. It has already handed control of our last major public asset, the port of Melbourne, to private hands — the very asset sale that Labor warned against in the Kennett years — with more to come apparently, according to the budget papers. Where it is in the community's interest —

Mr Nardella interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Halfpenny) — Order! Could the member from Melton lower the tone of his interjections.

Mr HIBBINS — Where it is in the community's interest, capital tied up in mature businesses can be recycled to build new infrastructure. The question is: what are these mature assets? The question is: what is for sale in the state of Victoria? That is the question that is being asked.

The Treasurer made mention in his speech, which I did listen to in silence, of the road-versus-rail debate. He likes to say that the government is doing both. But the reality is public transport moves more people more quickly and for less cost. The car-based policies of Victoria have failed us in the past. When people come back from overseas they say, 'Why can't we do public transport like London, Paris and Hong Kong?'. I do not think I have ever heard anyone say, 'Let's do the freeways like they do in LA'. Yet despite this, the government is going ahead with another expensive, unnecessary tollway — the \$5.5 billion western distributor — through a sweetheart deal with Transurban, with no explanation as to why the cheaper half-a-billion-dollar West Gate distributor or the port rail shuttle, which it took to the election, is not going ahead instead.

Communities around Australia are standing up to these expensive toll roads, which are destroying their communities and sucking up vital funds that could be used for public transport. Just as the Greens did with the east-west link here in Melbourne, local Greens members are standing up for their communities against the WestConnex in Sydney and the Perth Freight Link in Western Australia. They are bad for the economy, they are bad for the environment and they are bad for communities.

The Treasurer also made a point of saying in his speech that Melbourne's population could surpass Sydney's as early as 2030. That is an auspicious year, because it is around the same time that the western distributor will reach its capacity. So for that 5-odd millionth person to call Melbourne home, who is perhaps travelling down

the Tullamarine Freeway — maybe they are going to Altona Meadows or Wyndham Vale — and turns right at the western distributor or the West Gate Freeway, it is going to take them exactly the same amount of time to travel there as it would now. The western distributor is just another multibillion-dollar waste. The numbers do not stack up.

Of course we have got a federal Liberal government and a state opposition continuing their obsession with and plan to build the east-west link, holding out the \$1.5 billion from the Abbott era, which has been shoved out the door and is apparently now being kept in a locked box. This game must come to an end. The state opposition must end the east-west link policy and free up that money for public transport in Victoria. No political party can have any credibility on public transport if building the \$22 billion east-west link is a policy of theirs.

The reckless, irresponsible spending on tollways and freeways by Liberal and Labor governments must end. We need to address the critical problems in our public transport network. Almost every week there is a problem with our fragile signalling, which shuts down lines and creates chaos. This budget was an opportunity to invest in a clear plan — a business case to upgrade signalling across all the lines of the network. Instead we have got piecemeal upgrades and we have got a high-speed signalling trial that we cannot even get basic answers to while commuters are running the gauntlet every day.

The budget includes extra rolling stock on top of the additional rolling stock that will be ordered next year. We welcome this extra train order, because we were the ones who told the government last year that the train order was not enough. We certainly welcome this extra train order next year and we will tell you again this year that it is still not enough. The government has not ordered enough trains. Trams have been left at production levels from the previous government when they could actually double. This rolling stock is critical to not just address passenger growth but also create those jobs being lost in high-skilled manufacturing, with the shutting down of the car industry.

Again, we welcome the improvements to the Ballarat line and the Hurstbridge line, but more could have been done. This budget could have been a down payment on stage 1 of developing airport rail, Doncaster rail and Rowville rail; duplication of the Altona loop; tram extensions that meet up with train stations; and expanding the transport network.

I will speak about Melbourne Metro. The government has announced that it will step in and fully fund it. It probably did not have any choice, with the dithering of the federal government in relation to the funding of that particular matter. But this is a big project, with a long lead-in time and with benefits that will not be realised for some time, and the state government must get this project right. The Greens took to the last election a common-sense position that South Yarra station could be included in Melbourne Metro. It is a position that I advocated for when I was a councillor, when at the time the then Liberal government still had Melbourne Metro without a South Yarra connection as a policy. In fact it is worth pointing out that in 2011, had the then Liberal government agreed to have a South Yarra connection in Melbourne Metro when it approved the original Melbourne Metro business case, and then got on and actually built it, we would not be debating this issue. We would be watching it get built.

Also in my budget speech last year I asked the government to go back to look at how a connection with South Yarra station could be achieved with Melbourne Metro. I have asked the Minister for Public Transport at question time to do that. But they have not done that. They have left it up to Stonnington City Council to do that, which has discovered that if you just swap the Dandenong and Frankston lines where they meet east of Caulfield station, an interchange with Melbourne Metro and South Yarra station can be achieved at significantly less cost and with less disruption than what the state government is claiming.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — I take up the interjection by the member for Essendon. Let us not rely on what Stonnington says, let us get the state government to actually put some money into looking at it itself.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — Why would you do it? That is a very good question. I ask the same thing. I quote the member: why would you do it?

There has been some hope that the federal government would step in and stump up the money for the interchange. Unless it does so in the budget tonight, all we will have is just empty words from the federal local member. I say again that the state government needs to, at the very least, take another look at the South Yarra-Melbourne Metro interchange. It needs to get Melbourne Metro right. But Melbourne Metro aside, South Yarra station is badly in need of an upgrade. It is one of the biggest stations outside the city, with

congestion and population growth in and around the city. This budget delivers nothing — not a cent, not a plan, not a task force, not a committee. It is not good enough for the people of South Yarra who have been ignored by successive governments.

I just want to touch on one of my favourite subjects and that is the issue of bikes. As someone who rides into Parliament often, as do other members, I know that this government is yet to deliver on its big commitment of a \$100 million cycling and pedestrian fund. This budget has just delivered one-tenth of that. I welcome the continuation of Melbourne Bike Share. I would like to see that expanded to areas around the inner city such as Chapel Street, and of course investment in separated bike infrastructure such as the separated lanes along St Kilda Road. Quality infrastructure and laws to protect cyclists like a 1-metre minimum passing distance will make Melbourne a true cycling city.

The transition from dirty coal-powered energy to clean renewable energy is one that this state must make to tackle climate change, to create the new jobs in manufacturing and science and trades and research and development. The Greens welcome the modest funds that have been allocated to transition renewables and energy efficiency, but it is just not enough. Almost every week we have my colleague and Victorian Greens energy spokesperson, the member for Melbourne, putting the case for the need to make this transition, and not a week goes by without her being howled down by members of the government. It is good to see that the government is now admitting that the member for Melbourne is absolutely right on this and that it is putting in plans. It is putting in a Latrobe — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HIBBINS — Your government has put up the money for a Latrobe Valley transition plan. We welcome that. But a transition plan without a plan to phase out coal is not enough. This government must put in the fundamentals — the pillars of a renewable energy plan. We must transition to 90 per cent renewable energy by 2030, with a strong Victorian renewable energy target to phase out the dirty coal-fired power stations like Hazelwood, which was the previous Labor government's policy but it walked away from it. We need to support household solar with a one-to-one feed-in tariff. Labor's position is a step back from the former Liberal government's plan to start a coal export industry out of Victoria with the world's dirtiest coal, but it must now seize the moment and deliver on clean energy.

I will move on to education. In my electorate of Prahran the budget includes an extra \$5 million for the construction of Prahran high school, and I absolutely welcome this commitment and the commitment to build a brand-new purpose-built school on that site, with construction due by 2018 and the first intake of students by 2019. This is good news. This is great news for the families of Prahran who want to send their children to a good quality local state high school. I commend the state government on its foresight in demolishing the existing building on the Swinburne site and building an entirely new school on that site. It will be a positive, lasting legacy for the Prahran community for decades to come of high-quality public education and ensure Prahran is a community where families of all types can live. I also want to acknowledge the State High School for Prahran community group for its ongoing work on behalf of our community in making sure that the school meets the needs of local families.

But across the state there is still much to be done. A recent study indicated that 220 new schools will be needed across Victoria in the next 10 years. This budget delivers 11. If Victoria is going to meet that demand, it needs to be done in an open and transparent way, with a clear plan so families have the confidence that the needs of their community will be met. Recurrent needs-based funding is a must, and this government needs to end its private school funding laws which mandate that every time \$1 is spent on public schools, 25 cents is spent on private schools, regardless of the need.

It is clear also from the budget that our TAFE and training sector is still in crisis, with enrolments in TAFE falling. This is despite the government spending millions on its TAFE Rescue Fund. We are in this position thanks to the former Labor government's disastrous marketisation reforms and because, when faced with the inevitable cost blowouts, the former Liberal government, rather than walk away or back out of this disastrous policy, doubled down. This whole exercise has seen money wasted, money out the door, on qualifications that are not worth the paper they are written on. The question must be asked: how much public money has gone to the profit margins of these dodgy private training providers that have now had their accreditation cancelled? Labor claiming that it is now the rescuer that is going to fix TAFE is like the shonky builder coming back to fix up a house for which it did not put in the foundations properly, despite everyone telling them it would not work.

On the environment, this budget lacks key measures to protect and deliver for our environment. We still have the government continuing to prop up VicForests and

the unsustainable, uneconomic and unviable logging of our forests whereby the state faunal emblem, the Leadbeater's possum, is under threat and our forests are locked up from achieving the economic benefits they would bring to a regional economy. We need a Great Forest National Park — a national park on Melbourne's doorstep to protect the Leadbeater's possum, to protect the city's water supply and to grow regional economies with tourism. We need to act to reduce — —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — You might want to speak to your environment minister about that one, member for Melton. The government must also act to reduce the rubbish that pollutes our cities, our waterways and the bay; introduce the 10-cent container deposit scheme; and make our seas and waterways free from plastic bags and microbeads. These are practical environmental initiatives that are good for the environment and good for the economy.

As the Victorian Greens LGBTI portfolio spokesperson, I welcome the government's commitment to Safe Schools to ensure that it is not watered down by Malcolm Turnbull's conservative backbenchers. I have been concerned to hear some of the comments against Safe Schools by members of the opposition, raising the question of whether Safe Schools is safe under any future coalition government. I certainly welcome the construction of the Victorian pride centre and the extra funds for LGBTI community groups, which we know do absolutely critical work but are often completely underfunded and cash-strapped.

The government must back up this funding with legislation. All schools should be safe schools. It is unacceptable that right now at religious schools it is perfectly legal for gay, lesbian or transgender students to be expelled, denied entry or discriminated against because of their sexuality or gender status. The same can occur to teachers, to staff and to clients at faith-based schools and community service organisations. No student, no person, should have to live with the threat that if they reveal their sexuality, they may be sacked, expelled or refused a job.

Mr Nardella — Where are you getting this from?

Mr HIBBINS — The member for Melton asks where I am getting this from, and I would direct the member for Melton to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. I could furnish the member for Melton with the Equal Opportunity Act. This is unbelievable! The Victorian Greens equality bill, which I have released publicly, aims to end this unacceptable situation, and I certainly

seek the support of all parties and all members — even the member for Melton — in this place to do just that.

This government has failed to make housing the central concern it needed to be in this budget. Public housing stock has not kept up with demand, waiting lists are longer and maintenance and security are not up to scratch. Certainly these are not just houses; these are people's homes. In my own electorate of Prahran our housing estates are plagued by pigeon infestations, and even in new buildings promised security doors have taken too long to materialise. We have had some promise that there will be a housing affordability package some time later this year — in other words, 'trust us'. Trust is in short supply for those who are waiting for a home or whose own home needs to be repaired or upgraded. Victorians cannot wait.

We do welcome the housing package included in the response to the family violence royal commission. We welcome all the \$500 million-odd in response to the family violence royal commission. However, it must be noted that this is just the start. It has been pointed out that community legal centres have missed out despite demand for family violence services provided by community legal centres increasing nearly 500 per cent over the last decade.

I will move on to another one of my portfolio areas. In the portfolio of sport, I certainly welcome the \$22 million for indoor sports stadiums. There is demand in the Prahran electorate, where the local netball association is in bad need of new indoor courts. I will be encouraging them and the local council to seek funding through those funds.

The budget also includes \$75 million for the upgrade of Kardinia Park in Geelong. I just touch on a pet issue of mine, which is that I believe there is no point spending tens of millions on new footy stadiums if at the end of the season loyal club members cannot actually get into the AFL Grand Final. The state, the taxpayer, has been very generous in funding new footy stadiums, and it is only fair that in return the lifeblood of our footy clubs, the loyal club members who go week in, week out, are able to attend the grand final. I would like to see the allocation of grand final tickets, which the Minister for Sport has legislative power over, raised from 30 000 to 60 000 so that those members of competing clubs who go week in, week out, can watch their footy team on the biggest day of the year, the grand final in September.

I will just touch on a few issues that were raised in the debate — firstly, that of population growth. I know that Liberal members have a new-found interest in population growth, because they have established an

internal task force. I welcome this because the Greens have been putting forward policies to deal with population growth for some time. In fact the topic of my parliamentary intern's research report last year was keeping Prahran livable in the face of population growth.

Let us just have a look at what the government has got so far. Regionalisation is an idea to take the pressure of growth off Melbourne through incentives or tax breaks to live or set up businesses in regional Victoria. I will just make a few points about this approach. Firstly, notwithstanding that investment in regional cities, train services and supporting local economies is of course welcome — it is good policy — it is regionalisation as a way of dealing with population growth. By offering tax breaks to residents and businesses and by offering other incentives to make running a business or living in regional Victoria more attractive, rather than redistributing population growth we might just end up growing the population pie overall, which, again, may be a desired outcome, but it does not actually deal with population growth.

Secondly, if you are actually able to shift a percentage of population growth to regional Victoria, you are still going to have the overwhelming majority of people living in Melbourne, and in those regional areas people are still going to need the transport, health and education services, which will potentially now come at a greater cost per capita than if they were living in the city.

I will be very interested to watch those free market ideology and regionalisation ideas meet with the brick wall of the stark reality that increased population growth will need a strong revenue base and the sort of investment in public transport, public housing and public education that the Liberals have been so unwilling to undertake when in government. I look forward to the population debate with the Liberals. And, who knows, just as they have done with supporting the inclusion of South Yarra station as part of the Melbourne Metro, supporting 10-cent container deposit legislation, supporting the introduction of presumptive legislation for firefighters and supporting the banning of smoking in outdoor areas, they might just end up adopting sensible and responsible Greens policies.

To conclude, I grew up in a Labor family. My parents were teachers; they were members of the local Labor branch. We had a sign of the Labor candidate up on the farm fence every election. As a young boy I met Bob Hawke on the campaign trail and I marched against Jeff Kennett. But when you look at state Labor today, aside

from the factional infighting, it is unrecognisable from those days. In so many ways it seems to have taken the Kennett approach to governing, with its aggressive privatisation agenda, the failure to take on problem gambling and the scourge of pokies, the chumminess with Crown Casino, letting Transurban set our transport agenda, cutting local council budgets and giving millions upon millions to the grand prix with no questions asked — vested interests running this state.

As I said in my budget reply last year, this government says it wants to achieve great things, but it does not have the vision or the courage or the plan to do so. It says it wants to save TAFE, but it will not abandon the failed market contestability model that is destroying it. It says it wants to become the education state, but it walks away from the principles of Gonski and needs-based funding. It says it wants to support clean energy, but it will not shut down Hazelwood, our dirtiest power plant, or have a permanent ban on coal seam gas. It says it wants to support public transport, but it will not take any action to build airport, Doncaster or Rowville rail or invest in adequate signalling. It says it wants to support equality, but it is still allowing religious organisations and schools to discriminate. It says it wants to improve integrity, but it is still happy to accept donations from developers. It says it wants to protect the environment, but it continues to log our native forests. It says it wants to address problem gambling, but it is still dependant on pokies revenue.

There is no reason why this government cannot deliver. Our financial position is strong. We need a government with vision and courage to act. The Greens have a plan to keep Victoria livable and a plan to keep Prahran livable, and certainly they are plans that Victorians can trust.

Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Local Government) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I am extremely proud to speak on this budget, an unashamedly Labor budget, with a focus on jobs, education, health, public transport and roads. This budget is about getting on with it. It is about delivering for Victorians, and this budget, I am proud to say, delivers for the people of Sydenham. Thousands of families are smiling in my electorate after they read the news last week that the budget had delivered \$12 million to build Taylors Hill Secondary College, a 7–12 college. The Victorian Labor government will secure a new school for one of the biggest growth areas in Victoria — something that has been needed for years and was ignored by those opposite.

I am very proud that the Andrews government is delivering its school breakfast program, a program for

500 disadvantaged primary schools, including two schools in my electorate, to ensure every child gets a good start on a full stomach to do their best at school. This was a significant issue in the dark years of those opposite being in government, when some of my schools really struggled to be able to deliver a breakfast club service, and they now will have the funds to do so going forward.

The 2016–17 state budget invests \$43.7 million into the Doctors in Secondary Schools program, and two of the schools in my electorate will be eligible for this program. I know this program in particular will play a huge role in helping young people in my electorate with their battles with mental health issues.

An extra 7000 patients in the west will now receive care and treatment at Sunshine Hospital, with a \$61.3 million funding boost for infrastructure works at Western Health, at both the Sunshine and Footscray campuses, thanks to the Andrews government budget.

More Victorians are fleeing family violence. Unfortunately these figures have continued to rise in my own electorate. Many women and children have struggled with this issue in their homes, and many have struggled to keep a roof over their heads when they have taken the tough decision to escape harm and try to rebuild their lives. The budget measures that were announced in our most recent budget deliver \$572 million, which will deliver rapid services and be a major boost, particularly in my local community.

One great organisation will receive immediate funding to provide emergency accommodation, and that is Hope Street, which will now have a facility to provide a wraparound service to support over 220 young people that are experiencing homelessness in the Melton, Caroline Springs and Taylors Hill areas. Youth refuge and community outreach services are designed to provide at-risk young people with stable, safe accommodation and youth-specific services, and hopefully they will bring an end to seeing young people sleeping at bus stops in my electorate late at night.

On the local government front, in my portfolio areas I am proud to say that the government has continued its commitment to the \$50 million per annum Growing Suburbs Fund, formerly known as the Interface Growth Fund. This is a much-needed community fund which will deliver facilities and resources to the fastest-growing suburbs in this state. The Growing Suburbs Fund will ensure vital investment is targeted to priority projects in partnership with the 10 interface councils that are coping on a daily basis with increased numbers of families and booming populations. It will

provide for livability and resilience for the outer suburbs, and it will build on the successful first year of this fund, in which we funded 34 projects across Melbourne.

The 10 interface councils include Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra Ranges, and they have all put forward fantastic projects in the previous year. We look forward to those interface growth councils growing and to more projects coming forward from them to support Labor's commitment to supporting local councils and ensuring communities across the state have access to community facilities they need in a timely manner.

Also in the budget is a commitment to the Living Libraries Infrastructure Fund. I am proud to say that \$17.8 million over four years and \$4.4 million ongoing will be delivered by the Living Libraries Infrastructure Fund. This program has been vital, particularly in regional and rural areas, where library services are able to expand through improved capital works and leveraging investment in new buildings. In many cases this has allowed for an extended range of services to be provided by local libraries and also for an extended range of opening hours and days, which has been a major asset to local communities.

The 2015 round of funding from the Living Libraries Infrastructure Fund funded 21 projects across Victoria and leveraged substantial investment in libraries by Victorian councils. The projects ranged from small refurbishments in Mitchell and Gannawarra to large infrastructure programs, such as the construction of the new Narre Warren library. I had the pleasure of attending the new library in Wyndham, named in honour of Julia Gillard, the first female Prime Minister of this country.

The budget also delivers \$4.4 million over four years to support the Premier's Reading Challenge Book Fund, a fantastic initiative which promotes a love of reading in school-aged children from across Victoria, encouraging kids from years 3 to 10 to read 15 books and students in prep to year 2 to read or experience many more books during their school year. The challenge is obviously open to both public and private schools and has had a huge uptake across Victoria. However, access to books is always an issue. This program running in libraries will allow for the additional purchase of thousands of books so that anyone undertaking the challenge will have access to the benefits of such a program and to the books.

In terms of Aboriginal affairs, one of the most significant investments made in this year's budget in the area of Aboriginal affairs centres around a project that has been close to my heart and to the hearts of many in government — and I know that many in opposition have worked on this project — and that is Budj Bim in the south-west of Victoria. It is a fantastic Aboriginal heritage location and landscape which now, thanks to this investment of \$8 million, will provide an opportunity for the local Aboriginal Gunditjmara people to set up programs for tourism, to grow employment and to grow self-determination of the local Aboriginal people in this area. The investment will also open up this fantastic cultural facility for all Victorians to visit.

Budj Bim has been dated at at least 6600 years old, which actually precedes the pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge, but not many Victorians know about this fantastic piece of Australia's history and Aboriginal culture. It is the only place in Australia where Aboriginal stone houses are found. It has an amazing landscape, which has provided a reliable food source to the Aboriginal people as they have been able to farm and develop aquaculture in a way that has never been done in any other part of Australia.

Funding a master plan so that the Gunditjmara traditional owners are able to implement stages 1 and 2 will allow priority projects to go ahead, such as the building of visitor buildings and interpretation sites and the upgrading of camping facilities, lookouts, walkways and bike access. It will also allow for the construction of an aquaculture interpretation centre. All of this will strengthen the bid that Victoria is making to have the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape site registered on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's world heritage listing. This will take a major step forward. The funding will be delivered over four years and will engage the support of professional heritage experts as well as the local Aboriginal community to continue to work on that world heritage listing.

We are also protecting Aboriginal culture and heritage by developing statewide Aboriginal tourist experiences across the board, and I look forward to being able to announce the details of the new Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board that will be coming forward in the weeks and months to come. In addition to this we are delivering \$6.6 million for a Koori business strategy, providing for diversity and entrepreneurship of Victoria's Aboriginal businesses. There is \$4 million for a culturally diverse pilot program to support combating the unfortunate ice epidemic that is occurring, particularly in many of our regional areas.

There is \$3.8 million going towards self-determination for the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Over the next year a range of Aboriginal leadership self-determination forums will be hosted and genuine talks will begin with members of the Aboriginal community about what self-determination means to them. Also included in those funds will be provision for a review of the Aboriginal Lands Act 1970.

In addition to this there is the amazing commitment that has come as a result of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the amazing financial commitment made by the Andrews government to work with Aboriginal communities to overcome family violence, including prevention and early intervention programs that are being funded by a \$25.7 million funding boost to expand those programs and to make sure that dispute resolution and early intervention programs are properly coordinated and maintained out in the suburbs and in rural and regional Victoria.

We are also making a commitment of \$1 million to upgrade the Fitzroy Stars Football and Netball Club to strengthen participation, grow the membership and continue the club's critical community outreach that it does so well. There is also \$1 million to protect cultural heritage with support for registered Aboriginal parties to have heritage officers to facilitate the repatriation of Aboriginal ancestral remains but also to coordinate between the registered Aboriginal parties across regional Victoria. In addition to this there is also an \$875 000 commitment to a new Aboriginal youth mentoring program. Last year I had the pleasure of attending the Korea youth summit here in Melbourne and seeing the talent in the room. I really commend the commitment that is being made today in putting into place a youth mentoring system to work with new and emerging Aboriginal young leaders.

Finally, on the issue of industrial relations, there has been additional funding for the central bargaining unit, which operates in my department and which will promote a cooperative approach to industrial relations and support the Andrews government's commitment to low industrial disputation in this state. I am proud that Victorian public sector employees overwhelmingly endorsed the new agreement two weeks ago, 95 per cent voting yes to the agreement.

For the first time the agreement provides support for those experiencing family violence, provides for gender-neutral parental leave and recognises the cultural obligations for employees of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. These are progressive changes in line with the Andrews government's work

towards a more inclusive and fair Victoria, something that those opposite could learn from.

We know the record of those opposite, and that is to cut over 4400 Victorian public sector jobs, leaving a stack of expired enterprise bargaining agreements as they left government and engaging in adversarial approaches to bargaining. We differ from those opposite; we treat our workers with respect and value our frontline workers, who deliver vital services to Victorians every day.

My department also supports the Andrews government as it stands up for Victoria's most vulnerable workers. This includes taking a stand in support of penalty rates in submissions to the Fair Work Commission and the Productivity Commission. We have also called for fair pay increases to the minimum wage to ensure we do not create an underclass of working poor. This budget supports our strong and positive industrial relations agenda, which will be good for workers and good for Victoria.

This budget also delivers for my constituents and for all Victorians when it comes to jobs. The unemployment rate has dropped from 6.6 per cent under the Liberals to 5.7 per cent under the Andrews government. This means more than 112 000 more Victorians are engaged in meaningful employment under this government. More Victorian jobs have been created in the first 18 months of the Andrews Labor government than the entirety of the preceding four years under those opposite.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. This is a budget that abandons Victoria's battlers. This is a Treasurer and a government that have cruelly and deliberately turned their backs on Victoria's most vulnerable. This budget says to renters, to country Victorians, to pensioners and to other low-income households with electric heaters, 'Labor does not care about you'.

Let us take a moment to expose just how bad this Labor budget is for battlers, starting with renters. They get a double whammy of higher costs. The total cost of new property taxes is \$487 million. The land tax surcharge, a new tax introduced last year by Labor, is to be tripled. This is typical Labor: slide in a smallish tax one year and then ramp it up for evermore. But why stop there? Having convinced himself that a xenophobic tax is free money, the Treasurer has doubled down and increased the stamp duty surcharge from 3 per cent to 7 per cent. But who will end up paying for this? It is the renters of these properties.

The Treasurer lives in his own economic fairyland, where the laws of supply and demand do not apply. Given that he has never worked a day outside the union movement or the Parliament since 1983, he has never faced those fundamental economic forces. Well, here is the mail. If you increase the cost of holding an investment so you reduce the attractiveness of that investment, one of two things will happen: either the investor will seek to recoup the tax through higher rents, or the investor will hold less of that investment class, reducing the demand for it and leaving renters with a smaller supply of properties. Bingo! Less supply does what? It means the remaining investors can jack up the rents.

What about country Victorians? It is more bad news and yet more evidence — as if more was needed — that this government has little interest in country Victorians. In Ripon alone we see further delays in duplicating the Western Highway to Stawell. Under Labor this vital infrastructure project has stalled in never-ending planning instead of the government getting on with it. There is also no money to plan for the bypasses of Beaufort and Ararat.

Still on country roads, the important country roads and bridges program of the previous Liberals in coalition government has not been restored; \$28 million has been ripped out of Ripon's roads and not replaced. Despite the massive Melbourne infrastructure spend, Labor cannot even spend the remaining funds from the sale of Rural Finance in country Victoria. Page 6 of budget paper 4 notes that the former government funded Victoria's share of the Murray Basin rail project from Rural Finance. I am very pleased to see that the federal Turnbull government has matched this investment from the former Liberal-Nationals government in Victoria, yet there are no announcements in the budget for the remaining funds from the sale of Rural Finance. This is country Victoria's money.

In health we see no investment in master planning for the Maryborough hospital, no announcement of a community health centre for Ararat and insufficient spending at the regional Ballarat Health Services. The western half of Ripon, the furthest from Melbourne, is in the region that has lost over 12 000 full-time jobs since Labor came to power. No overblown rhetoric from Labor about job creation can hide the fact that it has abandoned job seekers in western Victoria.

This budget is particularly bad for low-income households reliant on electric heating, including many households in Ripon, where I admit it gets pretty cold in winter. What does this budget do? It triples the electricity tax on the energy source delivering 90 per

cent of Victoria's electricity. What does the out-of-touch Treasurer say about this \$252 million tax grab? He callously disregards the impact on household bills as 'negligible in the extreme'. Every cost-of-living hike hurts low-income households. It particularly hurts those with poorly insulated households using inefficient electric heaters.

The tax take in this budget is world class. The total tax increase is \$3.7 billion. That is up 20.7 per cent since Labor came to office. Stamp duty has gone up by \$1.6 billion in just one year. That is up 20.7 per cent. Every household in Victoria is being slugged under the monumental taxation grab. Insurance taxes are up 6.3 per cent to \$1.2 billion. The fire services levy is up again under Labor. That is 15 per cent in two years. Car registration is up 10.1 per cent to \$140 million. That is a big hit for all Victorian families. Cost-of-living pressures are clearly not top of mind for this government.

The goods and services tax is also up. Victoria is set to rake in an extra \$1 billion thanks to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Under this Treasurer in only two years state taxes have increased from \$17.9 billion to \$21.6 billion — a massive increase of more than 20 per cent. This is a very risky tax strategy for Victoria. When high property prices result in high stamp duties, the responsible path is to bank those windfall gains to repay debt or to restructure the tax mix to further reduce reliance on the swings and roundabouts of stamp duty. Other Australian jurisdictions — Labor governments, I note — are restructuring their tax bases away from stamp duty. South Australia is phasing out stamp duty on business property transfers over three years. The ACT is phasing out all stamp duty, including on residential property, over a somewhat longer period. This Treasurer is not demonstrating the intellectual capacity to reform Victoria's tax base. No doubt the member for Essendon, who I note is Acting Speaker, will continue to audition for the job.

The Labor government is spending all the additional revenue. The tax — the GST — it just spends. Despite hugely increasing state taxes and getting an additional \$1 billion from the GST carve-up, the forward estimates surpluses are the same as those left by the former government. The phony surplus from the Treasurer last year was exposed as an actual deficit and confirmed as such by the Auditor-General. Now Labor gets all this additional money, and it spends it.

There is no fiscal rectitude in this budget and there is no fairness, because on one hand Labor is able to say, 'Oh look, we're fully funding the Melbourne Metro project. We'll go this alone. Yes, we can do this'. But on the

other, the hand is always out to Canberra; it is always out to the ATM that is the federal government. Those opposite need to make up their minds. Which one is it? Are they fiscally responsible, or is Canberra an ATM? I just do not think there is any intellectual depth in this budget. It is just: take the money and run. Take it and take it and spend it and spend it — that is all that Labor does.

This is, to that extent, a true Labor budget; it absolutely is a true Labor budget that is poor for my electorate. We can talk about how poor it is for my electorate. It is particularly poor in relation to jobs. I find it interesting that when I start talking about jobs in western Victoria the abuse levels go up on the other side of the house. Why would that be? That would maybe be because those opposite are embarrassed that, instead of creating jobs in western Victoria, they are losing them — 12 000 jobs have been lost in western Victoria, in the western region — —

An honourable member interjected.

Ms STALEY — Yes, full time — 12 000. It is a terrible disgrace. It is an indictment of this government's job strategy that all it is doing is abandoning the people of western Victoria.

This is a budget that imposes real costs on Victorian families and is particularly harsh on low-income Victorians. Labor Party members should be asking themselves how this is fair. Taxing car owners, renters and electricity users is not fair. Lacking a population policy, which causes continual high amounts of — —

Mr Eren interjected.

Ms STALEY — We are hearing from the brains trust, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, who is at the table! I really think he should be quiet; he puts it on display every time he opens his mouth, and has done so again.

You have to have a population policy that accounts for regional and rural Victoria, and this government does not have any form of population policy. As a result it is piling money into providing services in Melbourne but abandoning country Victoria. Where are our roads being fixed? They are not being fixed. Where are the major hospital upgrades across Ripon? They are not there either. We do have 1 school out of my 40-plus schools getting an upgrade. I am sure the people of Donald appreciate that they get the one school upgrade out of the whole electorate, but nobody else gets one.

I have got schools that are crumbling. I have raised the condition of St Arnaud Secondary College before in

this place. It has termites all the way through its administration building. Bits of the top of the building are falling into the playground, yet we do not see any money for St Arnaud. In fact its portable classroom has been ripped out by this government. Why would the government care about St Arnaud? The government does not care about the country; why would it care about St Arnaud? That is the story of this budget. There is just nothing here. The government is spending record amounts of money everywhere except where it is needed in my electorate, and I do not think the people of Ripon will be looking particularly favourably on a lot of the initiatives in this budget.

I want to return to fairness. Those opposite talk a lot about fairness, yet somehow they can convince themselves that putting up car registration fees dramatically and putting up the fire services levy by 15 per cent, with no doubt more to come when the enterprise bargaining agreement with firefighters is signed, is somehow fair to people on low incomes and fixed incomes. Those opposite need to think about what the word 'fair' means. It certainly does not mean hiking up taxes on those who are least able to afford it.

I notice that at last those on the other side have gone quiet, perhaps because they are reflecting on the fact that they have once again not brought in a fair budget. They hate it when we tell them it is not fair, because of course they are meant to be the custodians of fairness — and nothing could be further from the truth. We have to look at the actual results here, and the actual results are that the government is taxing the most vulnerable — —

Mr Foley interjected.

Ms STALEY — Rego for car owners, people who have electric heating — who has electric heating? They are the people who do not have the capacity to put other forms of heating in. Electric heating is expensive. It is made doubly expensive if you do not have great insulation. Who would those people be? They would be the poorest people in our society, the people on the lowest incomes. But no, the government will go and tax them, and renters. Government members should take a good hard look at themselves as to what is fair, because this budget is not fair. It is not fair to vulnerable Victorians; it is not fair to country Victorians.

Ms WARD (Eltham) — It is with great delight that I get up to talk about this fantastic budget — and what a budget it is for the people of Victoria; it absolutely is. It is a great budget for the people in my seat of Eltham. It is a really good budget. It is a budget that continues our

government's investment in the people, the jobs and the infrastructure of this state.

It is unbelievable to me that the member for Ripon thinks that it is outrageous that Victorians demand their fair share, that we take it up to the federal government and say, 'Nine per cent is not good enough; this state deserves more'. Somehow that is us demanding more money. We are demanding our fair share. This state pulls its weight. This state has got booming growth and employment, and it needs investment from the federal government. It is outrageous that the people opposite want to sell this state down the gurgler and not give this state what it deserves, that they do not take it up to their friends in arms in Canberra and demand more money for this state, because if they did care about this state that is exactly what they would do. They would demand a better deal from their mates in Canberra. They would not just sit on their hands and bleat and bleat and bleat; they would actually do something of substance. Nine per cent is not a substantial investment.

Beyond that, if those opposite got their own way, the money for that ridiculous east–west tunnel would be returned. Do they know what that would do? That would reduce the federal government's investment in this state to 4.5 per cent. That is all it would receive — 4.5 per cent. That is how pathetic the federal government's investment in this state is. It is absolutely pathetic. It is absolutely hopeless that those opposite believe that is a satisfactory amount to invest in this state. This state deserves more. It deserves a federal government that actually cares about this state and wants to put some money into it.

I really do thank the Premier and the Treasurer for investing so substantially in this state, for building things and making things happen, for creating more employment, for creating better schools and better hospitals, for investing in roads and, most importantly for me, for investing in my community and my seat. This is a budget that is very, very good for schools across the state. In fact it was good for a number of my own schools. I have great schools in my electorate. I have a great community. I have people who understand the importance of education, who want their kids to have the best start in life and who understand that education is the way forward for this state and for this country.

It is when we have got smart, skilled kids that we can continue to be competitive in the manufacturing sector, that we can continue to be competitive in the intellectual property sector, that we can continue to be competitive in the overall professional sector. This is

what this state needs, and this is exactly what this state government is investing in.

I have a wonderful primary school, Montmorency South Primary School, in my electorate. The Minister for Education was kind enough to come and visit us a few weeks ago to see the really good things that this school is doing. It is a great school. This school has a Stephanie Alexander garden — and I am glad that this government is continuing the funding towards this program; it is a really good program. These kids are so proud of their kitchen and the things that they create in their kitchen. They are proud of their chooks, they are proud of their gardens and they are proud of their school, despite the fact that they have an administrative wing that has a library and a few classrooms added onto it that need some work. It has a school building with asbestos in it, a school building with some rotting boards and a school building that needs money invested in it. I thank the Minister for Education for coming to my school and listening to the kids who spoke to him and presented him with a bound volume of what they would like to see their school look like.

This government is going to help that school plan its future. This government is putting money in to help this school plan how it can build a better school, how it can make better classrooms that suit the needs of my kids. And these are really good kids. I thank Angela and Leanne at the school for meeting with the minister and me and sitting down and really talking with him about what is needed for my community and the Montmorency South Primary School.

I also want to thank the Minister for Education for investing in Eltham High School. This is a great school. It has taught many people in this place, including the member for Yuroke. It is a great school that has produced fantastic results. It is a great example of what a good state school can be. Again, I thank the minister for investing in this school and helping us to plan a sporting precinct which will reach out to a huge number of local sporting clubs, including the Eltham Junior Football Club, the Eltham Cricket Club, the Eltham Panthers football club, the Eltham Panthers netball club, the Eltham Tennis Club, the Eltham Rugby Club, Eltham Primary School, Eltham East Primary School, and we will also be including the Research Junior Football Club. This is an absolutely fantastic plan, and I thank all of those in the community who have met with me over the last few months as we have planned out exactly how we can create this sporting precinct. I want to thank Stewart McCallum at the Eltham Junior Football Club for coming to me last year with the seed of an idea of how we could create better partnerships across our area.

We have already seen this government invest in a sporting precinct for St Helena Secondary College last year, and what a great plan that is and how well it is panning out. We have soccer clubs and netball clubs that are thrilled to bits, as is the school, with how this project is progressing and the fantastic things that it will deliver for my community. I have a community that cares about sport. It understands the importance of sport; it understands how it builds community and how it teaches kids really important skills.

I also want to thank the minister for investing in Montmorency Secondary College. This is a great school. This is a really good school. This is a school that has a fantastic social conscience and produces kids who have really good results. In fact today I saw the principal, Allan Robinson, who is a great man — and poor Robbo, here he was without his moustache. This is a moustache that this man has worn forever. He is famous for his moustache. Last Friday it came off, because together with his school he raised \$1000 towards the Cancer Council and cancer research. That is a tremendous effort, and it just shows you the importance of community to this school. I am thrilled to bits that we are investing \$12.6 million to rebuild this school, because that is exactly what this school community needs. The school is housed in an older building, a building that does not reflect the modern needs of a modern school. That is exactly what Montmorency Secondary College is producing: it is producing modern kids; it is producing kids who are smart, active, vibrant and engaged, and who deserve to have facilities that reflect their ambitions in life.

I also want to thank the government for its investment at the Greensborough TAFE site and in Melbourne Polytechnic, and the wonderful things that are going to be done with the tech site up there as well. These are great announcements. There are so many exciting things happening in education in my electorate. I thank the government for taking this seriously and for putting in serious money to help build my local kids up and to give them the skills and education that they need. This government is producing the largest ever single investment in Victorian school infrastructure, which is \$924 million. This is just fantastic. There are not enough words to describe how good this is, and it shows the stark contrast between a Labor government and a Liberal-coalition government. It is a stark contrast when we have a federal government that does not want to continue the final two years of Gonski, with real money going out of schools, and when we have a federal government that does not invest.

I do not understand why the coalition does not understand that education is an investment. You are

paying it forward. You are investing in kids who are going to have the jobs of our future, the kids who are going to be taxpayers, the kids who are going to be doctors, nurses, paramedics — the kids who are going to continue to build this state. You want them to be educated, and it is up to us as a government, as lawmakers, to invest in our kids, and that is exactly what this Labor government is doing. We are doing it well. We are getting it done. We are building our schools, and we are building them better than ever before. I urge the coalition to get on board and to get with the program and stop bellyaching, like the member for Ripon has done, around what we are doing with money and asserting that we are crying to the federal government for money. Those opposite should start investing in this state. They should start spending money where it needs to be spent, which is education and which is also, importantly, women.

Women deserve investment. Women deserve support. And this is exactly what has come out of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. I cannot thank this government enough for the seriousness with which it has approached the royal commission and responded to its recommendations. I held a forum at a local school a couple of days ago. I was talking to the students about their policy areas and their areas of consideration — what they felt was important and what they wanted to have investment in. Over the course of our conversation we spoke about a number of things: we spoke about mental health issues, and support for those services; we spoke about kids wanting more activities in the local area; we spoke about public transport; and we also spoke about sexism. These girls — and there were girls and boys in the group I was talking to — spoke about the fact that they are still subjected to catcalls, that they are still walking down the street and having men stick their heads out the window and yell obscene comments at them, that they are still being harassed by boys. It is still happening. These are girls in my community who are 14, 15 or 16 years old.

It is still occurring, and it is this government that has recognised that we need to call this behaviour out and recognised that it needs to stop because when we have gender equality and stop having men harassing women around their physical appearance and sexuality, that is when we start to reduce and remove the horrible tragedy that is family violence. This is how we do it, and it is this government that is stepping up and doing something about this matter. It is happening to our 14 and 15-year-old girls now, and if we do not do something about it, in 15 years time it will happen to our girls who are being born now. This cycle has to stop, and it is fantastic that we are spending \$152 million to begin a housing blitz that will shelter

more family violence victims so they do not have the Hobson's choice of homelessness or returning to an abusive relationship. We need to give women the ability and the chances to escape safely. They need to be kept safe.

We are supporting family violence services such as crisis support and counselling. We are investing \$61.6 million for family violence prevention that is aimed at where Victorians live, play, work and learn. This includes expanding the respectful relationships program and introducing Victoria's first gender equality strategy. This is so important, and again it is only a Labor government that has recognised how important it is. If you have healthy and safe women, you are going to have a healthy and safe economy. You are going to have a happy and safe community and happy and safe kids. This does not happen if you do not have happy and safe women, and this government completely understands that. It understands that gender inequality is at the root of this problem, and only a Labor government will address this problem and do something about it. It is about time, and I am glad that we are getting on with it.

I also want to congratulate the government on the \$19 million it is spending on family violence navigators to guide victims through crisis and recovery, as recommended in the Luke Batty coronial inquest. I am also glad about the \$15.4 million for an independent monitor to hold government to account as the system is overhauled. We are not just barging in here; we actually want to be monitored. We want to know that we are doing the right thing, and we want people to see that. We are putting money where our mouth is. We are investing, and again I do not understand how the member for Ripon thinks that investing in communities, investing in people and making people healthier, smarter and better is a bad investment — I really do not — but it just goes to show you the short-sightedness of the coalition and how it cannot plan for the future and cannot see the future beyond its own nose because it cannot plan outside the 24-hour news cycle.

This is why today opposition members have devoted their time not to talking about the budget in question time, not to talking about the money we are investing in this community, but rather going down the path of a *Herald Sun* argument with the United Firefighters Union. That is what they are focused on. They are focused on an issue that is not about the economy or how this state is being governed. They have decided to participate in an argument that the *Herald Sun* is having. How much does this help the Victorian community? Let us talk about the things that matter to

people's everyday lives — how they are getting their kids to school and how their kids are learning at school.

The government is working on roads and investing in transport, and I have not even hit on the fantastic \$141.2 million investment in the Hurstbridge rail line, which is absolutely wonderful. I cannot tell you how many streamers and sparklers there are and how many parties are being held in my electorate at the moment because someone is finally doing something about the Hurstbridge line. I have been banging on about this line for most of my life, and I am so glad to have a minister who has listened to me and said, 'Vicky, we are going to do something about it' — and we are. We are investing in duplicating that line, and we are fixing the line between Greensborough and Eltham. Thank God it is finally happening.

Mr Edbrooke — Hallelujah!

Ms WARD — Hallelujah indeed! I could not be more pleased. And Bolton Street has got its money. We have \$10.3 million invested in Bolton street. I thank the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I thank the Andrews government for listening to my community, putting money where it matters, investing in my community and giving them the things that they need. We are indeed getting it done.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — It is a pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. First I would like to make a few comments in relation to my electorate and some specific issues within it. From an East Gippsland perspective the budget was quite disappointing, and I do not say that just as a matter of trying to be political about it. There were some very key projects around which there was a higher level of anticipation and expectation in the electorate that was not delivered on.

The two big-ticket items that I am referring to there are the Stratford rail bridge over the Avon River and the completion of the Bairnsdale Secondary College, and they do require further discussion. As we have just heard from the member for Eltham, there was a new school delivered to Eltham, and that is obviously a terrific result for that community. I have a brother in Eltham who would be very pleased to hear about the great infrastructure that is being provided to that particular suburb, but I can say that it is in stark contrast to the community of Bairnsdale.

To give members a bit of history in relation to the Bairnsdale Secondary College, both Labor and the coalition committed to building this school in the lead-up to the 2010 election. It was to be done in two

stages, and it had very strong bipartisan support. Stage 1 was subsequently delivered in the coalition's term in government — a magnificent facility there for the kids — but the school remains only half built. Then in the lead-up to the 2014 election, four years later, the enormous commitment by the Labor Party to complete this school that existed prior to 2010 disappeared off the radar.

The coalition committed to the many millions of dollars to complete the school, and what was a high priority for the party now in government prior to 2010 attracted no attention whatsoever — no visits, no commentary. That might have had something to do with the Labor candidate, who did not live in the electorate. The first time she entered the electorate was two days before the election, and then she disappeared just as quickly as she had arrived. People from the Bairnsdale Secondary College community could not even get a hearing with the candidate, let alone a hearing with the shadow minister. So it was very disappointing that that school completely dropped off the radar.

Subsequent to that and over 12 months ago the now Minister for Education received invitations from myself — which I have repeated in this house several times — and the school council to come to Bairnsdale and meet with the school community. Prior to Christmas one of his staff members provided a comment from the minister's office to TRFM, our commercial radio station, and the comment from the minister's office was that the minister would be visiting Bairnsdale Secondary College in early 2016. We have just ticked over into May, the fifth month, and not only has he not visited but the school has had absolutely no contact with the minister whatsoever.

I repeat in this house for the umpteenth time that the school community simply wants to talk to the Minister for Education. Twelve months ago the school sent an invite and it has been repeated here a number of times, so for the minister to be in here trumpeting that this is the education state is ridiculous because all this school wants, as the biggest secondary college in the region, is to have a chat — either for him to come down or for him to receive a delegation from the school. I do not think it is acceptable that 12 months later the school has not even received a response.

The other item I mentioned was the Stratford rail bridge, and that is an interesting one. In October 2014 members of the then coalition government representing Gippsland had a meeting with V/Line in Gippsland. It was about six weeks out from the election, and at that briefing we were advised that the costing and planning for the new replacement bridge over the Avon River at

Stratford was almost complete. We were told of a plan whereby the bridge would be largely constructed off site so that it could be put in place with minimal disruption to the rail line, but we were told by V/Line that some i's had to be dotted and some t's had to be crossed before that would be finalised.

So in the budget six months later, I understand that a couple of those i's might have needed to be dotted and t's crossed still, but here we are, 18 months later, into the second budget, and it is very disappointing that there is just no mention of replacing this bridge. As far as rail bridges go in Victoria, I would say that this would be the one that is absolutely most in need. Of interest is that last year the government, with the support and the attendance of an upper house member for Eastern Victoria Region, Ms Shing, conducted a lot of Public Transport Victoria regional network development planning meetings. There were consultations right across Gippsland, and there were a couple held in my electorate.

The report on that was put out in November, and in the summaries of those public consultation meetings, which I have just been going over again on my iPad, a number of improvements to the Gippsland line were suggested. Surprise, surprise, one of the most common themes was the replacement of the Avon River bridge at Stratford. But there were also things like new services into the region, the installation of myki ticketing systems at Bairnsdale and Sale train stations — all these wonderful little suggestions that were harvested from our communities by the government in a report released in November.

Five months later the budget comes out and there is nothing in there that acts on any of those public consultation meetings or the recommendations that came out of them, which is extremely disappointing. So in relation to the Stratford rail bridge, I can only hope that when some projects start getting announced out of the \$700 million regional transport fund — we are anticipating it will be \$700 million from the sale of the lease of the port of Melbourne — hopefully outside of the budget process later this year the Stratford rail bridge is indeed one of the first cabs off the rank.

To provide a little bit of balance, there were some pieces of good news in the budget. One issue that I have advocated on very heavily, which I am sure the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water is sick of me bringing up, is the Gippsland Lakes Environment Fund. Some \$10 million was to be provided over four years. Why that could not have been provided in the first year, in last year's budget, I will never know. It created an enormous amount of

uncertainty in our region, particularly for all those people who are working in those programs within our region. It is obviously a good thing that that certainty has been now provided, but we did not need that level of uncertainty in the first place.

We have also had a number of overtaking lanes that have recently been constructed — coalition funded — between Nowa Nowa and Orbost on Princes Highway east. Now that that program is going to be continued we will have further overtaking lanes, and that will obviously be a huge benefit to driver safety within the region. There is one fait accompli out of the budget that I must mention — that is, the money for the Macalister irrigation district next stage. That is very important for our region, particularly now that milk producers associated with Murray Goulburn have had some bad news in relatively recent times with the milk price. However, that upgrade will go ahead. In relation to that funding, the minister put the overarching rider in place that it was dependent on the sale of the port lease. We do not think it should have been attached to that. We think this upgrade deserved funding in its own right, but it was attached to the port lease. Now that that measure has gone ahead it was pleasing to see that in the budget, which will be good news for the Stratford-Hayfield-Maffra communities of my electorate.

We had an interesting situation when a new police station at Mallacoota was announced because nobody seemed to know it was coming. In fact it came as somewhat of a surprise to police command in East Gippsland, given that it is commonly recognised that the police station in greatest need of upgrade in my electorate is Orbost. There were a few members of the community and the police force locally who were scratching their heads as to why Mallacoota was getting a new police station and why Bairnsdale, which is our newest police station, was having a major refurbishment while Orbost was overlooked. Nevertheless it is important for the people of Mallacoota; it is terrific news for them.

I would like to make a few comments from a portfolio perspective. It is disappointing that there has been minimal investment in public drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation beds. I am pleased that the Minister for Mental Health is at the table. I am sure he would know that at present in Victoria we have 208 public drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation beds compared to over 800 in New South Wales, and many agencies were expecting a considerable investment in this area. From reading some of the budget submissions that came in from organisations like the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, I know that they had it

as quite a high priority that they wanted more residential rehabilitation beds. We do have unacceptable waiting lists, and unfortunately they were not there.

In the agencies I have been visiting — and I am sure they are no different to the agencies that the minister has been visiting — we have a waiting list for people who go into short-term detox units because when they come out of there they require residential rehabilitation facilities to go into. I have heard of some extremely unfortunate circumstances where between receiving their detox treatment and waiting for a public residential rehabilitation bed — because they cannot afford private — some people have passed away, which is an absolute tragedy. I am certainly not trying to make any political points out of this. I am just raising the fact that there is a recognised need for more public residential rehabilitation beds in this state.

In the aged-care sector the budget for seniors programs and participation has been reduced, and there is no increase in hours of respite for aged care in this year's budget. This is on top of costs imposed on our aged citizens, who will be facing price rises in certain other areas. We have got a new electricity tax that will drive up power bills for senior citizens and indeed the entire community that other members before me have mentioned. We have increases to the fire services levy. That will have an impact on all of our residents, including our aged-care residents. For those that are still driving we have also had registration increases which were touched on by the member for Ripon in her speech. One of the aged-care agencies sent me an email this week when I was seeking a bit of budget feedback. The quote was 'There is nothing really in it for us at all, but some of the taxes impact on our senior citizens'. That is concerning.

In the disability area we have had a reduction in the hours of community-based respite, and I note there is a new listing in the budget for contributions to the national disability insurance scheme. I would be hoping that we would soon have some further detailed commentary around the full commitment of \$2.5 billion that is required by 2019. I would hope that the minister would be able to, I guess, give the wider Victorian community some peace of mind and comfort about the fact that that is locked in, particularly in the current economic climate when we have a budget surplus and could commit to the full \$2.5 billion.

There was no increase in funding in the budget for disability advocacy clients. I have met in recent months with organisations like the Gippsland Carers Association, which was receiving a level of support

from the previous government, but that was halted under this government. It was obviously hoping to have that funding reinstated, but that has not come to fruition.

In the area of housing, we have a forecast increase of 222 social housing dwellings. I note that this is inclusive of the 130 new dwellings for family violence victims, and there is clearly a great need for that accommodation in our community. While it is critically important that we address that issue — there is no doubt about that — this leaves less than 100 new dwellings to assist in further reducing the public housing waiting list below its current figure of a little over 32 000. I would also welcome, in due time, some information from the minister about where that new public housing will be located, hoping there would be a percentage in rural and regional Victoria.

Overall the budget does not provide what we had been hoping for. The Bairnsdale Secondary College and the Stratford rail bridge are two items in my electorate that need improvement. As I said, I hope the rail bridge can be funded out of the \$700 million regional transport fund and that it is delivered sooner rather than later. It is possibly the highest priority, along with the Bairnsdale Secondary College, in my electorate. With respect to the Bairnsdale Secondary College, I reiterate that we just want the minister — and I notice that the member for Scoresby, Mr Wells, a former Bairnsdale Secondary College student, has entered the chamber — to come down and fund the new school.

Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) — I am very pleased indeed to be speaking in support of the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I would firstly like to congratulate the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and of course the Premier, all of my ministerial colleagues and indeed all government members for such a great budget this year. Government members went out there and listened to the community, and the community provided input into what they wanted from a government — a government that cares. Clearly that was fed back through the ministers, and accordingly the government has made determinations which by and large most of the community appreciate. We are proof that as a government you can be a fiscally and financially responsible government with a healthy surplus in the bank while also making sure you do not make vicious cutbacks that hurt the community.

We are very proud on this side of the house to be standing here today and, if you can call it that, boasting about such a great budget, because you do have to on occasions make it very clear that governments can actually perform their duties without hurting

communities. That is exactly what we have done. We have listened to the community, and we are investing heavily in those things that the community expects us as a government to invest in. Of course we know the alternative in the sense that the previous government did the exact opposite. What it did was cut back on critically important areas such as education and TAFE. The health system, of course, was in crisis as well. This budget reflects the Andrews Labor government's commitment to be the education state, whilst also delivering in the very important areas of sport, tourism and major events, and veterans.

I know that we have said this on a number of occasions, but it is about getting things done. With budgets you can talk about stuff and you sometimes talk at length about what you want to do and all that sort of stuff, but eventually governments sometimes do not do anything; they talk about it. This budget is about making sure we get things done. As the Minister for Sport I am extremely proud that we are the sporting capital of the world and the world's most livable city five times over. We are the most multicultural city in the world, and our population is accordingly growing at a faster rate than anywhere in the nation. Why would you not want to live in this state? We have a great government looking after its people.

Along with that comes a lot of pressure on a government. I would like to point out some of the investments that continue to be made in my electorate, and then I will get to my portfolios accordingly. I am proud to say that this is my 10th budget, having been a member for 14 years. We were out of government for four years, and we are trying to recover some of the losses we made during the time we were in opposition. As I said, this is my 10th budget, and again I can proudly say that record investments are being made in Geelong. For the first four years the electorate of Lara and the wider community of Geelong were part of record investments made by the then Bracks and Brumby governments. The four years under the Baillieu and Napthine governments were extremely bleak mainly for Geelong, where there were a lot of job losses. Investment in education, particularly TAFE, was dwindling, and there was some uncertainty going forward. Clearly Geelong had had enough after one term of that government.

However, I am extremely proud to be standing here as a member of the Andrews Labor government and happy to announce that the investments we have made in the Geelong region for the second year in a row have been tremendous. There is \$4.2 million in funding for North Geelong Secondary College, and might I say that we have already announced that we will provide an

additional \$6 million to Northern Bay College, which is a cluster of five schools in the northern suburbs of Geelong. They are going ahead nicely in terms of their development, and so it is timely that we are investing in other parts of Geelong where it is vitally needed.

As I said, there is \$4.2 million in funding for North Geelong Secondary College. This is a school which has had a fantastic revitalisation under its principal, Nick Adamou. These funds will go towards an upgrade and school modernisation. Nelson Park specialist school is also getting funding for a school upgrade and modernisation. I know that the principal, Libby Gatgens, was very excited when I spoke to her about the \$2.5 million her school will be receiving from this budget, and I cannot wait to see the great work she will be able to do with this funding.

The Lara train station will be equipped with 100 new car parks to cater for the growth of our region — and of course public transport is a big issue for Geelong. This budget delivers \$17.6 million, which will see a massive investment in public transport and roads. More V/Line rolling stock has been ordered to support further Geelong and Warrnambool services and to address overcrowding issues. There is also \$280 million to fund 27 new VLocity carriages, and an investment of \$131 million will increase passenger rail services to Ballarat, Traralgon, Geelong, Shepparton, Bendigo and Warrnambool. This will mean more than 50 additional services for Geelong each week. This budget also provides \$516.7 million for the Ballarat rail corridor improvement, which will have flow-on effects for Geelong and its commuters.

There will be \$10 million for the Geelong tech school, which is a fantastic announcement for the whole of our region. This school will be based at The Gordon city campus, and it is expected to open in mid-2018. It will have an industry focus on professional, scientific and technical subjects, health care and social assistance, as well as construction, and it will have links to advanced manufacturing, robotics, agriscience and business. The school will also create an important partnership between the industry, TAFE and Deakin University.

Geelong Performing Arts Centre is a fantastic institution. It had received \$30 million for refurbishment, and it sought more money for further improvements. We are very proud that Geelong Performing Arts Centre has received \$7 million in this budget to assist with its redevelopment.

There is \$4 million in the budget for a planning study that will be undertaken to determine the preferred alignment for an extension of the Geelong Ring Road

to the Bellarine Peninsula. There has also been a \$5.5 million funding boost to revitalise Geelong. This will deliver the early stages of the *Central Geelong Action Plan*, which will include outdoor spaces and streetscapes to unlock investment and drive economic activity in the Geelong central business district. The \$325 million investment in jobs initiatives for infrastructure and services includes \$5.5 million for the Geelong planning authority. This will be crucial in providing planning for key projects to revitalise the centre of Geelong, such as the conference centre. The government will prioritise support for retrenched automotive workers. This budget invests \$596 million in policing, including additional police, equipment, technology and other services across the whole state so that police get the resources they need to keep us safe.

I could go on and on about some of the government's broader initiatives, but in the short time that I have left there is a lot to talk about in relation to my portfolios. There is so much investment going on. Melbourne is the sporting capital of the world. Since coming to government we have invested over \$145 million in grassroots sporting infrastructure. We have created certainty about funding streams. We are ensuring that as Melbourne is the sporting capital of Australia and the world and as we have the highest participation rates in sport, Victorians have access to the facilities that they deserve.

We are investing \$100 million in grassroots sporting clubs through the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, and we invested \$9.6 million in 64 inner city netball courts in our last budget. We are providing accessible, high-quality community sport and recreation activities, which are a vital part of building healthy and active communities for all Victorians. We are listening to Victorians, who are screaming out for indoor stadiums. We are the first government to deliver a dedicated \$22 million Better Indoor Stadiums Fund. When the growth in ball sports is taken into account, it can be recognised that this fund was needed.

Regional Victoria is home to the state's top football and netball clubs, and we are continuing important investment in our country football netball program, with an \$8 million investment over the next four years. This is a true partnership between the government, netball and AFL, so I am pleased to advise that \$1 million will be contributed to this fund by both of those codes over the next four years.

We are investing in three sport infrastructure commitments: the Moorabbin Reserve redevelopment, which is a very important development; the Elsternwick Park redevelopment; and the construction of the new

pavilion at the Carrum Downs Recreation Reserve. The budget also includes a boost of \$2 million to the Significant Sporting Events program, which secures more than 70 events for Melbourne and regional Victoria each year. Simonds Stadium is regional Victoria's best venue — —

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I refer to page 77 of *Rulings from the Chair*, which states:

Prohibition on reading speeches and exceptions.

It is a well-established practice that members do not read their speeches. The purpose of this rule is to maintain the cut and thrust of debate — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Edwards) — Order! Could the member for Burwood get to his point of order.

Mr Watt — The member is clearly reading his speech. I would ask you to get him to not read his speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Edwards) — Order! There is no point of order. The minister, to continue.

Mr EREN — That is what you get from an opposition that does not like the great budget that we have announced. I will continue.

Simonds Stadium is the best regional stadium. The opposition did not invest any money during its term in government into making that stadium the best in the nation, if not the world, in terms of regional Victoria. The opposition did not support Labor's \$75 million proposal prior to the last election. We on this side of the house know how important this infrastructure spend is.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr EREN — This is what I like about the opposition. When they are hurt by a great budget like the one that has been provided by the government, opposition members carp and carry on like they are doing at the moment. They yap, yap, yap, yap, yap, because they could not do anything during the time they were in government.

When I get to tourism and major events, what a great story I have to tell. The previous government was asleep at the wheel. It did not care about tourism at all. It let tourism dwindle. This is the important point about this government. We acknowledge that this industry is worth a lot to our economy. That is exactly what we are doing through the strategic investments we are making

to ensure that this industry will rise from a net worth of \$21 billion to \$30 billion over the next few years. We are investing \$101 million in regional tourism infrastructure. We have already announced that \$48 million of that will go to one of the jewels in our crown: the Phillip Island Penguin Parade, a nature park that attracts 2500 people every day and that is worth so much to our economy. We have also announced \$20 million for regional events to ensure Victorians and visitors alike have even more reason to spend their money beyond Melbourne.

This is the issue. Those opposite called it the toenails of Victoria. That is what the Kennett government called regional Victoria, unlike this government, which appreciates and values regional Victoria. We have also boosted our Business Events Fund, which will receive an additional \$9 million, bringing this fund up to its highest ever level and meaning Melbourne will continue to attract the biggest, highest yielding conferences and exhibitions.

The Andrews Labor government is investing \$200 million in the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre to make sure that it has the best facilities in which to have these business events. When you consider all the other contributions that we are making — \$38 million for marketing activities to show the world we have the best of everything, \$30 million for the international education sector and \$152 million for creative industries — it is clear they will also boost our visitor economy.

This budget also delivers \$8 million for an upgrade to Budj Bim, one of the state's unique Aboriginal heritage sites. Of course when I and the government consider all of these things, we know that this industry is important to our state to grow the jobs that the previous government had lost.

Can I get to veterans in the short time I have left. We are very proud on this side of the house to have made so many investments and had so many activities, particularly in the year of the centenary last year which continues on for the next four years. We are investing \$5 million to commemorate and educate the public about the Anzac centenary, and the Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize (SOAP) has supported over 100 students to undertake a study tour of a lifetime. This year we are expanding the SOAP program from 12 to 22 students for overseas study tours and from 16 to 20 students for the Canberra tour.

I have 30 seconds left, and there is so much more to say. We are providing the 5000 Poppies program, which was displayed on the steps of Parliament House

this year, with \$200 000 to head to the Chelsea Flower Show. We are investing \$1 million to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Long Tan and the Vietnam War, including the graveside vigils and VetRide, which have already taken place. We were pleased to announce last week a \$1 million Veterans Heritage and History strategy to secure the long-term heritage of our ex-service community. This is a great budget, and I commend it to the house.

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — I join the debate on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I want to start off by asking: can anyone remember any time when a Labor government left the finances in a better state than when it found them when it won an election?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WELLS — 2010? Come in, Spinner. That is exactly what I wanted you to say. Let me say, this is what we had to confront when we came to power in 2010, left to us by those economic financial wizards from the Labor Party! The first thing we found was that the spending on myki was completely out of control, and there were no solutions. The Melbourne fruit and vegetable market was an absolute disaster, and what Labor was doing was forcing all the fruit and vegetable growers out to a place for which it had not even signed contracts. The desalination plant was costing, in fixed costs, \$1.8 million a day. But undoubtedly the classic of all classics was the regional rail project.

This project was something that Labor was very proud of. Running into government, it had a plan to connect Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong to the metropolitan system. The idea and the concept was very good, and that is that a train would go all the way from Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong straight into Spencer Street. The concept was great, but what sort of moronic department or government or cabinet or minister would put together such a great big infrastructure project and forget two vital points — one, no signals; two, no trains? If you are going to have a lot more services, you would think that you would put on more trains and certainly have a signal program. So the fantastic so-called regional rail project and infrastructure event was \$500 million short because it did not have any signals attached to it.

I know that the member for Murray Plains, the Leader of The Nationals, was also absolutely frustrated when he found out on coming to government just how hopeless the previous Labor government was. The telling point was that revenues were growing on average at 6.9 per cent but expenses were growing at 7.2 per cent. Every day, every month and every year

that was going past, Labor was falling further and further behind, trying to keep pace with a falling revenue. Clearly it was not altering the expenses to make the budget balance, so what happened? Kevin Rudd came with the stimulus packages. Under the Rudd and Gillard governments a whole heap of stimulus payments were made to Victoria for schools and other worthwhile projects, but the problem was that the Victorian Labor government had to rely on those stimulus payments to keep the budget in surplus. If it had not been for those payments, then the budget would have been in deficit. Without those payments, the budget was in technical deficit.

The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), whose independence the Labor government recognises when it comes to financial advice, as do we, said that had the incoming coalition government not taken steps the deficit would have been \$10 billion at the end of the Labor forward estimates in 2010 — a \$10 billion deficit that the previous Labor government got so terribly wrong. On top of that, we had the \$6 billion GST writedown and the \$1.2 billion writedown in stamp duty over a four-year period. So never, ever has there been a time when a Labor government has left the finances in better shape than when it found them.

We have had people from the other side call out, ‘2010’. That is just blatantly wrong. In 1999 Alan Stockdale, the then Treasurer, left a surplus of \$1.8 billion and an efficient economy, yet Labor was still able to spend it. The Labor government was spending like a drunken sailor — spending, spending, spending — and not increasing productivity. As a result of that Victoria came across tough times. Labor is never, ever able to get its finances right, and it never leaves the budget in a better position than it found it.

If we look at the pre-election budget update for 2014, which is a document that both sides of Parliament rely on in regard to the true state of the finances, we can see that it showed a \$9 billion surplus over the forward estimates under the previous coalition government. It is ironic that despite record amounts of taxes coming in, the surplus under the current budget is exactly the same as the surplus Labor inherited from the previous government. Where it says it is prudent and everything else, if you were to stack up the increase in taxes, then there has been no improvement whatsoever. What the Treasurer was saying in regard to prudent management is obviously wrong.

On jobs growth, under the coalition government, between December 2010 and 2014, 130 000 jobs were created, and that left all the other states for dead. These are not our numbers; these are numbers that were given

to the community by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the final year of the coalition government there was growth of almost 80 000 jobs. Labor came into office promising the world when it came to jobs growth, and despite the Premier saying Labor would deliver on every single election commitment, this has failed and there is no question that those opposite will say, 'We got this wrong. The jobs that we promised still will not be delivered'.

Who remembers this? All of us remember that on the night before the election Peter Mitchell from Channel 7 said:

... all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are, do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

And this is what the Premier said:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

Of course that was blatantly wrong. In this budget Labor has hiked up the fire services property levy by 7.2 per cent; introduced a brand-new tax, the land tax surcharge for absentee owners, of 0.5 per cent; and introduced a stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers of 3 per cent. So is the government now saying, 'Hang on a minute, they are not taxes. They are not new taxes'? This represents a state tax increase of 20.7 per cent since the election. So in just two years taxes have increased from \$17.9 billion to \$21.6 billion. This is yet another broken promise.

Of course the issue that Labor is going to be faced with is the increase in public sector wages. If you look at the \$2.8 billion increase in public sector wages, our side has no issue with regard to the frontline services; it is the back office we have concerns about.

Ms Thomas — You hate public services, don't you?

Mr WELLS — No, you are not listening, I just said that we have great admiration for the frontline services of the public service. There is no question at all, and we have been very consistent on that, but when it comes to the back office, the government has a \$2.8 billion increase. The public service under the previous Labor government was increasing by 5 per cent on average. When we had population growth increasing by about 1.6 per cent to 2 per cent, Labor had the back office of the public service increasing by 5 per cent.

One of the frustrations with this government is Labor's waste and mismanagement. I come back to the east–west tunnel, which is still the biggest issue in the outer east and in the electorate of Rowville by a million miles. We want the east–west tunnel built. We all

remember that in the run-up to the 2014 election we were categorically told by the opposition leader, now Premier, that there would not be one cent of compensation paid. Well, he was right — it was not one cent. In the Victorian Auditor-General's Office media release of 9 December 2015 the Acting Auditor-General, Dr Peter Frost, announced that the tunnel:

... was terminated in June 2015 with more than \$1.1 billion paid, or expected to be paid, by the state for little tangible benefit.

If you talk to someone from overseas and explain to them that we spent \$1.1 billion not to build a tunnel, they look at you and think that something is wrong; something is wrong if you spend \$1.1 billion not to build a tunnel. This is a project that sooner or later will have to be built, because you cannot have a situation where a capital city the size of Melbourne does not have a ring-road. The east–west tunnel would connect the Eastern Freeway with the Tullamarine Freeway so that if there were an issue on the Monash, you would be able to take the alternative; you would be able to get onto the Eastern Freeway, get into the east–west tunnel and do business. It is not just motorists getting to work; it is all those hardworking tradespeople and people in business who need the east–west tunnel built.

I will just touch briefly on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the goings-on with that organisation. After question time I am just bemused with the way the Labor government is treating volunteers. To have a situation where you are going to give the United Firefighters Union (UFU) veto powers over the CFA board and the chief fire officer is blatantly wrong. I tell you what, when it comes to the next major bushfire — and Victoria is renowned for them, and we need that surge capacity — it will be interesting to know how many CFA volunteers are still in, because the frustration among CFA volunteers is boiling over. My whole electorate of Rowville is in a CFA area, and we rely on them 24 hours a day.

We have great respect for the CFA volunteers, but the Premier is reported to be intervening in this to take the side of Peter Marshall and the UFU and to say that it is a legitimate right as part of the enterprise bargaining agreement to be able to have veto power. It is interesting that the previous coalition government fought it every step of the way. When it came to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade we fought every single step of the way to get rid of that veto power because we just simply did not believe that the union should have veto over the chief fire officer. It is wrong now, and it will be wrong in the future.

With regard to my Rowville electorate, we ended up from this budget getting absolutely nothing. We promised, in the run-up to the last election, an upgrade to the Scoresby CFA and to the intersection at Henderson Road and Ferntree Gully Road. We promised \$10 million for the Rowville Secondary College, a huge secondary college with around 1600 students. It is a great school that needs upgraded facilities. We made a promise to Rowville Primary School, and we promised Scoresby Secondary College an upgrade of \$5 million. We made promises in relation to Park Ridge Primary School, Karoo Primary School, Lysterfield footy club, Scoresby footy club and the duplication of Napoleon Road. We wanted Ferntree Gully Road upgraded, and obviously for Dorset Road we wanted the duplication extended. There are major projects in our area, but not one of them attracted one cent from this budget. I hope that the Labor government does not mind if we say that this budget was a failure for people in the Rowville electorate.

Just recapping: it is beyond belief the way the UFU is pushing around the government and the CFA. It is no wonder that public sector wages have blown out so much, and there will be a lot more to come with regard to increased wages if the UFU gets its way with the CFA, especially when you have to have seven career firefighters on the fireground before operations can start. It is just absolutely ludicrous. No matter how small the fire may be, having seven on that fireground simply does not make sense. To have a situation where a career firefighter cannot report to a volunteer firefighter with regard to control rooms suggests someone does not understand how the fire system works in this state. With those words I cannot say that I wish the bill a safe and speedy passage. I think it is an incredible disappointment, especially to the people in the electorate of Rowville.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — This is a big-picture budget that reimagines the world's most livable city, delivers new jobs, growth and productivity, improves health and education, and creates opportunity and innovation across Victoria. It combines the values of a fair go with the discipline of a AAA rating — a contemporary Labor budget combining heart and head. The budget also shows families where they fit into the big picture. An example is how patients are delighted that almost \$20 million will be invested to build the Broadmeadows surgery unit, which is expected to deliver 2500 surgeries per year for cancer patients as well as pain-relieving orthopaedic and general surgery. This is an example of why Labor matters.

The member for Rowville went to the issue of memory. Let us not be selective about this. Let us actually look at

what happened in the past, because a hospital should have been built in Broadmeadows decades ago — and what happened? We ended up with a *Yes, Minister* hospital in Essendon. Why was that? Because the Liberal government of the day was trying to sandbag a marginal seat. It was called the *Yes, Minister* hospital because when it opened there were no patients and there were plastic wrappers still on the equipment. This was symbolic of the way that the then government and, generations later, subsequent coalition governments have tried to run the state — to sandbag self-interest rather than governing in the public interest.

It reminds me of what happened with the recent media coverage where we had the former federal member for Indi, Sophie Mirabella, saying straight out — a direct threat to Victorians — that the electorate did not receive \$10 million funding from the federal coalition government because it did not vote for the coalition. That is a punitive brand of politics; it is driven by fear. It does not show hope or vision or the commitment to deliver the services that communities need.

I will put it in big-picture terms for members. Over the passage of time what has happened to the people that I represent is that the combination of a coalition government at the state level for one term only and a federal coalition has denied them access to up to \$1 billion. Forget \$10 million! This is what has occurred. We had the reverse Robin Hood strategy from the coalition when it was in power, when the current opposition leader, then Minister for Planning, worked on the project for the community activity centre in Broadmeadows for two years in a bipartisan way. Then we read the coalition's budget when it came out, and there was an asterisk: 'No longer proceeding'. What had happened? The coalition had taken the money out to sandbag the seat of Frankston, and it lost that.

We are still currently trying to get a deal with the federal government. I have reached out beyond partisanship to Malcolm Turnbull to say, 'Here is a chance to actually have an enterprise zone based in Broadmeadows and Melbourne's north'. How can we look at providing incentives for new businesses to come in? We are in this deindustrialised phase, and we need to create new jobs and new industries in this region. Here is a way that we can use, in a coordinated, strategic way, all of the different levers that the three various tiers of government possess. What would we be able to do? We would be able to have incentives — tax concessions — for businesses to come in. We would look at how we could get high-speed broadband in and other innovation propositions for the people of Broadmeadows. They have underwritten prosperity for

generations with their muscle, their sweat, their manufacturing nous and their ability to actually deliver, yet they are being denied access to \$800 million in the automotive transformation scheme where it is needed most.

Whether you look at this from a jobs and growth perspective or a national security proposition, we now have consensus that these are the most important issues for Australia as a nation. When former Prime Minister Tony Abbott went to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and it put out the maps which showed where the terrorist recruitment hotspot was, it was Campbellfield. What is in Campbellfield? Ford. What closes in six months? Ford. Which area is hardest hit? Broadmeadows.

I am looking forward to the federal government in its budget saying what its commitment is, because it goes to the proposition about innovation. Broadmeadows is a community that has been highly innovative. As I have always said, I want Broadmeadows to be remembered for the rise of the CSL, not the demise of Ford. Why is that? Because CSL has grown to be one of our best companies ever. It produces life-saving blood products, and it exports them globally. Even though Ford is going to close its manufacturing, we have the proposition that it is going to maintain its innovation hub. Why? Because the best innovation does not come from selling the most cars globally from Detroit or anywhere else; it comes from Broadmeadows. There it is — major corporates. We have it in small and medium-sized businesses as well, and we had it in the social innovation that Labor provided in the past. We have to change the system. We cannot continue to just let political parties play within a grid that suits their perception of political advantage at the expense of the public and at the expense of communities.

As I stand to speak on this budget, Labor is investing in landmark projects for Broadmeadows. The budget is all about delivering jobs and growth and trying to unlock hundreds of millions of dollars of value for the community. Broadmeadows has ended up with almost \$30 million being invested by state and local governments in a collaborative proposition, including \$20.2 million to revitalise the Broadmeadows town hall and featuring a business incubator and professional spaces to attract new businesses and to adapt it for conventions, conferences, trade shows in the future and other initiatives for economic and cultural development. The project is expected to deliver 200 jobs on site, add jobs for the community and capture a whole value potential around this community. There is also the redevelopment of the Broadmeadows railway station, which will open that up, and the whole proposition

about affordable housing. This is what we are looking to do. This is the big picture frame of reference that the Victorian government has actually said it is going to deliver.

It goes to having to try to continually win over coalition governments so that they can see that they need to be part of this collaborative approach. The collaboration and cooperation has been critical to the developments. The enterprise zone is now the issue being looked at. When the Treasurer referred to affordable housing being the next big issue and unfinished business of this budget, I say that here is a chance to actually look at what can be done with all of the old housing commission estates in Broadmeadows that were there when the suburb was set up. Let us just call it for what it was set up for: the factory fodder for the industries that have now gone.

Those big factory jobs have gone, so we have to use our innovation, but we have to also be collaborative in the way that we do it. I am calling again in this contribution for the Turnbull government to not simply pocket that \$800 million, as Tony Abbott did from the automotive transformation scheme. Remember that at the time the then minister for industry said it was needed for higher priorities. There are no higher priorities than jobs, growth and national security. We have consensus on that. Let us not see that money just pocketed or again allocated selectively to try to buy marginal seats or sandbag seats, because that has been the way that Broadmeadows has been treated for over half a century. That is the way these issues have been driven by coalition governments.

This is a time when we can no longer just ignore or be wilfully blind to the complexities that these sorts of communities have. It is not just me saying this; Jesuit Social Services is arguing this as well. The postcodes of disadvantage are far more complex now. I have twice as many Muslim families living side by side with Syrian refugees, and these are the issues we need to be careful of because the jobs are not there in the way that they were in the past.

One of Australia's greatest gifts has been to offer people a second chance in life beyond the burden of history, and all that has changed are the accents, not the aspirations. My family arrived in Broadmeadows when Ford first opened in 1958; the McGuire family will outlast Ford's manufacturing in Broadmeadows.

These are the issues we need to get a better proposition for, and we as a nation need an Australian government that is actually committed to dealing with how we combine and leverage our assets. Capital goes to

opportunity. Capital craves infrastructure for investment, and this is the proposition that I want to put on the agenda for the bigger picture — for the next evolution of Broadmeadows. We have the critical transport infrastructures already there. We have two train lines into an area that is only 15 kilometres from the heart of the world's most livable city. We have the Tullamarine Freeway that is now being expanded under this government. That is really important. We have a ring-road, and we have a curfew-free international airport at our back door. What would Sydney pay to have that specific set of pieces of infrastructure?

We need to now see the bigger picture of opportunity, particularly, as I am saying, for Melbourne's north. When you look at it, you can see that the population of Melbourne's north is more than four times the size of Geelong, and it is expected to grow by another 500 000 people in the next 20 years, meaning it will be home to an estimated 1 in 20 Australians. Food and beverage manufacturing in Melbourne's north is bigger than all of South Australia. Melbourne's north also has the highest proportion of undeveloped industrial land in Melbourne — about 60 per cent — defining Melbourne's north as the most sustainable and affordable region to cope with population growth.

The region is rapidly transferring from the heavy industries to a clever, advanced manufacturing zone. I remind the Parliament that former Premier John Brumby designated Broadmeadows as the capital of Melbourne's north, but we still have this experience of the tale of two cities: the poorest community, historically neglected, within the world's most livable city. Its fate is also challenging and confronting to Australia because what we are addressing here and what this government has invested in is how we deal with the issues of globalisation, the demise of local manufacturing, population growth to drive economic activity, multiculturalism and a fair go. This is what I am calling for: that we have a coordinated strategy to deal with the threats and — —

Mr Walsh interjected.

Mr McGuire — I take up the interjection from the Leader of The Nationals, or is it the Country Party? Which party is it? The investment is there. That is what I am saying. We have got it from the Victorian government. It is a record investment. It is \$43 million, and then, in a combined way with local government to get the multiplier effect, all I am asking is that the Australian government be a partner. Why would it partner? Because here is the innovation hub and centre. We have got the innovation. We have got CSL Behring, and we have got Ford. We have got the best innovation,

so why will the Liberals not do it? What is the reason? It is because the people do not vote for them. That is the reason I am calling out. This is the political bias, the systemic failure, the historic neglect and the wilful blindness that must be sorted. That is the complexity I am seeing. I am glad to take up that interjection any time.

The Minister for Health is at the table. We are going to come out with a strategy that makes Victoria the leader nationally on medical research and sets up the platform to take us globally. That is what Labor does. This is where we invest. These are the jobs of the future. The country is crying out for this sort of leadership. Let us see what we get from Scott Morrison tonight. Let us see what he does. What would he do to get the response from the critics and stakeholders that the Victorian Treasurer, the Premier and the Victorian government have got for this budget? How much would he pay? It would be more than a fistful of dollars, I will tell you now. That is the point in the run to the line in an election.

This is the test. The Labor Party's values have been stated. Here is the big picture vision to drive jobs, growth, productivity and prosperity. Here it is where people have always been left out can see where they fit in the big picture. That is crucial as well. That is what has happened with the Victorian budget. That is what I am looking for from the Australian government. I still hold out, above partisanship, the hope that it can actually see the big picture, be part of the big picture, participate and stop being a bystander. That is why the Liberals are in government, and now is the time to do it. They should get rid of the ideological view that they have to be a bystander rather than a participant, because this is not what we need at this time. We need these investments in these communities. An enterprise zone would help set up Broadmeadows and Melbourne's north. It would be a fantastic investment, and it is now time for the federal government to stand up and be counted. Let us see what Scott Morrison has got. This is what Labor is doing in Victoria. That is why I commend the appropriation bill to the house.

Mr Angus (Forest Hill) — I am pleased to rise today to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016, the Victorian state budget. I note at the outset that the budget papers are entitled 'Getting It Done'. I think there has been an embarrassing typing error there and the title should in fact read 'Not Getting It Done', because what we have here is a typical budget of spin from a Labor government which we know cannot manage money.

One example that I want to provide to illustrate my point is that of the single biggest infrastructure project in the budget, the \$11 billion Melbourne Metro project. This was announced as fully costed and fully funded before the 2014 election, but all Victorians can now see that this was obviously a complete lie. Last week's budget shows that, despite being previously touted as fully funded, it is still only partially funded to the tune of \$2.9 billion. The current government announces and reannounces its main project as being fully funded, but the budget papers reveal the truth that only a fraction of this project has been funded. The Treasurer stated in his speech last week, and I quote:

This budget delivers \$2.9 billion in capital funding toward the project, and provision has been made in future years as the project proceeds.

Who on earth knows what that means? What it can be translated as is that it is essentially another Labor project on the never-never program. Budget paper 2, page 7, table 1.1, shows that just \$2.9 billion is included in the budget, as I said.

Sadly for all Victorians, particularly for those who are struggling with work, the budget has no jobs plan and no overarching economic plan. Both those deficiencies in the budget have significant consequences for all Victorian taxpayers and for all Victorians. If we look at New South Wales, for example, we can see regarding job growth that since December 2014 there have been 81 275 more jobs created in New South Wales than in Victoria. The Victorian coalition in its last year in office created 77 950 jobs, whereas Labor in its first year created a mere 33 837 jobs. That does not augur well for all Victorians, but certainly not for those that are looking for work.

I note too that the state budget increases state taxes by \$3.7 billion, or a staggering 20.7 per cent, in only two years. One example is that stamp duty has gone up by \$1.6 billion in just a year. Similarly insurance taxes have increased, by 6.3 per cent to \$1.2 billion. Land tax has increased by 28.3 per cent to \$2.2 billion. Numbers of those taxes are predicated on an ever-increasing property market. That may or may not happen. To build your financial house upon the premise that taxes are going to continue to increase in that dramatic way is fraught with danger.

We also see on the expenditure side that public sector wages have increased by an incredible \$2.8 billion since the election. That equates to an increase from \$18.5 billion to \$21.3 billion, which is a 15 per cent increase. Again the sad thing for Victorian taxpayers is that that is not an increase in delivery, an increase in frontline services — an increase in more police,

emergency services personnel or other employees on the front line — but rather an increase in fixed overheads. If we cut to the chase — and other commentators, particularly in the media, have identified this — this is the payback deal for union mates. This is the day of payback for the help that was given in the lead-up to the 2014 election. This has massive implications for the rest of the Victorian taxpayers and other members of the Victorian community.

I can absolutely assure this Parliament that the local residents that I speak to in Forest Hill — I was talking to numbers of them on the weekend at different events and during the course of last week — are not getting 15 per cent pay rises. That is a significant disconnect between what is going on out in the real world and what is happening in the Labor public service world.

It is interesting too that the government is exhibiting breathtaking hypocrisy. On the one hand it is capping council rate rises at 2.5 per cent and then, as I said, it is coming up with these massive tax increases left, right and centre on the other side. Within the budget there are other tax increases, including state Labor's own carbon tax — the tripling of the levy on coal, which generates the power for 90 per cent of the homes and businesses in Victoria and which will obviously lead to higher power prices for all Victorians. It is delusional to think that putting an impost like that on a provider will not flow down to the consumer.

I now want to make a couple of comments in relation to the surpluses as shown in the budget. I refer to budget paper 2 at page 13 and compare the numbers there with the pre-election budget update figures that showed what the coalition had forecast prior to the 2014 election. If we look at 2014–15, under the coalition there was to be a \$1.1 billion surplus; under Labor there was a \$280 million deficit. Despite what was recorded, the Auditor-General correctly interpreted that to be a deficit and not a surplus, as stated by the government. For 2015–16 the coalition had \$2.3 billion and Labor had \$1.9 billion. For 2016–17 the coalition had \$2.7 billion and Labor had \$2.9 billion. For 2017–18 the coalition had \$3 billion and Labor has a mere \$1.8 billion.

In those four years we have a total of coalition surpluses of \$9.1 billion and Labor surpluses of \$6.4 billion, so a difference of \$2.7 billion. As I said last year in my budget reply speech, and I say it again, the Labor team before coming into government in its pre-election financial statement committed to deliver the coalition's surpluses. That is the stark example of the reality there — that Labor has failed to do that.

I want to turn now to infrastructure investment because again there has been much said about that. Budget paper 3 at page 13 shows the various inputs. I turn again to the coalition position and compare it with the Labor position. In 2014–15 the coalition had \$5.8 billion and Labor had \$4.6 billion. In 2015–16, the coalition had \$7.3 billion of infrastructure investment and Labor had \$4.5 billion, and I note that that was down from last year's estimate of \$5.2 billion. Those two figures total \$13.1 billion for the coalition and \$9.1 billion for Labor, so there is a \$4 billion difference there. As I and others look at it, that just proves the lie from the government about the so-called shovel-ready projects. We can see that during the first 17 months of this state Labor government its members have basically spent most of that time looking for the shovel.

Turning then to 2016–17, under the coalition there was to be \$7 billion of infrastructure investment and Labor had \$7.5 billion. In 2017–18 there was to be \$6.7 billion under the coalition and under Labor, \$7.7 billion, up from \$4.5 billion as was previously advised. The totals there are: under the coalition, \$26.8 billion and under Labor, \$24.3 billion. So, despite all the chest thumping and carrying on by the Treasurer, the reality is that the current budget that has just come down is lower in infrastructure investment than the position was when the coalition government left office. What we have is a typical Labor budget — high taxing and high spending, both at record levels. We see an ever-increasing size of government, with more backroom employees and fewer frontline personnel. That is a real problem for all Victorians.

Turning to some other areas, we can look at the dividends in budget paper 5. They are outlined at page 26. We can see that there is some significant dividend gouging from various statutory organisations. We can look at the Transport Accident Commission and see that in the 2017–18 year there will be an almost doubling of the dividend, from \$342 million in the 2016–17 year to \$629 million in the 2017–18 year. Similarly the Treasury Corporation of Victoria, although smaller in scale, will go from \$35 million to \$81 million, so we can see a massive increment there.

During the course of the coalition's term in office we heard much about higher education, and particularly about the TAFE system, so I think it is instructive for all of us to turn to the budget papers and see what the current Labor government has done in relation to higher education, TAFEs and so forth. We can see that by looking at budget paper 3, pages 184 and 185. We can look at the output measures in relation to training, higher education, workforce development and skills. Basically, as we go through virtually all those

measures, we can see that there have been substantial decreases in the delivery end.

Here we have the people who trumpeted the lie for four years that the previous coalition government had cut funding to TAFE. We now see in the government's very own budget dramatic decreases in terms of the outputs and deliverables. They are in terms of the annual government-subsidised module enrolments, which are down by 15 per cent; government-subsidised student contact hours through training or further education providers are down 15 per cent; the number of apprenticeship traineeship commencements by new employees is down 11 per cent; the number of government-subsidised course enrolments is down 16 per cent; the number of students enrolled in government-subsidised courses, down 15 per cent; and number of students without year 12, certificate II or above enrolled in foundation courses is down 26 per cent. That is just the overview version of those output measures. That just shows the true picture, because you cannot hide that. It will be very interesting to see the reality in relation to those ever-decreasing targets provided by the current Labor government.

Turning now to the electorate of Forest Hill, basically it is a sad story for the electorate. We have essentially missed out on all fronts. Highvale Secondary College did receive a further capital injection for some building improvements, following on from the original money that the previous coalition government had provided. But when you look at some of the schools in my electorate, and I have mentioned many times in this place Vermont Primary School, Orchard Grove Primary School and Livingstone Primary School, you see they are very large and fast-growing primary schools that are in desperate need of funding for various infrastructure projects. I note in passing that when we were in government we went back over the records and we found that in 11 years Labor did not spend a penny on any of those schools. What a disgrace that is.

In conclusion, this is a typical Labor budget — high taxing, high spending and a bad budget for Victorians. It comes from a government that wasted \$1.1 billion not building a major piece of much-needed state infrastructure. It is a budget that continues to push up the cost of living. This remains a very significant issue for most Victorians and certainly for the residents of my electorate of Forest Hill. The government has not helped in any way in relation to that. On the contrary, it has contributed to cost of living pressures for all Victorians. The government is also not delivering on increased police numbers. Law and order is drifting out of control under this government. A range of very significant problems are now becoming apparent.

Those Forest Hill residents who use the tolled section of the Monash Freeway will now be paying tolls for an additional 10 years to fund the so-called western distributor on the other side of town, a road that most of my residents have probably never heard of and will probably never use. That is a disgraceful way for this government to be funding a project — by cross-subsidising it from one side of town to the other.

It has been interesting to see what the media has said in relation to the state budget. The *Herald Sun* of 27 April sums it up with the headline ‘All thanks to the taxpayer’. Basically it just reiterates the fact that this is the highest taxing, highest spending government that we have ever seen. Instead of cutting back as the rivers of gold from the property market flow in, this government has continued to spend and waste money left, right and centre. Another article in the *Australian Financial Review* of 27 April sums it up with the headline ‘Pallas sidesteps tough tax decisions’. That is exactly what has happened. This is a bad budget for Victorians.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — What a pleasure it is to rise to speak about this fantastic budget. Congratulations to the Treasurer, congratulations to the Minister for Finance and congratulations to the Premier on the delivery of this fantastic Labor budget.

This is a budget that tells a clear story of the aspirations, the values and, I might add, the talents of the Labor Party here in Victoria and of this government in particular. This is a budget that sets out a clear vision for the future of this state built on strong economic foundations. It is a budget that does not shy away from making the big decisions, the type of decisions that the previous mob lacked the wherewithal and the courage to commit to. This is a budget that commits to building the infrastructure that people in our communities have been crying out for, infrastructure that will ensure that Melbourne remains the world’s most livable city and that its benefits flow also to regional Victoria. In regional Victoria we are seeing investment where it matters — in better roads and in more reliable and more frequent public transport.

This is a budget about fairness and opportunity. The previous speaker made a jibe about Labor and the union movement. I do not and will never shy away from Labor’s connection to the union movement. The secretary of the Trades Hall Council, Luke Hilakari, called this budget ‘jobstastic’. I do not always agree with everything Luke has to say, but when he called this budget ‘jobstastic’ he was absolutely on the money. This is a jobstastic budget for the people of Victoria. This is a budget that understands that a decent job is the

pathway to a meaningful and productive life. This is a government that will stand up for working families, for those facing retrenchment, for those in insecure work and for those in our community suffering financial hardship.

We were also somewhat amused when the member for Malvern last week decided to leap to his feet straight after the Treasurer had delivered this rather brilliant budget. The member for Malvern leapt to his feet, anxious as always to try to impress the bored and hapless backbenchers over there, ready with some quick wit and some lines. With much fanfare, the member for Malvern got to his feet and said, straight up, ‘Where is the jobs plan?’. Well, here is the jobs plan. It is conveniently called Jobs Victoria. It was something that the member for Malvern failed to see in his urgency to get up and give his budget reply. There it was, right under his nose, and he failed to see it.

I would like to share with the house a bit of background information on jobs and employment in the state of Victoria. Let us be clear about this: employment has increased by 112 600 jobs since the government came to office. This is absolutely consistent with this government’s priority to grow jobs by over 100 000 over its first two years in office. We have an ambitious target; we do not shy away from having targets for jobs growth. That mob on the other side did nothing when it was in power. What they did do was oversee a decline in employment and an increase in unemployment.

Let us be really clear that when we came to office, unemployment in this state was 6.9 per cent. We had the highest rate of unemployment on the mainland. We are now sitting at 5.7 per cent. That speaks to this government’s commitment to grow the economy, make investments in infrastructure and have a target for jobs growth, and we will never shy away from that.

One of the brilliant things about this budget is the \$12.3 billion investment in capital infrastructure. This is going to build schools, it is going to upgrade hospitals, it is going to expand the rail network and it is going to alleviate congestion on our roads. Just as important is the fact that we are making the commitments to these infrastructure projects because we know that infrastructure projects equal direct jobs; in fact 15 000 jobs in the short term and many more to follow as these infrastructure projects provide the vital infrastructure we need for economic growth in this state.

In my electorate of Macedon I am particularly excited about the opportunities the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund presents. I very much look forward

to having some very fruitful conversations with my regional tourism board about the way in which we may be able to develop and submit some proposals for some of this infrastructure funding. It is very exciting. I will be saying ‘Watch Daylesford-Macedon Ranges for some fantastic tourism projects’. I also note that there is \$123 million worth of water infrastructure projects in this budget.

I want to talk about another fantastic announcement. It was with great pleasure that I heard the Treasurer announce cuts to payroll tax. This is a fantastic announcement on budget day and one that possibly took that mob on the other side by surprise. It was something they were not able to do. Besides whingeing and bleating and moaning about payroll tax all the time, what did they ever do about it? They sat on their hands and did nothing.

My electorate of Macedon is home to many small, dynamic and innovative businesses. In fact by and large 80 to 85 per cent of people working in Macedon are employed in businesses of between one and five people so I have a real interest in small business and in supporting small businesses to develop and grow. This increased payroll tax threshold that we have introduced will benefit 36 000 businesses across the state, and we will see 2800 small and medium size businesses pay no tax at all. This is absolutely fantastic news for Macedon.

In more fantastic news we see an expansion of the Future Industries Fund. As people in this house should well know by now, the people in my community are absolutely passionate about renewable energy and new energy technologies. We are equally passionate about producing the world’s best food and fibre. The commitment of the Andrews Labor government to grow both these industries is a terrific commitment and one that will also contribute to economic development and more importantly jobs growth, providing secure, well paid jobs in my electorate.

Another much-needed initiative is the \$11 million to improve mobile phone coverage across the state. I would like to take a moment to remind the house that of course telecommunications is a federal government responsibility. It is an absolute disgrace that in this state you could be in Gisborne South — you could see the city skyline — but not be able to use your mobile phone. It is an absolute disgrace that in the community of Benloch, which was recently affected by the Lancefield fire, there is no mobile phone coverage. As a state we are working as hard as we can, we are putting some additional money in and we are campaigning to the federal government and telling it to get a move on

and make sure that it is putting the investment in to deliver mobile phone coverage.

I note some laughter from those on the other side. Of course I also note a couple of suburban MPs over there. I might remind them that in regional Victoria lack of access to mobile phone coverage is no laughing matter. It is a matter of safety, and it is a no. 1 concern for people in my community. I have said it is a matter of safety; it is also a matter of business. It is very important to small businesses in my community that they have access to mobile phone coverage. They would also dearly love to see a national broadband network that actually delivered on the promise, not the fraudband from the Prime Minister that is being inflicted on us at the moment.

I do digress for a moment to make the point that the Prime Minister and the Treasurer of Australia have an opportunity tonight to make the right investments in telecommunications infrastructure that will enable the development of small business in this state. If they fail to do that, they will have let down the small business community across Victoria.

Of course as Parliamentary Secretary for Health I am delighted at the investments this budget is making in our healthcare system. If we want to look at an issue that was thoroughly and utterly neglected by the previous government, then we need look no further than health. It is no secret that the former Minister for Health was the worst health minister this state has ever seen. He was so occupied with engaging in his war on paramedics that he had no regard for investing in healthcare services. It has been fantastic to see that this budget and the Minister for Health have delivered so many fantastic initiatives.

The budget delivers \$1.63 billion in health and ambulance services and programs. This is the biggest increase in health funding in Victoria’s history. This investment, importantly, will support an extra 79 000 hospital admissions and 43 000 patients in our emergency departments each year. We are ensuring that around 200 000 Victorians will receive their operations and move off hospital waiting lists in 2016–17 with a \$335 million investment in elective surgery. These are fantastic commitments to our first-class health system made by this government. People can trust only a Labor government to deliver this investment. It is not just about the dollars; is also about having the policy settings in place and having the care for the people that work in our health care system supporting them, developing them, listening to them and working to improve the healthcare system collaboratively, and that is what this government is doing.

I did want to touch on the fantastic outcomes of this budget directly for the people of my electorate. In doing so, I wanted to speak about two brilliant investments. The first was announced by the Premier and the Minister for Education just before the budget was handed down at the Bullengarook campus of the Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School — an investment of \$4 million. My colleague and friend the member for Sunbury was as delighted as I am by this investment. We are both local members who know the school — both campuses — extremely well. We are regular visitors to the school. We get to attend both the concerts and the debutante balls. We have both taken great delight in this fantastic investment.

It was also a great pleasure last week to attend Woodend Primary School, a school that received not an ounce or a skerrick of funding or support from those on the other side. Despite the fact that a former member for Northern Victoria Region in the Legislative Council, who left this Parliament to pursue a career in Canberra, actually lived in Woodend, not a single cent was spent on that school, so it was fantastic to announce \$2 million for the school. The parents and friends, the school council president and the kids were all really excited, and it was a wonderful day to go up there, meet with them and celebrate with all of them.

I note also that the budget has allocated just over \$20 million to improve car parking at our railway stations. I have used the adjournment debate previously to invite the Minister for Public Transport to my electorate, and she will be coming up to outline how this will benefit people in the electorate of Macedon. It is a brilliant budget.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — I am pleased to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. It is interesting to follow the member for Macedon, who contests that this budget is the best budget that has ever been. However, she spent most of her time giving advice to the federal government and to former ministers in the former government, so there must not be a hell of a lot in the budget for the member for Macedon. It is just staggering. I have to say it was very interesting to listen to the introduction of the member for Macedon, in which she thanked the Premier but not the Treasurer, for the budget. She is obviously not very happy with the Treasurer with respect to that.

I think it is important when we do analysis of the budget to understand where government revenue is actually coming from. As the shadow Treasurer and other members on this side have spoken about, what we have seen is an increase in state taxes by 20 per cent over two years, or \$3.7 billion. It is absolutely

staggering. Total revenue is up 6.9 per cent, we have seen that insurance tax is up by 6.3 per cent in 2016–17, and it sits now at \$1.2 billion. Land tax is now \$2.2 billion, which is up by 28.3 per cent.

From a local perspective, one of the issues of contention is the fact that we are effectively seeing a tripling of coal royalties for some of Latrobe Valley's largest employers. Again, \$252 million over four years is a substantial hit in anybody's reckoning. Where is the money going? This is important to understand. Whilst we have got this significant increase in revenue that the government is taking, where it is expending the money is vitally important as well.

If you have a look at the pre-election budget update, you see that public sector wages, for example, were at \$18.49 billion. They are now forecast to be \$21.3 billion, so public sector wages are up 15.2 per cent, or \$2.8 billion, since the election. That is absolutely staggering, and as we know it is only going to get worse.

When you have a look at the increase in costs, you see that the coalition had set out a long-term financial plan, where the cost increases each year were to be about 2.6 per cent. What we have seen in Labor's expenditure is an increase of \$3.1 billion or 5.9 per cent. If you compare the two, coalition expenditure over the forward years was at 2.6 per cent on average and what we are seeing in Labor already is 5.9 per cent. This is a situation of making sure you live within your means, and what I might say on the same point is that while we are seeing that increase in expenditure of 5.9 per cent of course we should not forget that Labor has capped local government expenditure at 2.5 per cent. One could say that is very hypocritical, at the very least.

We all remember the pledge before the election: we all remember the Premier and the Treasurer coming out and saying that there would be no new taxes and no increases in charges, taxes or fees. What a joke that was. He made that promise to every Victorian. Well, that promise has been well and truly broken already.

In addition to whacking businesses and employers for money, money is also being cut in a number of different areas, and as the shadow Treasurer articulated, some of those being hardest hit are our most vulnerable people. When we came to government we extended the electricity concession rate so it was an all-year-round concession. What we are seeing in this budget is actually a cut in electricity concessions, down to \$134 million from \$165 million. That is a \$30 million cut.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr NORTHE — This is to pensioners, such as veterans and low-income earners.

Mr M. O'Brien — What a nasty government they are!

Mr NORTHE — It is a very nasty government. Of course with the Minister for Emergency Services here, we know that the enterprise bargaining agreement deal with the United Firefighters Union will send the fire services levy skyrocketing in the future as well. We have seen an introduction of taxes and an increase in taxes: the land tax surcharge has increased threefold to 1.5 per cent. The stamp duty surcharge has increased from 3 per cent to 7 per cent. And there is the coal royalty tax, which I have spoken about. In that context we know that there has been a waste of money, in particular the \$1.1 billion the government wasted on not building a road — east–west link.

I am pleased that the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation is here, because in that particular portfolio area the government has also had a little bit of a windfall. I am talking about what the shadow Treasurer called a Tattslotto win, which is a very good description I would have thought. What we had at the time was the government in a number of legal disputes with Tattslotto and Tabcorp, and with Intralot among others. This was in regard to litigation over the gaming machine licences and the Labor bungling of that. Essentially we saw a legal determination made against the state of \$540 million. Indeed that was when the coalition was in government, so effectively that \$540 million was taken out of the coalition budget. What we have had is a High Court decision that has overruled the original determination, and that has now seen \$540 million plus interest in this particular budget, so that is better than winning Tattslotto, and it is important to note that.

Revenue from gambling taxes is set to increase substantially over the forward years as well. When you look at public lotteries in this year's budget, you see there is \$446 million. Electronic gaming machines are set to raise \$1.1 billion, and for the casino the figure is \$251 million and rising over the forward years. Liquor licence fees will raise around \$22 million. One of the issues that we have raised in the past, and again when you compare the 2016–17 budget against budgets that we put forward in the past whilst we were in government, is that you see a difference for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. We committed to, and we established, that foundation,

which cost \$150 million over four years or \$37.5 million per year.

Ms Garrett interjected.

Mr NORTHE — I think the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, who is at the table, is giving me a two-fingered salute — —

Ms Garrett — It is 2 million!

Mr NORTHE — It is 2 million, right! But what we have actually seen is a reduction in funding for the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, and that is in the budget papers. It was in the budget papers last year. The minister says it is only \$2 million, but at the same time whilst all these taxes are increasing we have actually seen a reduction in funding to the foundation.

In terms of the electorate of Morwell, I suppose there is quite a bit of disappointment among us, and I know I have raised it a couple of times in my contribution already, but it is a real concern that the government has effectively targeted an industry in regional Victoria without any consultation and increased its royalties threefold in one fell swoop. That might sound okay for some who have an issue with the industry, but this will have a significant impact on those particular businesses directly. It is also going to have a significant impact indirectly on businesses in my electorate, and it will have an impact on electricity prices for all Victorians.

On that point, the *Latrobe Valley Express* of 28 April, under the heading 'Government's royal rumble', dealt with a number of issues pertaining to this matter. I will quote part of that article. It states:

At the weekend the government announced it would triple the brown coal royalty rate from 1 January next year, raising \$252 million over four years.

...

A spokesperson for Hazelwood Power Station and Loy Yang B owner ENGIE said the increase would inevitably have a 'detrimental impact on the region's energy sector' and it had not been consulted on the decision.

... the ENGIE spokesperson said, 'However, this government decision takes \$20 million a year straight out of the Hazelwood business. That is a significant additional cost that has to be found at a time when we are already experiencing very difficult electricity market trading conditions'.

The article goes on to say:

AGL Loy Yang general manager Steve Rienets said the increase in royalties would add almost \$35 million in annual operating costs to the business.

This is staggering — \$35 million annual operating costs:

‘Increased costs of this magnitude could flow through to wholesale electricity prices and ultimately to customers’, Mr Rieniets said.

The Treasurer said, ‘This will not cost jobs and this will not raise electricity prices’, but this is a guy who should know. This is the general manager of AGL Loy Yang, who has said categorically that increased costs of this magnitude could flow through to wholesale electricity prices and ultimately to consumers. That is what he said.

Further:

An Energy Australia Yallourn spokesperson said the company was working to understand the impact of any increase in mining royalties on customers and its business more broadly.

‘As we’ve consistently said, operators and government should be mindful in any decisions they make of minimising or avoiding additional costs to customers’, the spokesperson said.

Again, it defies logic that the government would target a particular industry in a regional area which, I might say, since December 2014 has seen a substantial loss of full-time jobs in the Latrobe Gippsland region. So at a time when we really need support from the Victorian government for businesses who are large employers in the region, what we are seeing is a whack of \$252 million over four years. It is just crazy. In the budget the government also talks about a Latrobe Valley transition program, and whilst we await the details of that, one does hope that it is an employment program or an economic activity employment program that supports local businesses to grow and expand.

I say that because when the coalition was in government we had a very successful local program called the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund, consisting of \$15 million, which supported local businesses that could demonstrate growth and capacity to expand, but more importantly the ability to create new jobs. That program, over a period of time, supported more than 40 local businesses, created around 1100 local jobs, and created about \$93 million worth of economic activity. When there was a change of government the program was abolished. It was not continued and there has been nothing in place since that time to support our local businesses, so one hopes that that program does provide that support.

In terms of train services a lot has been said about the Gippsland line, and the member for Bass is sitting behind me. Given all the interruptions and disruptions

that we have had over these past months for the community of Gippsland, one must say that the budget is an absolute disappointment to Gippsland commuters. We have seen a little bit of funding for planning and for other things, and there are a couple of off-peak services, but that is not what the commuters of Gippsland need. What they need is major infrastructure investment such as the coalition’s commitment to duplication of the tracks between Bunyip and Longwarry, and making sure there are additional peak services. Off-peak services are not the problem for Gippsland commuters. It is the peak services where we have issues with punctuality and capacity that are the major challenge for that line, but unfortunately there is nothing in the budget that will address those particular concerns.

Our community certainly acknowledged the fact that the government has put some money towards the Hazelwood mine fire response and will continue on with some of the investment that the coalition government made. It is important that our community does have funding, resources and support to improve the health of those in the community because it is something that has set us back for a long time, and it is important that we recognise that and continue to invest and have the resources available.

We were pleased that the Morwell Park Primary School also received some funding in the budget. This was part of the Morwell Primary School regeneration project to which the coalition government had committed, along with the amalgamation of three primary schools onto the one site in Morwell. It was something that had bipartisan support, but unfortunately for the Morwell Park Primary School it did not receive funding last year so it has been a nervous 12 months for the school community, but we are pleased to see that funding for the school was announced in the budget.

What we are not pleased about is that funding runs out for two important organisations in my community — the Gippsland Carers Association and Barrier Breakers, which is a mental health advocacy group. The coalition provided funding, not a large sum of money but \$100 000 over four years for those two groups. We pledged a further \$120 000 over four years if elected. Unfortunately there is no money in the budget for those two important organisations. It is not a big sum of money in the larger scheme of things, and that is a massive disappointment for those groups, along with the fact that the Latrobe Special Development School very much needed a substantial upgrade to its school community. Overall, that is my synopsis of the budget for this year.

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — It is a great honour to stand up and support what I think is a fantastic Labor budget delivered by the Andrews Labor government. It is a budget that delivers a \$2.9 billion surplus. It is AAA credit-rated, with unemployment falling and a forecast of 3 per cent growth. That is a rate of growth that those on the other side of the house could only drool about. Three per cent growth means we are going to see job creation again in Victoria. What this side of the house wants to see is for Victoria to take back its rightful place as the jobs engine room of this country.

The budget also funds in its entirety a project that I think would be fantastic and transformative for Melbourne — the Melbourne Metro tunnel, freeing up our clogged city loop. That is a project that we cannot wait for Malcolm and his cronies to come and help with. We are going to get on with the job and build that tunnel.

I cannot start this contribution without thinking back to last week on budget day when the shadow Treasurer jumped up foolishly and replied to the budget without even having read the documents. How can Victorians take him and all of those opposite seriously when he has not actually read the documents before he made his response? Reflecting on the comments he made as recorded in *Hansard*, they are littered with errors and false comments. It must be embarrassing now to look back and to think about that. At the very outset of his contribution the member for Malvern said that Victorians are asking why, then, is New South Wales blitzing us when it comes to creating new jobs? He went on to ask the government, ‘Where’s the jobs plan?’, and then to also ask why New South Wales was racing ahead when it comes to job creation.

If the member for Malvern had waited until today to make his budget reply speech, which convention normally dictates — you do that, you do the right thing — he would have seen reference to Jobs Victoria, the plan that was part of the budget that Labor produced that brings together all of the initiatives that the Labor government is taking to create jobs for Victorians. Infrastructure investment, skills and education, a smart economy — all the sorts of things that Victorians want in terms of job creation are outlined in this coherent plan put together by the Andrews Labor government. The member for Malvern should have waited until today so he could have been across all of the information.

Again in terms of comparisons with the commonwealth and with other states those opposite chose to draw comparisons with New South Wales, and it is true that in some measures New South Wales is ahead of

Victoria. In not all but some measures New South Wales is ahead. I would say part of the reason is that we gave New South Wales four years head start while those opposite put the economy to sleep. They put the Victorian economy to sleep, and now they complain that New South Wales has edged ahead of Victoria.

If you look at the last CommSec state and territory economic performance report, the April 2016 edition, it makes some interesting observations about Victoria’s position. Victoria is closing in on New South Wales, and the report says:

Victoria has gained substantial ground on NSW and is solidly in second spot on the economic performance rankings.

It also says:

Victoria now has the fastest annual economic growth rate in the nation, up by 4.3 per cent on a year ago ...

We have a government now, the Andrews Labor government, that is getting on with the job of a fast-growing economy — creating jobs and investing in skills and infrastructure — and we will get back to the position where we are the jobs engine room of the country. For the member for Malvern and those opposite who have spoken today to complain about our performance in terms of job creation and employment is an absolute disgrace after what they did in their time in government.

What we on this side of the house have done is, after inheriting unemployment of 6.7 per cent, we have dropped it to 5.7 per cent. We have been able to bring unemployment down. We have created jobs. In fact we have created over 112 000 jobs, 71 000 of which are full-time jobs. That is a job creation record that those opposite — the job wreckers opposite — could not come near in their entire time in office. We have even seen this in the regions. In Geelong the unemployment rate is down; in the Hume region it is down. In Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton — in all of those areas — we have been able to bring the unemployment rate down.

We acknowledge on this side of the house that there is still a lot of work to do and there are still a lot of people who are feeling the pain of not having a job or feeling the pain of not having a TAFE campus to attend or proper TAFE courses available because of the damage that those opposite did. But we are setting about fixing the damage that those opposite did. Let us just think about the record of those opposite. The member for Malvern was very quick to jump on this side of the house in terms of its job creation. Under the coalition total employment grew by a massive 3.6 per cent over the four years that it was in office, while unemployment

grew over the same period by 44.2 per cent — a massive indictment of those opposite in terms of job creation. They were job killers on the other side of the house, and we remember all of the large employers that were closing down and heading offshore because of the lack of confidence in the Victorian economy under those opposite during the Baillieu and Napthine years.

In terms of the member for Malvern and his role as Treasurer, in the 21 months that he was Treasurer of Victoria our unemployment rate was above the national average for 19 of those 21 months. That is another record of shame for those opposite. How they can come into this place and pretend to lecture us on employment and job creation is beyond me.

When you want to talk about jobs and investment in infrastructure you have only got to look at the list of infrastructure projects that this government is supporting and funding — 50 level crossings, over 4000 jobs flowing from that massive infrastructure undertaking; Melbourne Metro, nearly 4000 jobs created through that project; the Tullamarine widening, Melbourne Park, Murray Basin rail, the Flinders Street station redevelopment, and the construction of new trains and trams that will produce jobs for Victorians right here in Victoria.

Of course there is our massive infrastructure program in schools: \$1.1 billion in terms of rebuilding existing schools, building new schools and maintaining schools — \$1.1 billion in building and maintenance. Aside from the benefit for the students who will benefit from better facilities, we also see of course the trades involved and the building and construction industry involved in that sector. This drives confidence in the private sector, meaning that they have a lead from government — that is, we have a confident government that does what it said it would do and invests in infrastructure. They then have the confidence to invest in their businesses as well and to take people on. And what better way to encourage businesses further than to give them payroll tax relief, to lift the threshold for payroll tax, meaning that 36 000 businesses in Victoria will receive payroll tax relief from the changes to the threshold in this budget? That is 36 000 businesses across the state that are going to do it better because of the Andrews Labor government.

You do not have to listen to me or the member for Malvern to try to work out who is right on this particular issue. You can look at what the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said.

Mr Paynter interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — Order! The member for Bass!

Mr BROOKS — Not Victorian Trades Hall, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry — the employers. What did the employers say about our budget? The employers said:

The Andrews government has today delivered a pro-business budget that backs Victorian business by lowering costs, creating jobs, delivering productivity-enhancing infrastructure and opening doors to international markets.

It went on to say:

... the increase in the payroll tax threshold from \$550 000 to \$650 000 was a win for business and jobs.

A win for business and jobs is a win for Victorian workers and their families. They are going to see more jobs because of the investment by this government in infrastructure, in skills and in payroll tax relief for businesses. Again, this is a record that those opposite could only dream of when they had their four-year chance. They could only dream of the missed opportunities.

This brings me to the really important areas of social services, to important services that Victorians rely on and in particular to initiatives that affect people in my own electorate of Bundoora. In terms of health we have seen an investment in this budget that will mean that some 79 000 extra patients will be able to be admitted to hospital. We will be able to treat an extra 43 000 patients in emergency departments and reduce waiting times as a consequence of that. This is part of a \$1.63 billion boost to our health system.

This makes a massive difference to people's lives. I know that in my part of town, which is very close to the electorate of the member for Eltham and right in the heart of the electorate of the member for Ivanhoe, the Austin Hospital, a great hospital with great staff, is going to get a \$40.8 million investment in infrastructure to make sure it is able to continue to provide the care that our local residents need when they are sick. That is a great investment in health. It shows that the Labor side of Parliament values investing in people's health.

We have also invested in education. Not only have we been able to invest in more funding for schools to run programs, but we have seen equity funding roll out to schools to make sure that the kids who need the most help get the most resources. This year that funding is rolling out. In my electorate that means for my local schools there is an extra \$1.1 million. That is not in place of other funding; it is on top of other funding, on top of indexation and on top of enrolment growth. That

is an excellent boost for schools in my local area which means they are able to help the kids who need the help the most.

We are going to see the rollout of 10 new tech schools, one servicing the Banyule area and one servicing the Whittlesea area. They are going to be great for our local communities. There is a \$68 million investment in specialist schools. Those special schools with the poorest facilities are getting the funding they need. Again, those opposite can criticise this budget, but probably one of things I am most proud of is the fact that we are investing in special schools. Those opposite could have taken the opportunity to put money into those schools, but they chose not to.

Then there is the investment of capital at a whole range of mainstream schools around the state, and I am really happy about the funding that has been provided to Greensborough College. The campaign to get the rebuilding happening at Greensborough College goes back a long way. The previous Baillieu government failed to even listen to that school until in the middle of winter there was a failure of the heating system in the dilapidated buildings the students were accommodated in. There was still no response from the Baillieu government. On the TV news and in the newspapers we saw kids going to school with blankets before the then Minister for Education would lift a finger and fix up the heating at that school. We had the foundations of the school giving way, with holes in the floor and school bags literally disappearing through the floor.

We campaigned, and a lot of credit for this funding goes to the previous retired principal, John Conway, and the previous school council president, Glenn Martin, who had the guts to stand up to the previous government and fight for their local school community. That funding is being delivered in full, with \$10 million over this budget and the previous budget meaning that that rebuilding work can get underway. That is a great outcome for those kids. On top of that, Bundoora Primary School has been included in the planning process for upgrades in future years. That is another school community in my electorate that is excited about our investment in education.

In the time I have left I want to quickly touch on some great transport initiatives. There is the upgrade to the single section of track between Rosanna and Heidelberg on the Hurstbridge line, something that has been campaigned for heavily by the member for Ivanhoe and the member for Eltham, who have been trying to get better services along that line. This will enable not just more peak services but a more reliable service. When there is an incident — maybe someone

is sick on a train and they have to be taken off by ambulance, causing a disruption to services — at the moment that can result in real problems in terms of timetables. This upgrade will mean that trains will be able to get back to the timetable more quickly. This is a fantastic initiative costing just over \$140 million. It is a worthwhile investment in the north-east of Melbourne, coming on top of the removal of two level crossings in the north-east at Rosanna and Alphington.

There is also the Mernda rail extension that will see \$587 million ploughed into getting that rail line right out to Mernda through a station near Marymede Catholic College and potentially one at Hawkstowe Parade. That is a great benefit to people in my electorate, because it means that people who live in those areas will not have to rely on their cars all the time to get to work; they will be able to take the train. That is a great initiative, and I congratulate the member for Yan Yean for her hard work in getting it funded. That is a project that is due for completion in 2019, so it is not that far away. It is a great project for the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Of course with new train lines, with Melbourne Metro and with those sorts of projects you need more trains, and this budget delivers nearly \$900 million to purchase new Metro trains, on top of the 37 we ordered last year.

I also want to mention the Plenty Road upgrade at Mill Park, which is great for my local area. Yan Yean Road is being upgraded as well as Bolton Street and O'Herns Road. This is a great budget for Victoria which stands in stark contrast to the funds delivered by those opposite.

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — I rise to speak on this bill and take note of the budget papers, and unfortunately I only have 15 minutes to discuss the failed opportunities, the disappointing flaws and the failings of this budget, not only for my electorate of Bayswater but also for my shadow portfolios.

I will say that I am grateful for the government continuing the level crossing removal project in Bayswater. Of course that is something on which the previous Liberal-Nationals government spent millions for funding preliminary work. The crossings do need to go, but we are at the moment paying a hefty price. It is being paid by local businesses with the permanent loss of parking on Mountain Highway. Some of the businesses have actually decided to sell, which is very sad because some of them have been there for many years.

There has also been a decision to reduce the major thoroughfare of Mountain Highway from six lanes to

four. In my 10 years in this place I have seen some pretty dumb things, but this has got to take first prize. This is a combined not-so-bright idea of Knox City Council and VicRoads, with traffic capability through Bayswater to be reduced by some 33 per cent. This is a deliberate redirection of cars and trucks on to the already far too busy Canterbury Road. Do not think the people of Heathmont are not absolutely hopping mad.

At a meeting at the council chambers I was informed, with all sincerity I have to say, that traffic counts show no increase on Mountain Highway in the past 10 years. What a load of balderdash. There cannot be anything further from the truth. I am not sure how Hansard will spell the word ‘cockamamie’, but perhaps it could substitute the words ‘harebrained’, ‘absurd’, ‘ill-conceived’, ‘ridiculous’, ‘half-baked’, ‘unwise’, ‘loopy’ or ‘just plain stupid’. There is time to stop this unnecessary change, and I hope the minister is taking note.

On the topic of roads, I note that there is no funding for a safety upgrade to the intersection of Bedford and Canterbury roads. Also missing is any investment in Maroondah City Council’s plans to redo the area around Allens Road and the Heathmont shops. We are starting to see a pattern here and need to be cognisant of the additional traffic being pushed through onto Canterbury Road with the part closure of Mountain Highway that I mentioned earlier.

On education, it seems the government has finally realised that things cannot be done by halves — especially not school projects, which is what we saw last year. Victoria can hardly be called the education state when schools that are expected to receive funding are left waiting for the funds to provide the proper infrastructure and education their students need to be able to excel. Boronia Heights Primary School and Bayswater North Primary School will finally see funding flow to their projects, which are already well underway. The Basin Primary School will be able to do a modernisation of some of its facilities and co-locate The Basin Community House on site within the next few years.

In health, the Maroondah breast cancer centre, which was promised before the last election, got the nod, but general waiting lists continue to grow and blow out right across our area and also around the state. With the recent financial windfalls that this government has enjoyed, all Victorians should be angry and disappointed that greater emphasis has not been put on relieving the pain of those waiting for surgery.

Victorians should also be angry that frontline police numbers have declined disproportionately under Labor. Between the four police stations that service the Bayswater electorate — at Knox, Boronia, Ringwood and Croydon — our area desperately needs 35 additional sworn members immediately. These would replace those who have been seconded to work with task forces, which are all very worthwhile projects, and are no longer able to be rostered locally or perhaps those who are away on health or maternity leave. Considering crime is up 6.4 per cent on this time last year, and particularly with an increase in crime of about 5 per cent in the City of Knox and a rise of 5.9 per cent in The Basin alone, there is no greater proof that a lack of frontline police directly results in increases in criminal behaviour. These long-term gaps must be filled, and the problem must be addressed.

I am sure all eastern suburbs MPs eagerly checked to see if the Andrews Labor government had quietly snuck in some funding towards the much-needed east–west link. But alas, the outer east was treated with contempt again. I am not sure why Labor members hate the outer east so much. Perhaps they will tell us one day, and I wait for that day eagerly.

Also missing was funding for the Bayswater scout hall, something promised by the Liberal Party in 2014, due to the extreme crumbling of the building. I will continue to lobby for all of these worthwhile causes and ensure the collective voice of the people of Bayswater district is heard.

In my portfolios there was also very little joy — a lot of smoke and mirrors, but very little substance. Aboriginal affairs should and do continue to share bipartisan support. However, it is disappointing to see that four out of the six output initiatives listed in this budget have only one year of funding. That is two-thirds of all the initiatives that have no funding certainty past the next year and may well have funding cut altogether from 1 July next year.

The Aboriginal cultural management and protection initiative has only received \$1 million for one year. This allocation is supposed to implement the reforms of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. In particular I am concerned about how this level of funding, with no further funding promised, is going to assist the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council to undertake the new obligations given to it under the Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Bill 2015, specifically clause 78.

Aboriginal self-determination and strong Aboriginal culture only received \$3.8 million of funding, with that again sunseting at the end of the upcoming financial

year. The community infrastructure program gets \$3 million for just one year. Of that, \$1 million is going into a sports club. Young Aboriginal people's health and wellbeing gets \$900 000, with no further funding proposed. When we know that the Indigenous population is over-represented in our jails, why will the Labor government not invest in early intervention programs to help break this nexus? I am disappointed that the government continues to talk about self-determination and the importance of Victoria's Aboriginal community but cannot see fit to allocate desperately needed resources and certainty.

In Victoria, tourism is a major economic contributor. Many thousands of people rely on a strong tourism industry. They rely on government to provide structure and support to help the industry grow. Often a grant can be the hand up that is needed to reinvigorate an area or develop a fledgling precinct into something highly attractive. So you can imagine that many areas around the state were excited by announcements in last year's budget. Their names were published, so money must have been available to start their long-awaited projects — right? Wrong. The biggest pool of funding in the tourism portfolio was in something called 'contingencies' — no line item, no funding amount, no timeline of when the money would be available and no certainty for those involved.

A year on, some projects are still pining, still yearning, to be thought important enough to have real dollars allocated to them this financial year or over the forward estimates. How can attractions or regions develop business plans around uncertainty? Where is the money for Sovereign Hill by night, the Ararat arts precinct or the completion of the Grampians Peaks Trail? I assume that they are all still in contingencies.

If we look at the regional tourism fund, a substantial amount of that has already been allocated to the penguins — one particular project. How does that end up as a great result for areas that need funding to develop their attractions? How can it help to develop the tourism industry so that more people can be employed or so that those who want to invest are attracted to create extra growth in those areas? It does not. Instead of spending a huge amount of money on a dud logo that could not even be used at the Australian Open earlier this year, why did the minister not insist his department invest the money in practical outcomes — measurable programs that would actually be useful to someone?

Speaking of practical and measurable, the money that was spent on the Wander Victoria campaign, which had absolutely no call to action or real point, could also

have been spent more effectively. Who exactly is calling the shots in that department? The new consolidated tourism body, Visit Victoria, still has not recruited a CEO and has not released a tourism strategy for Victoria. One would think that 18 months after being elected a government that respects this important sector would have all that in place and be moving full steam ahead in a united direction.

The arts is a little different. It has a strategy, for want of a better word. Again, this is an industry that is vital to our state's wellbeing and economy. However, we see a decline under the watch of the current minister. The arts is a sector with a unique and important soul which makes it different to other industries, many of which are invested in in very long-term strategic ways. The criticism of both the *Creative State* plan and the 2016 budget in which it is contained is that it fails to treat the creative sector as an industry, showing that the title is merely spin.

Much of the funding contained in the budget is to continue ongoing, existing programs. Many of these programs, I have to say, predate the present government, which simply keeps the arts sector ticking over, such as support for festivals or basic education programs or the renewal of exhibition spaces. Many of these programs had not been funded in the forward estimates of the 2015 budget, so the government is simply making up for a lack of forward funding last year and calling it new money. The program's smoke and mirrors go further, raiding \$20 million already budgeted for in the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and claiming it as new money. Using the fund in this manner is not unreasonable per se; however, double counting the \$20 million as new money for the arts is deceptive.

In film and screen, this budget fails dismally. It fails to include investment in studio facilities to attract tentpole projects to Melbourne. We see a lot of the other states at the moment investing very heavily in studio facilities, but they are also investing in people. We do not see any money in this budget that articulates programs to train and retain film crew here in Victoria — whether they be technicians or special effects experts — again a growing industry, or to invest in growing Victoria's screenwriting stocks. This is one of the most vital things that could be happening, but it is not. It fails to show how the sector will grow jobs in Victoria under Labor.

If we look at the budget overall at a state level, we see that this has been a very lucky government. It has had windfalls from lotteries. It has had the lease of the port of Melbourne that it can now factor in. But if we look at

that in comparison with what we had when we were in government up until the end of 2014, we see that as a Liberal-Nationals coalition we left a surplus in 2014–15 of \$9 billion over the forward estimates. That is huge, but of course that has not been matched by the current government.

In jobs growth, we had more jobs in the four years that we were in government than the projected growth of those opposite, and certainly they are nowhere near their target. Last year we saw the Treasurer give us a very phony surplus — the Auditor-General agreed with us on that one. The surplus in 2017–18 is a lot less than we had projected. Of course there has been a windfall as far as taxes go. We see all sorts of lovely extra grabs. There is the land tax revenue, which is up. As I said, that is due to luck; that is not due to good management. Car registration fees are up by 10 per cent, but why is this not being spent on road safety projects — for example, the ones that I outlined before, like Bedford Road and Canterbury Road, and also things like Allens Road and the upgrading of the area around the Heathmont shops?

We see expenses for the state up by 10 per cent. We see more public servants. We see wage expenditure increase in 18 months by 15.2 per cent. Of course there are so many other things that are going to affect people not just in Bayswater but around Victoria. The \$250 million increase in our power bills in this state is going to hit hard, and it is going to hit the people of Bayswater, Boronia and Kilsyth South — all the areas in my electorate. As I said, it is just lucky that there is so much money around, but unlucky that this government is not willing to spend it in the right places. This budget is bad for business; regardless of what industries you are in, it is bad for families, and it is very, very bad for Bayswater.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — I am really pleased to rise today to speak on the 2016–17 Victorian state budget. Before I begin my remarks, I want to congratulate the Treasurer on the budget that he has presented to the Parliament. It is a true Labor budget, and that makes me very, very proud. As with any budget, this one occurs within a context. Since its election, the Andrews Labor government has got on with strengthening our state and making it fairer for all Victorians. The last budget delivered on just that agenda. The first budget of the Andrews Labor government invested across our state and fulfilled the commitments that were made by us in opposition. The first budget of the Andrews Labor government was great for Ballarat. The Andrews Labor government has kept faith with the people of Ballarat and funded critically important projects in our city. These are

projects that improve the infrastructure and the future capacity of Ballarat to grow and to prosper.

In the 12 months since that budget, the Andrews government has got on with it. Just two weeks ago I visited the Eureka Stadium with the Premier and the Minister for Regional Development. I really love visiting the stadium and seeing how much it has changed. We looked at the progress of the upgrade of the facility, but we also looked at the plans for the grandstand which were unveiled that day. It is a very exciting project. I am also really excited that the Western Bulldogs are committed to Ballarat, and I am really pleased that the club wants to play games in the national women's league at Eureka Stadium too. We would absolutely welcome that. AFL games in Ballarat will bring thousands of visitors to the city, which will be terrific for our local economy. Additionally, people in Ballarat deserve first-class facilities, and the new Eureka Stadium delivers that as well.

Work on local schools is underway. Architects were appointed last year, and the physical works will begin soon. The new school facilities at the Wendouree campus of Ballarat Secondary College and at Delacombe Primary School will provide first-class facilities for students and teachers and also for the broader community.

Before coming to government the Premier said Labor would bring back tech schools, and it is. The Ballarat tech school is going to be located at the SMB campus, which is right in the very heart of Ballarat. It is going to be a great partnership with Federation University. It will also be a pathway to those really important high-tech jobs for the young people in our city.

What we have seen over the last 12 months is concrete action to deliver on the Andrews government's commitments to Ballarat. We have got on with every single project. But government is more than just ticking off a list of commitments. The Andrews government came to office with a commitment to hold a royal commission into family violence. That commitment has been kept. I note the presence at the table of the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, and I thank her for her work most sincerely. But as I said, this is not an exercise in ticking off a list. The government's intention was not to simply hold a royal commission; the government's intention was to get to the root causes of family violence and to act on them. It was about making a difference in the lives of women and children across Victoria who live each and every day under the threat and with the reality of family violence. Our government is not about paying lip-service to this intention; it is making the largest ever investment by

government in tackling Victoria's biggest social and law and order issue.

This budget responds to the royal commission's recommendations with a \$572 million statewide funding boost over two years. This includes \$152 million for a housing blitz, so that victims can leave an abusive relationship while keeping a roof over their head, and \$120 million to keep kids safe.

Before going on to speak about aspects of this budget that have been particularly welcomed in Ballarat, there are a number of other statewide initiatives that I need to mention. Across this chamber members have different views on a wide range of issues, but I think all of us agree that every single child deserves a safe environment in which to live and grow, and this budget provides additional resources to keep kids safe. This budget provides a \$168 million investment in better services and increased support for children and families that interact with the child protection system. This includes funding of \$35.9 million to increase the safety of children and young people in residential care, \$34.2 million to increase the number of foster and kinship carers, \$3.4 million for additional child protection workers and funding for counselling to family violence and sexual assault victims, which is part of a \$25.5 million initiative. I would like to congratulate and thank all of the people who work in those areas and do such important and really difficult and often heartbreaking work.

After a tragic history of too often brutal government intervention, I am pleased that there is \$16.5 million to help Aboriginal children who cannot live with their families to keep connected to their culture and to recruit Aboriginal kinship and foster carers. I think each of us here wants to make sure that the errors of the past are not repeated.

Secondly, I want to talk about the government's commitment to reducing suicide in Victoria. Suicide prevention is something I care deeply about, because before coming to this place I managed Lifeline in Ballarat, an organisation whose purpose is to be there as a source of support for people who are at their most vulnerable and at risk of suicide. I am very pleased that there is \$27.5 million in the budget for suicide prevention initiatives, including, and I am quoting from budget paper 3 that:

Trials of personal support services for survivors of suicide attempts will be conducted at six sites across Victoria.

There will also be the trialling of additional approaches to suicide prevention across six local council areas and the development of a youth suicide prevention app.

These are so important, these initiatives, and I am well aware of the importance of suicide prevention in Ballarat. Anything we can learn from trials into the effectiveness of suicide prevention strategies will be shared and will help to reduce its occurrence in communities across our state.

It is fair to say that this Victorian budget was well received in Ballarat. Last year the Ballarat *Courier's* front page the day following the budget read:

Ballarat's State Budget Bonanza.

Eureka!

This year the *Courier* again summed up the budget impact on Ballarat on its front page. The front page of the *Courier* last Thursday said:

Budget Bonanza!

\$518 million boost to fix the region's troubled railway, including duplicating 17 kilometres of track between Deer Park West and Melton.

\$4.2 million for a Ballarat Innovation Lab and digital space, set to bring 200 ICT jobs.

\$8.1 million to modernise and upgrade city's schools, including Ballarat Secondary College and Mount Clear College.

The Ballarat line has not been serving Ballarat's commuters as they expect and as they deserve. I have heard the concerns of commuters loud and clear, and along with my colleagues the member for Buninyong and the member for Melton, who is in the chamber, I have been speaking with the Minister for Public Transport to put the case that the Ballarat line needs real investment. The minister listened to our concerns and in the budget has delivered, so I really want to thank the minister for her work in delivering through the budget over half a billion dollars to improve the Ballarat line.

Duplicating 17 kilometres of line between Deer Park west and Melton and constructing additional passing loops will boost punctuality and reliability on the line. Additionally this will enable two extra services in the morning and afternoon peaks and a train every 40 minutes in off-peak periods. Trains that run more regularly and on time will be great for both regular commuters and also those who occasionally use the train to get to Melbourne. This is a far cry from the disregard the former Liberal government had for improving services on our train line. A passing loop promised by the Liberal Party before the 2010 election is only now under construction, and it took a Labor government to get the project moving.

Earlier I spoke of the government's investment in the last budget in the Wendouree campus of Ballarat Secondary College. I was very proud to deliver on a \$3 million commitment made to provide better facilities at this great school, and I am absolutely over the moon that there is a further \$3 million for the campus in this budget. The \$6 million provided by the Andrews government will make an incredible difference. I was at the school just a fortnight ago, and the plans have been drawn up. They are amazing. I want to congratulate everyone at the Wendouree campus, in particular the principal, Rick Gervasoni, the campus principal, Rick Elliss, and the assistant principal, Seona Murnane. The facilities they are planning will be of as high a quality as the teachers who work at the school and the students who attend there each day.

Jobs have always been a real priority for me. Meaningful work makes such a difference in people's lives. It creates opportunities for individuals and families, and it provides security. Across Victoria we are already seeing that things have improved since the election of the Andrews government. The unemployment rate is 1 per cent lower and 112 600 more people are working in Victoria since we came to office. This budget sure delivers for Ballarat in terms of jobs.

In Ballarat, Alstom builds trains. They are great trains, and they are built by a highly skilled workforce. It is terrific news for Alstom, for the employees and employers who work there and for the supply chains that the budget provides for five six-car X'trapolis trains to be built by Alstom. This is in addition to the five trains that the Andrews government ordered last year. Just a couple of weeks ago a visitor to my office said that on their way back to Ballarat they passed one of the shells of the carriages ordered last year on its way to the Alstom facility on Creswick Road, ready to be fitted out by the very highly skilled workers there.

A city like Ballarat has a diverse economy and needs to be looking to a future of innovation. This budget provides a \$4.2 million investment to establish the Ballarat innovation lab and digital space to grow Ballarat's information and communication technology industry. This exciting initiative will bring 200 ICT jobs to Ballarat, boosting our economy and our capacity to make the most of a future driven by innovation.

But not every government action is about creating opportunity. Governments also need to provide the services communities need when they are facing big challenges. Across regional Victoria ice is a real problem. It ruins the lives of people who have become addicted, it can destroy families and it breaks apart

whole communities. The Andrews government is providing through this budget for an 18 to 20-bed residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility that will serve the Ballarat community. This \$6 million initiative will make a critical difference to the lives of addicts and their families. As I thanked the workers in the child protection system before and as I thanked workers in the area of family violence before, I really want to thank those who work with those who are facing an addiction and who work particularly with the families. As we know, it does not affect just that person; it affects their siblings, it affects their parents, it affects their children, it affects their neighbours and it affects their friends. Ice addiction affects absolutely everyone, so I really welcome this as part of a broader initiative to really smash this ice scourge.

Unfortunately I have not been able to speak about every aspect of the budget, or even every aspect that will have a direct and positive impact on Ballarat. I want to conclude by again congratulating the Treasurer for presenting a budget that is good for Victoria, and of course, most importantly for me, as the representative for Wendouree, that is really good for Ballarat. It is great for our schools, great for our hospitals, great for our commuters and great for those who are facing challenges in their lives that perhaps some of us have faced as well. Certainly we all know people who have faced those challenges. It is an absolutely true Labor budget, and it is a budget that demonstrates that the Andrews government is getting it done. I commend the budget to the house.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — Let me state from the outset that this is a high-taxing budget. This is a budget that is reaching deep into the hip pockets of hardworking Victorians. It is a typical Labor government budget from a government that has not learned its lessons about economic management. Labor has always thrown money around like a drunken sailor, with little respect for how hard Victorians have to work to earn their income. It will take a while for the full financial effects of this budget to hit home, but hit home they will. As the line goes in the Beatles classic *Taxman*, 'There's one for you, nineteen for me'. If only Premier Andrews and the Treasurer were that generous.

Last year this Treasurer delivered us a \$286 million deficit. This year Victoria has a larger than normal surplus for a Labor government. But before anyone gets excited and sings the praises of a reformed Labor, you only have to gently scratch the surface of this 1980s-style budget to see that it is a house of cards. As Terry McCrann said in his analysis in the *Herald Sun* last week — —

Mr Pearson — What's wrong with the 80s?

Mrs FYFFE — Actually the 80s were very good years — probably the year the member was born!

Terry McCrann said that the surplus was boosted by a booming Victorian property market. This has been helped along by considerable Asian investment, which is now showing signs of slowing. Tax revenue will soar by 8 per cent next year, which is much higher than normal. Land tax will surge by 26 per cent and stamp duty by 11 per cent. New property taxes will cost Victoria \$486 million across the forward estimates. The government has made a miserly cut to payroll tax to try to seduce small business, but it is so miniscule it is not worth the effort. It was a pathetic attempt to garner political support from small business to shore up Labor's standing at the 2018 election.

For businesses in the Yarra Valley a better initiative would have been for the Andrews government to can its two expensive public holidays, which have undermined business profits and, in many cases, resulted in businesses closing on Easter Sunday and AFL Grand Final eve because it is too costly to open. The government has had the Department of Treasury and Finance work overtime to create the illusion of benefits to business, but what paltry crumbs it gets is taken back threefold with the other hand.

The only wages growth we are likely to see will be in the public sector as wages will blow out by 15 per cent in just two years, going from \$18.5 billion to \$21.3 billion. This will not benefit frontline services; this is purely another dodgy union deal paying exorbitant wages to sheltered public servants. It has long been known that people have sought employment with departments because they are seen as cash cows where they could earn, despite having minimal qualifications, a fantastic salary that is the envy of many in the private sector. Thanks to Labor, Victoria's public servants are becoming the new wealthy class, and my fellow Victorians are footing the bill for these overgrown policy beasts while living on Struggle Street.

Then we have Labor's non-existent jobs plan. In the coalition's last year in office Victoria's economy created 77 950 jobs compared to just 33 837 jobs created under Labor. With Ford, Holden and Toyota finishing up production soon, this will exacerbate the jobs pain. But does the Treasurer care? Not at all. Labor has been quite content to turn its back on these workers. Meanwhile, cost-of-living pressures are intensifying. We have Victorians who are already struggling to pay their bills, so what does Labor do? It jacks up the taxes

on coal, which produces 90 per cent of our electricity, and then the Treasurer stupidly says it will have no effect on energy bills. Who is going to pay for it? Is the Treasurer expecting the little tax fairy living at the bottom of the garden to slip some money under our pillowslips at night to pay for it?

On roads, the budget includes more than \$10 billion for public transport and roads projects across the state, but not a drop for the neglected roads in Evelyn. All the money is being blatantly pumped into Labor strongholds and marginal seats it thinks it has a chance of winning at the next election. Despite serious concerns about the lack of emergency access by the Lilydale Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade on Hardy Street, Lilydale, we do not have any confirmation of funding for signal changers for the traffic lights at the top of Hardy Street.

It should be no surprise to the government, whose many members were MPs under the former Brumby government, that I have long supported the need for signals at the intersection of Killara Road and Maroondah Highway in Coldstream. In 2007 the previous Labor government installed traffic lights at the intersection of the Maroondah and Melba highways and defended inaction on the Killara intersection, stating that the aforementioned lights would address the congestion problems facing motorists entering and exiting Killara Road. That has not been the case. The reality is that when the lights stop traffic along the Maroondah Highway, they immediately let in traffic from the Melba Highway, so there is not the break in traffic that Labor claimed. Residents have difficulty exiting Ingram and Killara roads and Station Street, and, even worse, the CFA cannot get out in a timely manner.

Then there is the matter of congestion on Clegg Road, Mount Evelyn, in front of St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Congestion during school pick-up and drop-off times has grown with population growth. It has motivated a local policeman to contact my office to register his concerns about student safety. It is interesting that at the 2014 state election my opponent did not make any commitment around local roads, other than the broader commitment by Labor to remove the two level crossings in the Evelyn electorate, in Mooroolbark and Lilydale. It shows that this government does not have its finger on the pulse of the issues that are a real priority for Yarra Valley families.

We have no funding in the budget for the missing link between the Eastern Freeway and the Western Ring Road. Funding for that missing link would have significantly reduced transport and logistics costs for

producers in the valley to cross Melbourne and get to the market and the airports.

With health, Labor has tried to paint a rosy picture of its health investment. However, if you look a little closer, you will see that funding for dental health has been slashed by 15 per cent. This will see waiting lists balloon, with 31 000 fewer patients to receive vital dental care next year. Meanwhile, the paramedic pay rise will cost Victorians \$54 million, yet, remarkably, it has not been funded.

I note that the government has invested \$10 million for the first stage of the Maroondah East Breast Cancer Centre in Ringwood, which some of my constituents will hopefully benefit from. However, with very limited parking and a long walk from Ringwood East shopping centre and station, this package is only half baked. Where will the patients park? Parking around Maroondah Hospital is terrible as it is.

I was extremely disappointed to see that the Andrews government has turned its back on lymphoedema services. Despite the former Bracks and Brumby Labor government opening the service just six years ago with its usual fanfare, Labor has already turned its back on lymphoedema sufferers, who include cancer patients. Eastern Health announced it was closing the service due to budgetary constraints. As a result of other budgetary constraints at Eastern Health, we also lost the eye clinic at Yarra Ranges Health. At this moment there are more exclusions in health delivery in the Yarra Valley than a cheap-as-chips insurance policy.

The government has invested a small amount in autism services in the budget, but the money lacks a dedicated policy to ensure it goes to the right areas and addresses current failings of the system. On 18 April I hosted an autism forum which highlighted seven priorities being ignored by the Andrews government: difficulties getting a diagnosis, which prevents families from getting help; inadequate funding for aides in schools for children who show potential for integration in traditional learning environments; no support for managing major transitions between levels of school and on to adulthood; the need for counselling for parents to help couples work through the issues so that the marriage remains intact; funding for a dedicated degree in autism to promote better understanding of what is a complex disorder; and funding for research to improve early diagnosis. The needs of parents, children and autistic adults are not being met. We need to do more to work with this as we work to keep families together and to maximise the potential of these children.

There is nothing innovative or new in this budget. It will just keep Victoria trudging along, dragging behind it the ball and chain of a \$3.7 billion tax bill. In education Melba Support Services, a great service in the Yarra Valley caring for severely disabled adults, was supposed to be given \$1 million for its move to the old Swinburne campus. Yet to my knowledge it has not yet seen a penny of that money and is still paying rent.

In terms of mainstream education, the government is investing \$924 million in school infrastructure. Despite the sizable scale of investment, only one school in the Evelyn electorate will see any new funding, and that is Bimbadeen Heights Primary School. The coalition committed \$5.3 million in funding prior to the last state election, so I am pleased to see that the lobbying and hard work by the Bimbadeen Heights school community and me have paid off. I was at Bimbadeen just last week going through the school's redevelopment plans with principal Leigh Johansen, and they are fantastic.

However, there are many other schools in Evelyn that also deserved funding but missed out. Rolling Hills Primary School and Seville Primary School are schools trying to plan for increased growth and offer facilities to attract parents wanting the best for their children, but they both need funding. Lilydale West Primary School urgently needs an injection of funding. Although Manchester Primary School does get \$1.2 million in the budget, it is for an existing project that the Liberal Party committed to fund. I note that the Yarra Ranges will receive a share of asbestos removal and relocatable classroom funding; however, that is cold comfort for schools that need redevelopment. It is very telling that the government has had to inject \$63.3 million into relocatable classrooms to deal with overcrowding.

The Leader of the Opposition had it right when he said that the budget fails to deliver a plan for population growth. There is no vision here. Parents would be shocked to hear that Labor's plan for education revolves around temporary classrooms. These are not the modern facilities of advanced learning institutions capable of producing young adults ready to be part of a globalised world.

I come to law and order. Labor has also failed to deliver funding for additional police to keep pace with population growth. Mooroolbark police station is not in my electorate, but it services part of the Evelyn electorate. This station, which is supposed to be a 24-hour station, is often closed, as police are attending call-outs. In the 21st century this is not good enough. Under the Andrews government's watch we have seen the Apex gang running rampant, yet as a result of this

budget we have fewer frontline police on the beat. To have just 400 new sworn officers barely covers the attrition rate in the Victoria Police force. Our state is growing at a rate of 100 000 people per annum, which is grossly out of step with police numbers and funding. Again the Andrews government lacks vision, and any appreciation of the need to plan for a future that extends beyond the four-year election cycle. What will it take for Labor to learn the lessons? I remember former Chief Commissioner of Police Christine Nixon saying we had no gangs in Melbourne. How wrong she was.

On the environment, I see the government has allocated \$74 million for bushfire preparedness and response activities. That is \$18.5 million each year for the next four years, which includes funding for additional aviation services for firefighting. We must never have a repeat of the Black Saturday bushfires, so I am relieved to see this funding. However, the government's bungling of the United Firefighters Union enterprise bargaining agreement and selling out of the Country Fire Authority means that if we encounter a mass walkout of CFA volunteers because this government hands over control of the CFA to the militant United Firefighters Union, more money is going to be needed to pay for non-volunteer firefighters.

Last week I spoke about the siren going off at 6.30 in the morning when I was at home and about looking out and seeing the volunteers rushing to the station. Last night once again I saw the lights of the trucks on Warburton Highway as they were attending an accident. So often the volunteers at the Wandin CFA are out responding to issues. The stress they are under at the moment is not good at all. Everywhere I go I am being approached by CFA volunteers. Whether it is at Anzac services or when I am at shopping centres, they come up to me and say, 'You've got to stop this'. They are the backbone of my community. They are the people who really reach out to help everyone. This is one issue that has exposed the cracks of division in the Labor ranks. This government is divided, and unstable government is bad for Victoria.

Lastly, it was disappointing to see Esther Park overlooked for funding, which the coalition had committed prior to the 2014 election. The provision of \$250 000 would have breathed new life into the Esther Park pavilion, which is home to the Mooroolbark Barkers. This soccer club has ever-increasing participation rates. Its inclusive policies and warm welcome to our new residents is to be commended. The number of female players is growing, and at the rate it is going, girls will be equalling the boys within just a few years.

This is a pathetic budget with no vision, but it is full of nasty tax surprises. There is no congestion-busting east-west link. There is no port of Hastings. What we are getting is a bad deal. We have got a sky rail that no-one wants and a program to remove 50 level crossings that relies on the Andrews government being in government until the end of time itself. Our public transport is packed, our hospital waiting lists are growing and our state schools are run down and not coping with population increases. Where is the funding for the \$11 billion Melbourne Metro rail project? I am thoroughly disappointed by the Andrews government's second budget. It confirms once and for all that Labor does not care about anything but its union cronies and the debts it owes to them — the promises it made for unions campaigning in the 2014 election.

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — It is my pleasure to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. I begin my remarks by congratulating the Treasurer, the Premier, the cabinet, all the caucus members, the parliamentary secretaries and everyone who contributed to this sensational second budget of the Andrews Labor government. In many respects you would think this was a budget for the third premiership quarter. Those opposite must be kicking themselves when, after their four years of nothing, they see this budget, which is arguably the greatest budget of any state in Australia right now. When ScoMo gets on his feet tonight, he will wish he was delivering the Victorian budget and not the commonwealth budget.

I actually thought for a moment that Sophie Mirabella was in the Victorian Parliament. I have heard those opposite say, 'We would've done this, we could've done this', and, 'If only I was re-elected, I could've done this'. They had four years to do something. They did zilch. They are where they belong and where they are going to stay — in opposition. They should keep getting their advice from Sophie Mirabella. She did really well in the federal seat of Indi, and she is on a path to re-election there with her comments on the Wangaratta hospital.

I also want to single out the Deputy Premier. After four years of neglect, we have had another significant investment in education. I will never forget Essendon Keilor College and the former Minister for Education in the coalition government. Labor committed \$10 million in 2010; it then lost the election. The minister went out there and said, 'I've seen the school', and he described the conditions there as disgusting. There were four strikes. Then we had the Niddrie by-election. Those opposite were so hungry to boost their margin that they did not even run a candidate. Why? Because the first question Mr Baillieu would have gotten in the Niddrie

by-election would have been, ‘Will you fund Essendon Keilor College?’ . He did not even front up.

We all know how it ended for Mr Baillieu. I would like to claim the credit, but I think people on his own side deserve the credit there. At Essendon Keilor College it was four strikes and you were out for the Liberal coalition. In Labor’s very first budget the Premier and Minister for Education committed \$10 million to get it done. I am very proud that it was Labor, after 1600 signatures and bringing a door into Parliament to give to the then minister, that we finally got the rebuild that school so richly deserves.

I note we also have the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence here today. There is a record \$572 million in the budget to target family violence.

Turning to my electorate, this budget also provides funding for Aberfeldie Primary School, the school that Victoria’s first, and so far only, female Premier, Joan Kirner, went to. I am working with that school and am going to make sure that we really honour Joan Kirner’s name, with \$1 million committed to the school to really make sure a strong legacy is left.

As the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice I want to acknowledge the work of the Attorney-General, the Minister for Police, the Minister for Corrections and the Minister for Emergency Services. As parliamentary secretary I have been very fortunate to work with those three ministers. They have given me incredible opportunities. Just recently I got to represent the Attorney-General at a very important meeting of attorneys-general. I am having a discussion with the member for Broadmeadows about redress. The Minister for Police and the Acting Minister for Police have also given me incredible opportunities.

I think we can be very proud of the two budgets in the justice portfolio. There was \$2.5 billion in the first budget, a record investment in police resources and then another \$596 million. Members should do the maths — two budgets and a total of \$3 billion invested in police resources. It is just incredible. There are 406 sworn officers. All up there are some 1152 police personnel on the front line. It was actually the Brumby government budget that delivered on police resources, and those opposite are living off that. It is embarrassing.

Those opposite like to talk tough on law and order, but they were not willing to fund a single sworn police officer over the past 16 years. The budget was cut under Kennett and then cut again. We on this side are very

proud of what we have done in the areas of public safety and community safety.

I am very pleased that one of the first tasks that the Minister for Police charged me with was a review of our crime prevention program. We committed \$20 million to crime prevention in the budget. Members only have to look at the Jesuit Social Services report entitled *Dropping off the Edge 2015*, the 2015 Ombudsman’s report entitled *Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria* and the report of the Parliament’s inquiry into locally based approaches to community safety and crime prevention in 2012. All of these reports highlighted that if you are to tackle crime prevention, you need to focus on areas of disadvantage. Some 2 per cent of postcodes are responsible for 25 per cent of our prison population. That is where we are going to shift our work on crime prevention. It is not just going to be money out the door for lights, cameras and action, as it was under the former government; we are going to target communities in need and make sure that we make a real difference to those communities in need and do something very worthwhile.

Another area that I am very proud of and that the Premier in particular has taken up is in the area of crystal methamphetamine, or the drug ice. One of the things I first did on coming to Parliament was to be part of that groundbreaking inquiry. This budget funds stage 2 of the *Ice Action Plan*.

Acting Speaker, if I could just take you back to the *Age* editorial of 8 September 2014, which is headed ‘Ice report must spark comprehensive action’. It says:

The landmark report into methamphetamine, a powerful and highly addictive stimulant, released in recent days by the Victorian Parliament’s Law Reform Committee needs to become a catalyst for a comprehensive community offensive against an illicit drug that is causing tragic harm, particularly to young people in regional and rural areas, where youth unemployment is striking hardest.

...

The report, which makes 54 recommendations, must be backed by manifold action.

The editorial goes on to highlight some of the actions:

Creating a ministerial council, led by the Premier ...

Expanding the drug court ...

Stronger measures to identify and prosecute manufacturers ...

Better resourced and expanded outpatient facilities.

When we handed down that report I will never forget the Premier coming into the Parliament, pre-empting

the *Age* editorial, and saying, ‘I’ve got in my hands the recent report by the parliamentary committee into the drug ice. That’s why we’ve funded an extra 11 sniffer dogs and an extra 8 dogs in regional and rural Victoria’. He never thought about doing anything else to combat crystal methamphetamine apart from funding sniffer dogs, whereas the then opposition leader, and even the *Herald Sun*, said at the time that the government should take action and lead from the front. The then Leader of the Opposition actually read the report. As Premier he set up a ministerial council, led by himself, with health professionals and judicial officers. He is doing an incredible job with both stages 1 and 2, along with the Minister for Mental Health, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Health.

The press release on 16 April headed ‘Next stage of *Ice Action Plan* to make communities safer’, the *Age* editorial and our own parliamentary inquiry highlighted the important work of the Drug Court in Dandenong. My predecessor, the then member for Niddrie and Attorney-General, the Honourable Rob Hulls, established that Drug Court. Those opposite talk about taxpayers funds; they are meant to be the party of financial management. For every \$1 invested, the court returns \$5 to the community. We had four years of those opposite sitting on their hands. Now we see the expansion of the Drug Court to Melbourne. Expanding the Drug Court was one of the first priorities of our parliamentary inquiry. I think the Attorney-General and the Premier need to be congratulated on that. It is an incredibly big investment. It is something that needed to be done, and I am very proud that the Attorney-General and the Premier are leading from the front and doing what is needed.

The other thing that is very big is the Melbourne Metro project. We heard the member for Kilsyth talking about the Melbourne Metro rail project, but we are getting on with it and getting things done. Members only have to read some of the material. This is Infrastructure Australia’s no. 1 project for Victoria, duplicating the city loop. It is going to make a big difference to the people of Niddrie, and for those in my neighbouring electorate, represented by the member for Essendon, it is going to make a big difference on the Craigieburn line.

Members should read Adam Carey’s article headed ‘Metro rail Tunnel: Melbourne needs it, so let’s build it’, which was published in the *Age* of 16 April. He said:

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

...

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

Mr Carey goes on to say:

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

that is, 17 —

each capable of carrying 1 100 passengers — 37 400 people an hour in total.

In contrast let us have a look at the Liberals’ east–west link. Mr Carey said:

The east–west link was projected to carry 80 000 vehicles a day by 2031, which equates to 96 000 people using VicRoads’ measure that shows each vehicle in Melbourne carries an average 1.2 people.

So you have 1.2 people in a car versus 17 trains an hour going in each direction, each capable of carrying 1 100 passengers. That is a massive difference in terms of the mobility and sustainability of our public transport network going into the future.

The Craigieburn line, which I have just highlighted, will almost be like a grade separation in itself — a grade separation, if you like, in the city loop. The northern loop, which is shared by the Sunbury, Craigieburn and Upfield lines, and which cannot take anymore trains, will see its capacity doubled. It will be a fantastic project. With this budget we are seeing a real legacy for the Andrews Labor government.

The opposite side is meant to be the party of financial management. We saw the little blimp, the member for Malvern. The member for Hawthorn should not worry; he is moving up the chain. I think he is ahead of the member for Malvern already. He is doing very well. That little show we saw in question time was one of the best. He is doing well. He should not worry. My money is on him —

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr CARROLL — I do like you, and I reckon you are the man. In an article in the *Age* of 19 March 2015 headed ‘Liberals are not better economic managers’, Josh Gordon said the Liberals needed to lock in the east–west link ‘for political reasons, exposing us to unnecessary risk’. He went on:

... it’s time to abandon the rhetoric from the Liberals that they are the better economic managers, certainly in Victoria, where the handling of the east–west link shows they exposed taxpayers to greater financial risk than they needed to,

ostensibly for political reasons. That's not good economic management, that's economic sabotage.

This is a fantastic budget by the Andrews Labor government. I congratulate the Premier.

I again thank the justice ministers for the opportunities they have given me in that portfolio. I have had an incredible two years working with the Attorney-General, with the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections, with the acting police and corrections minister and with the Minister for Emergency Services. They have given me incredible opportunities. I have been very fortunate as the parliamentary secretary on three occasions to go to ministerial council meetings with our federal and state counterparts. It provides another opportunity to highlight what a privilege these positions are.

Most importantly, in delivering for my community in the Niddrie electorate, there was \$10 million in the first budget for Essendon Keilor College, and we have another million dollars for Joan Kirner's former school, Aberfeldie Primary School, in honour of Joan Kirner, a wonderful Victorian, a wonderful contributor to public debate and a real trailblazer for women. I will do everything I can to make sure the school does everything it can to ensure her name is well and truly honoured.

Having the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence at the table during this debate, it would be remiss of me not to highlight her work. At the recent meeting of attorneys-general from right around Australia and across the Tasman — and I have said this to the minister — the participants were vitally interested in the work we are doing to combat family violence. I know the minister does not rest on her laurels; she reminded me that we still have so much further to go. But there is \$572 million to address the key and most critical components of the work of Marcia Neave in that royal commission. I think we have had outstanding leadership from the Premier and the minister.

I am lucky to have had the minister out to my electorate, and she is also booked in very shortly to do a morning tea with my constituents. She is always welcome in Niddrie to highlight the work we are doing, which will see \$572 million of statewide funding across the next two years in response to those findings, including more housing and crisis accommodation, more counsellors, more prevention programs and more support for children who are victims of family violence. I think it is fantastic to be delivering on 65 of the most urgent recommendations that the royal commission made.

On that note, again I want to congratulate the Premier. It is fantastic to be in government. I know those opposite are still getting used to opposition. This is a fantastic budget. Tonight I have no doubt that ScoMo wishes he was delivering the Victorian budget. We are the envy of the nation, and we are so happy and so proud.

Ms Ryall interjected.

Mr CARROLL — The member for Ringwood permanently has Liberal Party head office staff parked out in her electorate to make sure she gets re-elected. But we on this side stand on our merits. We deliver for our communities. We are always putting people first. From the first budget to the last budget, we will not rest on our laurels. I congratulate the Premier.

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016.

Mr Richardson — Tell us about tax.

Ms RYALL — I am actually very happy to tell the member for Mordialloc about tax and how we have a very high-taxing, high-spending budget, which is pretty normal for Labor and something that we have all come to expect from it.

Having listened to the member for Niddrie talking about his schools, I want to highlight something that the Deputy Premier, who is also the Minister for Education, said. He said, 'You can't get a first-rate education in a second-rate classroom'. If we turn that around, that means anyone who is in a second-rate classroom at the moment is not getting a first-rate education. That is pretty appalling.

Mr Carroll interjected.

Ms RYALL — I heard the member for Niddrie saying, 'Where's this going?'. I ask him to just wait for it. I bring up the case of Norwood Secondary College. Labor has been in power for 12 of the last 16 years — —

An honourable member — Yeah, we know.

Ms RYALL — And the state of Victoria certainly knows. Norwood Secondary College is an old school; it has been around since about the 1950s. In fact the last major works that took place there was for a library under former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. During the 12 of the last 16 years that those opposite have actually been in power, they did nothing for the students of Norwood.

In a press release of 15 July 2014 the Premier said, ‘Only Labor will rebuild and redevelop the schools in the east that are under so much pressure’. Nothing could be further from the truth. He said Labor was helping parents and teachers and putting kids first. Interestingly in this budget — for the 2016–17 financial year — it is certainly not putting the kids at Norwood Secondary College first. There is no new capital funding for schools at the Maroondah end of the Ringwood electorate in this budget at all. In fact in the 2015–16 budget Labor promised \$10 million. Of that, it was going to spend in this financial year around about \$1.3 million. Well, it spent \$282 000 on my schools in the Maroondah end of the electorate.

In the 2016–17 budget the government is saying it will spend around \$3 million on the schools under what it calls the Maroondah education plan. Four schools are in that Maroondah education plan. On the existing project, \$3 million is expected to be spent, but here is the kicker: no-one knows how much of that \$3 million will be allocated to which school. I have actually had the minister out —

Mr Nardella interjected.

Ms RYALL — I have, member for Melton. I have had the minister out, and he knows full well what the circumstances are. There are 1100 students at Norwood secondary College, and all the Minister for Education wants to provide to them is one single-court stadium. The last major works undertaken at the school was a Gough Whitlam library. These students, according to the minister, are getting a second-rate education.

What the coalition committed to Norwood Secondary College was \$7.5 million, of which \$4.5 million was for its stadium and \$3 million was for its science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) centre. In fact the school is a replica of my old high school in the 1970s. I think the Minister for Education was born about that time, in the early 1970s, and the science rooms that the students used in the 1970s are still there.

What the school needs as a priority is a two-court stadium for 1100 students. We have primary schools of half that size in terms of student population, or even less, that have a one court stadium. How do 1100 students fit on a one-court stadium? If we are talking about getting students first-rate educations, the school also needs a STEM centre. The minister needs to step in and provide this huge school with a second court so it has a double-court stadium. It will certainly assist in the school being able to use it as a sports facility, which is absolutely necessary.

I understand the government is offering \$50 million in shared community facilities in schools, so it certainly is incumbent on the Minister for Education to make sure that these funds — an additional \$1.6 million — are added to the funds that he is providing to Norwood for its single-court stadium to make sure that it gets a double-court stadium. It is absolutely necessary. Not to do this would be a travesty. Because the right thing to do, the decent thing to do, is for the minister to make sure he treats the students in my community, the students of Norwood Secondary College, with respect and provides for them to make sure that they not only have a two-court stadium but that they also have a STEM centre.

I move on to deal with Maroondah Hospital. When the government announced the breast cancer centre was to be built adjacent to Maroondah Hospital, we as a community welcomed that announcement. The government was well aware when it made that election commitment that the parking circumstances for the public at Maroondah Hospital were very, very poor. It was extremely difficult to get a park at the hospital, and that is why in addition to rebuilding Box Hill Hospital, in addition to upgrading Maroondah Hospital, the coalition also committed to — as a start — 100 additional car parks for the public at Maroondah Hospital.

The Premier and the Minister for Health, in announcing the cancer centre, had the opportunity to design into it hundreds of additional car spaces in the one building as part of the one construction. That would have been exercising foresight. That would have been demonstrating vision. That would have been good planning, and it would have gone an enormous way to dealing with what has now become a parking crisis. As I said, Labor has been in power for 12 out of the last 16 years, and it has watched and failed to act while this problem has become a crisis. We have over 1000 people who have signed a petition to have the car parking addressed within the context and the construction of the cancer centre. There has been media on this and I have raised the issue in Parliament, but we know that the government is not listening. We know it does not listen, because it did not listen with sky rail, it did not listen with changing the bail laws, it neglected to address the South Yarra station with the Melbourne Metro, and the list goes on.

My community is one that has been ignored and continues to be ignored by this government. They have had enough. The *Maroondah Leader* put up online an article on the Maroondah Hospital crisis, and some of the comments include:

I'm guessing Minister for Health Jill Hennessy has never had to search the 'sufficient' car park with a suffering child in the backseat.

... I feel for people with mobility issues who also can't walk far from their car to the hospital.

One woman described how she took her two-year-old to Maroondah emergency but was unable to find a park at all. There was no parking in the streets. She also had a younger child with her. They instead had to go to a GP, could not get an X-ray, and now as her son still cannot walk properly and she is concerned his foot is broken she has to actually return to the hospital. This is just a small snapshot of the sorts of situations that arise, but the frustration is palpable.

From an answer to a question on notice to the minister it was discovered that the hospital has in total 97 car parks for the public. This is a hospital that had in this last quarter over 9500 admissions, 7000 outpatient appointments, 5420 day procedures and 4741 emergency admissions. Emergency presentations are up on the last quarter. This crisis is not going to go away — it is a crisis. It is only going to get worse with our growing and ageing population.

The cancer centre has its own car park, to which the government is only contributing 39 places. Eastern Health has had to stump up for 50 places, when it needs to be able to spend that money on treating its patients. The government boasts of its huge surpluses, and I make the point that those surpluses come from the fixing of the structural deficit that Labor put this state into, and the coalition actually rectified that. I call on the minister and the Premier to intervene to fund and build the car parking needed to address the parking crisis at Maroondah Hospital as part of the construction of the cancer centre. That would be the right thing to do, the visionary thing to do and the respectful thing to do in enabling my community and the surrounding communities to be able to access the health care they need.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Disability support case review

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The action I ask is for the minister to meet with Kay and Jim Drysdale to explain why he will not

review their case for support funding. Kay and Jim Drysdale are 77 and 71 years old this year. They have been caring for their son, Ray, for 44 years. He has an intellectual disability, autism, mental illness and epilepsy. They have provided ongoing care for him and tried to make him as independent as possible.

They took out a second mortgage 10 years ago to help him try to live more independently. They work full time to try to pay his mortgage and to make it manageable for their son on his disability pension in the future. Despite having done the right thing by their son and by the state by providing ongoing care and working tirelessly to develop their son's independence, they have not received the help they need to continue this role.

I have known the family for many years, as does most of Berwick. Jim and Kay are loving parents who work hard in their small business. They have a daughter, Alison, as well as obviously their son, Ray. Ray is known around town, and with a little extra support can remain independent in the future. The Drysdales just need a little extra help so they can stop working.

In early 2015 they approached the Department of Health and Human Services again for help. They feel that things are getting desperate and that they will no longer be able to care for him at all if they do not get at least some help. They believe that 4 hours of care a week would ease the burden and help them to continue in their role. Their question to the minister is: when does a child with a disability stop being the sole responsibility of a parent, and how old do they need to be or do they have to die before they get any support? They would like the disability support register to become a waiting list, and they believe that if it were, they might have received some help over the last 40 years. They want the minister to commit to providing some help to the family instead of just fobbing them off.

Bendigo West electorate schools

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for the minister to visit my electorate of Bendigo West and meet with schools that have been successful in receiving funding in this year's state budget.

I want to thank the minister for his commitment to making Victoria the education state and for his commitment to the special needs plan. Kalianna School in my electorate was thrilled to receive \$4.3 million in the state budget for stage 1 of its new school. This

school is a leader in special needs education and has led the way in innovative learning and higher education involvement in special needs education. The school is excited about the future plans it has for its partnership with La Trobe University in training teachers in special needs education.

Marong Primary School was also successful in receiving planning money in the budget. Marong is a large growth area of Bendigo, and accommodating growing enrolments into the future requires planning. The minister visited Marong primary with me last year. He was the first education minister to visit the school in a very long time, and in fact from some perspectives he is the only minister to have visited this school. The school was thrilled that it has been allocated funding to plan for the future.

In Chewton the fantastic Chewton Primary School was excited to receive funding through School Pride funding. This school is an integral part of the Chewton community, and being a very old school it has ongoing issues with maintenance. It plans to use its funding for improvements to the building and grounds.

The minister will be welcomed with open arms in Bendigo West because people understand not just his commitment but also the Andrews Labor government's commitment to making Victoria the education state. We look forward to the minister's visit in the near future.

Goulburn-Murray Water bridge tenders

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. The action I seek is that the minister immediately overturn a policy position that is financially crippling Victoria's farming community.

Last week I was contacted by Nelson McIntosh of Nelmac Construction and Piling, which has been building bridges for 55 years. Based in Yackandandah, it was unsuccessful in a tender for two Goulburn-Murray Water bridges at Cobram and Yarrawonga in my electorate. Its tendered amount was nearly \$400 000 lower than the successful tender — in other words, the successful tender was 55 per cent higher. You might say the design was unsuitable or the specifications were not in order, but when Nelmac received a letter on 17 March this year, it stated that the business was unsuccessful due to a lack of documentation and design concept.

When Nelmac informed the design engineer that he was unsuccessful and said who the successful tenderer

was, for a price \$383 600 higher, there was silence on the end of the phone. This silence was followed by an admission that the same design concept was given to the successful company by himself, and he too was astonished that a contract for the same design concept for the same two bridges was given to a tenderer who submitted a 55 per cent higher bid. At a time when drought is affecting many parts of our state, and when those who have access to irrigation water are paying incredibly high prices to keep crops growing and livestock alive, why would the minister allow such rampant financial mismanagement to take place in Goulburn-Murray Water?

Our farming businesses are at the crossroads financially and yet the minister has allowed these rorts to take place. It is time that the minister removed this unsustainable Labor policy of awarding tenders to bidders for the same project specifications to her preferred tenderer. If this policy is allowed to continue unchecked, farmers will be paying 55 per cent higher costs for a commodity that falls free from the sky. The only costs involved are storage and delivery, and these costs are being driven up by the minister's department. An explanation and an apology are required to all Victorian water users.

Woodend Primary School

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that the minister join with me in visiting Woodend Primary School to meet with students and staff, with the principal Andy Kozak, with the school council president, Brad Dean, and with the parents and friends president, Emma Tuck. It will be a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the announcement of \$2 million for the school to upgrade and modernise facilities and for school community members to outline to the minister their aspirations for the school.

I visited the school last Wednesday, and the response from the school community was fantastic. I would particularly like to acknowledge former school council president Peter Lane, who has been advocating for many years now for a capital commitment to Woodend Primary School. His hard work has paid off. With more than 380 students enrolled, Woodend Primary School is one of the largest schools in my electorate. The school runs on solar power, with 140 panels funded by parents, community members and a small grant from Sustainability Victoria. Students grow their own food at the Karlsruhe annexe and are passionate about arts and performance, sport and fundraising. The junior school council is one of the most active I know, always

dreaming up new ways to raise money to support a range of local and international causes.

This much-needed injection of funds will enable students and staff at Woodend Primary School to get the first-rate facilities to match the first-rate education experience on offer. What a contrast this announcement is to the neglect of our education system by the former Liberal government. Its representatives in the Woodend area should be embarrassed by the neglect of the community by the Baillieu and Napthine governments. Again, the action I seek is that the minister join with me and that we celebrate Woodend Primary School being part of this government's commitment to developing the education state here in Victoria.

Sandringham Hospital

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. The action I seek is for the minister to unequivocally guarantee the ongoing and vital role of the world-class emergency department at Sandringham Hospital. The Sandringham Hospital emergency department has developed into a vital resource used by almost every family in the wider Bayside and Kingston region of Melbourne, and personally I fully support the Sandringham Hospital emergency department remaining open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Press speculation on the front page of the *Age* of 30 March that the Sandringham Hospital emergency department represents an early saving point in Victorian health administration must be counteracted emphatically by the government. The closure of the emergency department from 7.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m., speculated upon in the context of a federal-state funding stoush, would jeopardise local health care and, in the words of one Bayside doctor 'would place lives at risk'.

Alfred Health has subsequently stated that it has no plans to alter services. However, even the debate about politically expedient cuts to the 24/7 emergency department at Sandringham Hospital must be rejected. Local residents attend the Sandringham Hospital emergency department for multiple reasons, including cardiac arrest, bone fractures, allergic reactions, pneumonia, appendicitis, diabetic coma, food poisoning, high fever, domestic accidents, asthma and croup. Some of these conditions can be very frightening for families, and even more so if the patient has to travel another 14 kilometres to the nearest alternative emergency department. The Sandringham Hospital emergency department has developed into a world-class treatment and training facility, with massive reinvestment in the last five years, and it must remain that way for the next generation of Bayside and

Kingston residents and people from the wider area around Melbourne.

This morning a petition was lodged containing some 7200 signatures calling upon the Victorian government to maintain the vital 24-hour emergency department services at Sandringham Hospital to meet the health needs of the local community and the southern region of Melbourne. I place on record the comments that some people have recently written to my office. I quote from one letter in which a family says that they recall their family's 'various emergencies ranging from swallowed toys, airway blockages through to a severed finger and a coronary attack'. The person stated that they feel very lucky to have had the Sandringham Hospital emergency department close by. Another person wrote, 'In the past two years we have had cause to attend the emergency department' owing to cardiac arrest and an accidental fall. They stated that the care provided at the hospital 'is first class in every respect'.

The narratives continue, with other residents who have said, for example:

My son now age 21 has had three broken arms, one knee chip repaired ... and my daughter has had major knee reconstruction, and a number of operations ...

Yarrabah School

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — I raise an adjournment matter for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for the minister to come with me to visit Yarrabah School in Aspendale, a specialist development school in my electorate, and to talk to the school community about the master plan that was committed to in this year's Victorian budget.

It joins with a number of schools in my electorate that have benefited in the last couple of years, and Yarrabah School is a special example. The school has grown by 700 per cent over the past two decades, increasing from 19 students in 1992 to well over 160 students now, as well as some 60 early childhood students. The school has nearly 100 staff on site caring for well over 200 children, and it has not received any significant funding from the state government for many years. That is about to change, and it was a proud moment to see that Yarrabah was getting that master plan funding that will end portables being plonked on site and look to a longer term plan for that school.

I have to take issue with some of the comments from the member for Evelyn during her contribution to the debate on the appropriation bill. She made some comments about and politicised the government's response to supporting autism. The suggestion that

those support packages and the support and assistance for children and their families is somehow a political thing is absolutely absurd. When you go on a bit of a rant about the budget and start attacking it and politicising such an important issue in that way, saying things that are not based on any fact and in fact show a complete lack of understanding of what has actually been committed to in this budget, it is absolutely disgraceful.

I think the member for Evelyn should be cautious with her comments when she is trying to politicise something as important as support for children with autism, because our special needs boost in this budget is unprecedented. It is important and delivers significant investment for 20 specialist schools in our patch.

In conclusion, I ask the Minister for Education to come out to my electorate, visit Yarrabah School and talk to them about the important master plan that they are undertaking.

Pigeon control

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, who I note is in the chamber tonight. The action I seek is that the minister invest in measures to prevent pigeon infestation at public housing estates in the Prahran electorate.

Last year I raised this issue publicly on behalf of residents in the Inkerman Heights and Horace Petty estates, and some action was taken in cleaning some windows and installing some spikes. But a year later it is clear that this has not been enough, and I have taken the time to personally visit tenants and have them show me around the estates and show me the affected areas. These are not just housing estates; they are people's homes.

Residents continue to raise this with me, and pigeon infestation continues. It is a health risk. It causes an unsightly mess through droppings, with windows and common areas covered in pigeon faeces, and it causes the degradation of buildings. Now I understand it is difficult to prevent residents from feeding the birds, and signs have been put up and letters sent to residents, but action can be taken to put up barriers on all roosting sites, often on the ledges that are common on the exterior of public housing high-rises, as well as other measures to address this problem.

Melbourne Metro rail project

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister

for Public Transport, and the action I seek is that the Minister for Public Transport provide an update for constituents of Pascoe Vale regarding the construction of the Melbourne Metro tunnel and the improvement it will make to services for commuters on the Upfield and Craigieburn rail lines.

The 2016–17 budget has reaffirmed the Labor government's commitment to Metro rail, the biggest rail project in Australia, which will give the Cranbourne, Pakenham and Sunbury lines their own tunnel through the CBD. But importantly from the perspective of my constituents it will free up space in the city loop to run more trains in and out of the city, including on the Upfield and Craigieburn lines. I would appreciate if the Minister for Public Transport could update my constituents on how this will improve their services.

Maroondah Hospital

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — My adjournment request is to the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to accompany me out to Maroondah Hospital to talk to and consult with my community members and residents, as well as those from surrounding communities, about their views on combining the breast cancer centre with hundreds of additional public car parks in the one single construction.

The breast cancer centre funding is welcome, and there is a perfect opportunity to combine this with a public car park to address the parking crisis at Maroondah Hospital. The former coalition government rebuilt Box Hill Hospital and upgraded Maroondah Hospital with a commitment of a further 100 car parks as a start. With population growth and our ageing population, every month that the government delays addressing this crisis means residents are less able to access their health facilities — that is, sick patients and their families are unable to access their health facility. That includes inpatients, emergency presentations, outpatient appointments, day procedures, as well as visitors. They total in the tens of thousands of people per quarter, yet there are only 97 hospital public car parks and 72 time-restricted street car spaces.

Eastern Health is doing the heavy lifting on catering for its staff parking, but Eastern Health's funds should be used for patient care, not paying for public car parking, which this government must take responsibility for. I implore the Minister for Health to work with me and my community on this, to do the decent and the right thing by them, by the sick and their families, and to

show vision and fund hundreds of additional car spaces in the same building as the breast cancer centre.

Ballarat Secondary College

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Education. The action that I seek is that the minister visit Ballarat Secondary College, Wendouree campus. The Wendouree campus is a fantastic school. I have visited there many times and each time I do I am left feeling so impressed with the high quality of teaching and support offered to the students, but it is also not difficult to notice the need for building upgrades. These upgrades are urgent, and the urgency is driven by the exciting changes that are happening at the school. The Wendouree campus is moving forward at a great rate, with new uniforms, a new structure in providing education for students from years 7 to 12 and a new name.

The Andrews Labor government values this school and the amazing work that is happening in planning for the future. The Wendouree campus has great plans and aspirations, and it would be fantastic to share these with the Minister for Education, a minister who has secured \$6 million for this school: \$3 million in the last budget and a further \$3 million in this budget. I would encourage the minister to visit the Wendouree campus of Ballarat Secondary College to share in these exciting plans. He would be welcomed with open arms.

Responses

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — I thank the honourable member for Gembrook for his adjournment matter. Families like the Drysdales are the true champions of our community, and there is not a member in this place who at some stage through any of their constituent engagements would not have come in contact with an example like the Drysdales.

The roles that unpaid carers deliver in our community are of such worth and such unrecognised value that we should all stand in awe of the contributions they make. That is why the nation as a whole in 2013 signed up to the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), because the Productivity Commission, an Ombudsman's report, and numerous reports of this Parliament and its committees found that our disability system is disjointed, underfunded and dysfunctional.

The worst thing of all is that it keeps people with a disability away from mainstream Australian life. It seeks to keep people with a disability in a closed world where, sadly, their rights are not recognised by the

broader community. The reason the NDIS has bipartisan support at all levels of this Parliament and indeed this nation is that it seeks to deliver the goal of an ordinary life to people whose lives have been denied that ordinariness. For generations they have been kept away from the rights that they should rightly have expected one of the richest nations on earth to be able to deliver to them.

When opportunities like this come around to focus on the inadequacies of the disability support register (DSR), it serves as an opportunity to point to all that is wrong with our disability service system. I have nothing but admiration for the work of the likes of the Drysdales in the community of the member for Gembrook and every other community around this state, because our disability support system is dysfunctional and unable to cope. The disability support register, for all of its many virtues, is essentially a waiting list demonstrating this community's inadequacy and short-changing of people with a disability.

At the numerous community forums we have been holding on the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme, people like the Drysdales show up in huge numbers. There is no more moving example than when an elderly parent who has cared for a person with a disability all of their lifetime gets up out of frustration and because they are at their wit's end to point to the inadequacies of the system that is meant to be there to support them and points to the really human dilemma of 'What do I do with my son or daughter when I am no longer able to care for them?'. Until 2013 this nation, let alone this state, had no answer for that family.

Now in a great national endeavour we are on the verge of starting to roll out the national disability insurance scheme. I would like that to be available in one fell swoop to every family with someone with a disability in this country, but that cannot be. The national agreement rightly has a phased arrangement in place, and it does not get to the east — I am not exactly sure where the Drysdales live, in Berwick as I understand it — for some time. It starts in the north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne and areas of regional Victoria this year and indeed interstate in New South Wales as well. By 2019 this arrangement will be in place across this state. That should not be anything other than a matter of great rejoicing and support among all members of this place.

The honourable member raises an issue about one particular family, and I will undertake to look at that, but it would be wrong of me to create an expectation that the DSR is anything other than a waiting list — because that is precisely what it is. It is a testament to

how imperfect we have been as a country and as a community when it comes to the very processes that the honourable member and the Drysdale's circumstances point to. I use this as an opportunity, on the eve of a federal budget that is about to be delivered in a few short minutes, to make sure that all honourable members keep this issue above partisan politics and that we ensure that the national disability insurance scheme is funded in full, as it is in the two key states where it has been rolled out.

I would hope that the federal government does not succumb to the argument that is being promoted by some that somehow or other in the out years the national disability insurance scheme will be underfunded, because if it is not delivered in full by all of the partners — and it is a partnership between the state and the commonwealth — then the Drydales of this world will be the ones that will be short-changed. The member has asked me to have a look at that, and through the normal processes of review that is precisely what we will do. The more fundamental issue at stake here is the full rollout, on time and on schedule, as signed up to by the Prime Minister and the Premier in 2015 and as originally signed up to by former Premier Napthine and former Prime Minister Gillard as part of the national deal in 2013. I thank the honourable member for his adjournment item.

The honourable member for Prahran raised the issue of the Horace Petty estate and the issue around pigeon droppings on that estate. We should not underestimate the importance of this issue. I met with the South Yarra Public Tenants Association only last week, and it reinforced this matter in the context of much wider discussions about the future of that estate and the prospect of getting rebuilding going on that estate in the future. The association wanted to make sure that that community was not alienated from the rest of the community through some other misguided community groups seeking to oppose the redevelopment of the estate down there and seeking to oppose further investment in diverse housing stock on that estate. Like that community, I support its reasonable demands for modernised and better quality housing that more accurately fits its modern needs and the issues that the honourable member raised about a number of estates throughout inner Melbourne in particular. I will undertake to further examine that matter as indeed I undertook to do at my meeting with the South Yarra Public Tenants Association only last week.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Industry) —
Regarding the actions sought by the members for Bendigo West, Macedon, Mordialloc and Wendouree

for the attention of the Minister for Education, they will be passed on.

The members for Sandringham and Ringwood sought actions from the Minister for Health.

The member for Ovens Valley sought action from the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.

The member for Pascoe Vale sought action from the Minister for Public Transport.

All of those requests will be passed on diligently to the appropriate ministers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.26 p.m.

