

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Tuesday, 6 December 2016

(Extract from book 17)

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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

(to 9 November 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, and Minister for Emergency Services (from 10 June 2016) [Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation 10 June to 20 June 2016]	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects.	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D’Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports.	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for International Education and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment, and Minister for Resources.	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms G. A. Tierney, MLC

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Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

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

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
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Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁶	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Fumeaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
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Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Koroit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ Elected 14 March 2015

⁵ Elected 31 October 2015

⁶ Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

Legislative Assembly committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Tuesday, 6 December 2016

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) took the chair at 12.03 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, their culture, their elders, past, present and future, and elders from other communities who may be here today.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! I would like to acknowledge and welcome to the gallery today His Excellency Daniel Carvalho, Ambassador of Chile, and Mr Gabriel Jara Maldonado, Consul General of Chile. Also I make a very special acknowledgement to His Excellency Señor Eduardo Frei, former President of Chile and the Special Envoy for the Asia-Pacific. Your Excellency, we welcome you as a friend whose distinguished career is an inspiration to us.

Señor Eduardo Frei served Chile and its people as President from 1994 to 2000, and in doing so followed in the footsteps of his father, who also served as President. Our distinguished guest's presidency was notable for improvements in health and education and in efforts to reduce poverty. His service to his nation continued when he served as president of Chilean Senate from 2006 to 2008. He is currently special envoy for the Asia-Pacific, which brings him to our shores. With growing investment, trade and people-to-people links between Chile and Victoria, particularly in the areas of public infrastructure, health and education, it is with great warmth and affection that we welcome His Excellency Eduardo Frei to our state and to our Parliament.

Su excelencia, bienvenido al parlamento de Victoria, es un honor y privilegio recibirlo y hacerlo en la lengua de Pablo Neruda y Gabriela Mistral. On behalf of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and all members, we welcome you to the Parliament of Victoria.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Youth justice system

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. On Thursday of last week a young offender at Malmsbury was set upon and bashed.

The same offender was set upon and bashed on Saturday and then set upon and bashed yet again on Sunday night, requiring medical and emergency intervention. These are just three of numerous code black incidents that have now occurred in youth justice facilities just over the last week. Premier, how often in the last week has the situation become so bad that local safety emergency response teams (SERT) have been required to intervene and restore order to youth justice facilities?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Again, I would need to get the most up-to-date information in relation to the specifics of his question. What I will say, though, is we take our responsibilities very seriously, and that is to — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, it is no laughing matter. I tell you what: cutting funding is no laughing matter either. Ignoring Ombudsman's reports for four years is no laughing matter. We will not be lectured by those opposite, who cut and closed and ripped away instead of investing appropriately to protect — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, a straightforward question to the Premier, I ask you on relevance: how many times have SERT teams been required to intervene and restore order in the last week?

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier actually did answer the question at the outset. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition might have been too busy shouting over the top of him. However, the Premier very clearly indicated to the house that he would get the specifics in terms of the issues that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He would do well to listen to the answer before raising these unnecessary points of order.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, if the Premier has completed answering the question, as the Leader of the House suggests, he should simply sit down. He should not launch into a tirade against the opposition. If he is in a position to do so, he should add further information to answer the member's question, otherwise he should sit down.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier was being responsive in the early part of his response to the substantive question. I do now ask the Premier to come back to continuing to answer the question.

Mr ANDREWS — As I was indicating, the Leader of the Opposition has asked a specific question in relation to incidents. I will come back to him with advice on those matters. Just as I will honour that commitment, I will honour our commitment to staffing our juvenile justice facilities, our duty of care to inmates in juvenile justice facilities and our commitment to every single Victorian by providing extra resources and a comprehensive program of reform, as announced yesterday. We reject the notion of building facilities and then providing zero staff for them. We reject the approach of cutting hundreds and hundreds of staff out of the Department of Health and Human Services. We reject that.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier is entitled to silence. The Premier is responding to a substantive question as advanced by the Leader of the Opposition. He shall be allowed to continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — We reject that approach. We always have and we always will.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Speaker, noting the Premier said last sitting week he would get back to the Parliament about how many code white incidents had occurred, which he still has not done, I further note that at Malmsbury on 24 November there was yet another code white, which is a riot, forcing a full staff evacuation. This occurred over two units in which computer records were accessed, two common rooms were trashed and young offenders threw faeces at human staff. Premier, for two years you have claimed — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to silence when about to put a supplementary question to the Premier.

Mr GUY — Premier, for two years you have claimed there was no law and order crisis. Now you have begrudgingly admitted there is, will you also admit there is a massive crisis in our youth detention centres?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The Leader of the Opposition has raised a number of specific matters, and I will check on the accuracy of those before I respond to them.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is on his feet. The Leader of the Opposition will be silent. The Premier will continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — I am required to provide a response based on a commitment I gave in the last sitting week, and that takes a little bit of time, because you have got to work through all the errors made in the question — all the false claims made in the question. We will work through all the claims that the Leader of the Opposition has made in this question and we will respond in due course.

Mr Battin interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook will come to order.

Mr ANDREWS — He was criticising SERT last week, and now he is apparently a great friend of SERT this week. We will check his claims and come back to him in due course.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier has concluded his answer. The Premier was responsive to the question as put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Ministers statements: police resources

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am very proud to rise to update the house on action being taken by our government to give Victoria Police all the resources that they require — —

Mr Pesutto interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Hawthorn. The Chair will not warn the member for Hawthorn again. The Premier is entitled to silence when he is making a statement.

Mr ANDREWS — I am proud to update the house on the fact that our government is giving to Victoria Police all the resources that they need to fight crime and keep our community safe. Every Victorian deserves to feel safe; many in our community do not, and that is why the minister and the government have worked closely with the chief commissioner, police command, ordinary rank-and-file members of Victoria Police and the Police Association Victoria to deliver the most significant boost to police resources seen for a very long time.

I will come back to the context of these announcements in just a moment. But \$2 billion over the next four years to recruit 2729 additional police, and what is more, a new model to allocate staff — a model that police have

been calling for a very long time — to deal with the pressures and challenges of family violence, a growing community, youth crime issues that are well understood by this government and all Victorians, the scourge of ice and many other factors that demand a more sophisticated approach and stronger resources.

I cannot put it any better than the chief commissioner himself when he said:

It represents the greatest boost to policing numbers that we've had in 163 years.

What is more, the secretary of the police association, Ron Iddles, someone who has served this state with great distinction over a long period of time, said:

Today is an historic event. Never in the history of Victoria Police have we seen such an injection —

of police officers, the largest number ever committed by any government. Is it any wonder they are all upset over there?

Honourable members interjecting.

Carjackings

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to revelations last week that gang members are brazenly attempting to carjack luxury vehicles along the Geelong Road. Premier, can you now confirm that, rather than being isolated incidents, Victoria Police are now having to respond to between 15 and 20 attempted carjackings every week along this stretch of road?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I am not in a position to confirm that. Nor would I be taking the Leader of the Opposition's word for it, because he has got form on just making things up. What I can confirm is that Victoria Police need more resources. They need more resources — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is on his feet.

Mr ANDREWS — I hope the record got — —

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

Mr T. Smith interjected.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Kew

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Kew will withdraw himself from the house for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Kew withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Carjackings

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — As I said, I can confirm Victoria Police need more resources, and just for the sake of the record, to quote the Leader of the Opposition, he says, 'They absolutely do'. Victoria Police need more resources and the Leader of the Opposition cannot be loud enough to agree with me. It makes you wonder why they recruited to not even cover those leaving the police force. They did not even recruit to cover retention — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Geelong is warned. She will not be warned again. The Chair is on his feet. The Premier to continue, in silence.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Mordialloc has been warned. The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order in silence.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I asked a very straightforward question about 15 to 20 carjackings now being responded to by Victoria Police every week along the Geelong Road. I ask the Premier to cut to the chase and confirm that is the case. It is a simple question. I ask you to bring him back to it.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, again, the Premier did address the question immediately upon coming to his feet to answer — —

Mr Guy — So sit down.

Ms Allan — So charming.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition

shall not interject when the Leader of the House is on her feet. The Leader of the House, to continue.

Ms Allan — Indeed, Speaker. The question also went to matters around Victoria Police, and it is entirely appropriate for the Premier in answering the question to go to the issue of resources for Victoria Police as he has been doing, and he should be entitled to continue to answer the question.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, as with the point of order on the previous question, if the Premier has nothing to add, if he is simply undertaking to obtain further information for the Leader of the Opposition and if he has concluded being relevant, then he should sit down. It is not in order for him to embark on a general dissertation about Victoria Police in response to the very specific question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr ANDREWS — Thank you so much, Speaker. So I am — —

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition does not like the answer. Well, you might as well get used to it, because this government will continue to give Victoria Police every resource they need. We will not be, for instance, spending two whole years failing to even cover retention. Those who would pretend today to be concerned did not recruit anywhere near enough police in 2013 or 2014. And remember the sustainable government initiative? ‘Let’s cut the resources available to Victoria Police’.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair warns the member for Rowville and the member for Bass. The Premier will continue, in silence.

Mr ANDREWS — So the — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition wants to — —

Mr Guy — I haven’t said anything.

Mr ANDREWS — Yes, you have. You said quite a lot yesterday.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier, through the Chair.

Mr ANDREWS — Out there with your usual gendered language yesterday, that is what you were. In any event, despite all the bluster and the noise and the anger of those opposite in opposition, their record in government is very obvious.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order!

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. The member for Ripon on a point of order. The member for Ripon is entitled to silence.

Mr Staikos interjected.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Bentleigh

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Bentleigh will withdraw from the house for a period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Bentleigh withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Carjackings

Questions and statements resumed.

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

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the question to the Premier went to the matter of Victoria Police — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Essendon will allow the Leader of the House to make a point of order in silence.

Ms Allan — The question went to the matter of Victoria Police resources. It is entirely appropriate for the Premier to address those matters in his answer. If those opposite do not like it, that is not enough of a reason to take a point of order against the Premier.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier is debating the question. It was a specific question about carjacking incidents on the Geelong Road. The Premier is now taking exception to what the Leader of the Opposition said at a press conference yesterday. That has got nothing to do with the question; it is debating it. I ask you to bring him back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair upholds the point of order as advanced by the member for Ripon. The Chair calls on the Premier to come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — We will come back to the Leader of the Opposition on the claims that he has made — we will check the accuracy of those. But what I can confirm is 2729 additional police; I think that is exactly what police need. And why do I form that view? Because that is what the Chief Commissioner of Police has asked for. That is what the secretary of the Police Association Victoria has asked for and endorsed.

I think that the dedicated men and women of Victoria Police will be much better able to deal with issues like carjacking because they have been resourced properly for the first time in the history of this state.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Noting that crime figures in New South Wales released today again show massive falls in crime in New South Wales as opposed to the massive rises of crime here in Victoria under the Andrews government, if people in vehicles driving in broad daylight along one of the busiest highways in our state are no longer safe, will the Premier now admit that two years of going soft on crime has let criminal gangs flourish and left our communities living in fear?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The answer is no. What I can confirm though —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Well, those opposite do not seem interested in listening to the answer. The member for Warrandyte could not get a question up, so he just yabbers from over there.

Mr Burgess interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings has been warned.

Mr ANDREWS — What is important is to make sure that you invest each and every year, whether it is delivering in full on custody officers in our first budget in 2015 — delivered, whether it is a \$600 million package in this year's budget — delivered. The announcements made on Sunday were endorsed by police command and the Police Association, with a new approach and an unprecedented amount of investment.

And on the comparisons between Victoria's data and New South Wales, the Leader of the Opposition was pulled up on radio yesterday about this by Tom Elliott, no less. So you could not get away with it with him and you cannot get away with it in here either.

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

Ministers statements: police resources

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — On Sunday we changed the way we allocate police in this state, and it is after extensive work from Victoria Police and the Police Association (TPA). What this new model is going to deliver is 2729 new police over four years. With our 406 there will be 3135 police in the next five years out on our streets.

As the Police Association secretary said, 'it is a game changer', and indeed it is. Those opposite say, 'Police need resources'. Well, they do, but how did we get into this position?

Mr Battin interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook will desist.

Ms NEVILLE — Well, let us read budget paper 3, 2010–11: the Labor government funded 1700 police. Let us look at the last budget, the 2014–15 budget: what we saw was the lowest number of police go through the academy in a decade. That is right, that is your legacy. So it is a game changer.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is unable to hear the minister. The minister is entitled to silence. She will continue in silence. The minister has the call.

Ms NEVILLE — It is also a game changer because we now have a contract between the government,

Victoria Police and the Police Association to deliver 2729 police over the next four years — signed by us, signed by the secretary of the Police Association, signed by Victoria Police. The big question is: are those opposite going to abide by that contract?

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms NEVILLE — Are those opposite going to do that or are they going to keep flip-flopping?

Mr Battin interjected.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Gembrook

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Gembrook will now withdraw himself from the house for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Gembrook withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Ministers statements: police resources

Questions and statements resumed.

Ms Allan — On a point of order, Speaker, I would just like to draw the house's attention to the Leader of the Opposition's claims that the Chief Commissioner of Police and the secretary of the TPA should be believed by no-one. That is his claim: that these people should be believed by no-one. That is the position of the Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition will come to order; the Chair is on his feet. There is no point of order. The minister, to continue.

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — This is a model developed by Victoria Police in consultation with the police association and which the government has signed up to. So over the next five years, 3135 new police. Will those opposite ever back those police?

Port Phillip Prison

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, I refer to revelations

that Middle Eastern crime gangs have seized control of parts of Port Phillip Prison and have begun to operate crime empires from behind bars. With your government signing a new 20-year operational contract for the running of the prison, why have you not inserted a single new provision into the new contract to ensure that this rampantly increasing criminal activity is detected as a priority and stopped?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Macedon will come to order, as will the Leader of the House.

Mr M. O'Brien interjected.

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

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I do thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and the member for Hawthorn, being such an expert, having answered so many questions in his long parliamentary career. Don Coulson's senior legal adviser — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier, through the Chair.

Mr ANDREWS — The Leader of the Opposition has done as he so often does — he has made a claim. He has essentially asked me to confirm whether certain items are included or not in that contract. I cannot confirm that, and I will not for a moment accept his word on any matter. I will speak with my department and respond in due course.

Honourable members interjecting.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Hastings

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hastings will withdraw himself from the house for the period of 1½ hours. His disruptive conduct is not acceptable.

Honourable member for Hastings withdrew from chamber.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and
MINISTERS STATEMENTS**

Port Phillip Prison

Supplementary question

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Victorian prisons are becoming centres for organising gun running, drug trafficking, bikie bangs smuggling drugs into prisons and attacks on guards by prisoners who are high on ice. Premier, with four corrections ministers in just 10 months — just like the crime wave on our streets, just like the crisis in our Victorian youth justice centres — and two years of doing nothing about law and order, is it not the fact that our prisons have become the latest casualty of your soft-on-crime approach?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Roads and Road Safety is warned. The Chair will not warn the minister for roads again.

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Macedon

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Macedon has been warned. The member for Macedon will withdraw herself from the house for the period of 1 hour.

Honourable member for Macedon withdrew from chamber.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and
MINISTERS STATEMENTS**

Port Phillip Prison

Supplementary question

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The answer to the Leader of the Opposition’s supplementary question is no. We will continue —

An honourable member — Which branch is it?

Mr ANDREWS — Apparently that is funny. They would like a different outcome. The answer is no. The government will continue to make sure that it does

everything it possibly can to deal with all the issues that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition. In relation to illegal guns, for instance, this government has made profound changes to the law in relation to illegal firearms. We are very proud to have made those changes. So appalling is our record, I think those opposite voted for it; I think they did. In relation to our prison system, I can alert the Leader of the Opposition, for instance, in terms of juvenile justice, the staff’s safety is very important to us and reported WorkCover incidents are actually down compared with those years that the opposition were in power. So the answer is no.

Ministers statements: crime legislation

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I rise to inform the house of new laws to be introduced by the Andrews Labor government to target older, experienced criminals who prey on young people to do their dirty work. The government will introduce legislation into Parliament early next year to create a new offence of ‘procuring young people to commit offences’. This offence will carry a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

Yesterday the government announced a raft of new measures to deal with youth crime across the board. These measures are aimed at making sure that young people are held accountable for their crimes and provided with intensive supervision and control orders to break the cycle of reoffending. But we also need to target older criminals who induce and encourage youths to commit crimes. That is why we are creating a new offence which will capture circumstances where a person encourages a young person to engage in general criminal activity, such as where an older person encourages a young person to bring them stolen goods without specifying how those goods should be obtained.

The offence will also capture those who knowingly benefit, directly or indirectly, from an indictable offence committed by a child. Victoria Police has spoken to us about these laws and has advised that in some cases older criminals are procuring young people to commit offences and that that is particularly true in relation to car thefts and carjackings. So this offence will recognise that those who commission young people to commit violent crimes are just as culpable as the actual offenders. In announcing these laws the government is sending the strongest possible message that older, experienced criminals will no longer be able to use young people as shields against criminal responsibility.

Pill testing

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — My question is for the Premier. Going into this summer experts fear we are once again going to see overdoses and deaths from party drugs if we do not bring in pill testing at music festivals. Doctors and community members are planning to hand out pill-testing kits at festivals across Australia, including at Melbourne University, because governments have failed to provide this service themselves. We know from years of experience in Europe that pill testing reduces drug use and saves lives because when people are given non-judgemental advice about the harmful substance they are about to take, they overwhelmingly choose to throw out their drugs. Yet the Premier has told the media he does not support pill testing. Premier, do you think it is acceptable to see another person die this festival season when we have a measure available that is proven to reduce drug use and to save lives?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Melbourne for her question. I do note her very recent interest in the provision of non-judgemental advice. I did not think I would ever get lectured by the Greens on the provision of non-judgemental advice. That is their stock in trade, I am afraid. Notwithstanding the seriousness of these matters, the hypocrisy of some is just boundless. I speak about pill-testing kits in the first instance, and then I want to come to ice, which is a related issue — not exactly the same issue that you are asking about but a related issue, and it speaks volumes to our approach in relation to these matters. In relation to pill testing, Victoria Police do not support that and neither do I. You can criticise the government and me for that if you choose to, but that is the position that we have adopted, and that is the position that Victoria Police believes is the best in terms of not only law enforcement but harm minimisation as well. The fact that we can have a debate about these matters is probably a good thing. For too long perhaps we have not talked about this as much as we should have.

That answers the substantive question you have asked. I think it is a bit rich and perhaps not quite the tone that we ought to adopt when it comes to these discussions to be suggesting that I might like someone to die this summer. I do not know that is necessarily the level of debate that the people of Melbourne sent the member for Melbourne here to lead but, anyway, that will be for others to judge.

When it comes to ice — the scourge of ice — we made commitments around establishing an ice task force, which I chair —

Mr Pesutto interjected.

Mr ANDREWS — and which the member for Hawthorn would know nothing about. I chair that task force, and I am proud to do it, and it delivered a comprehensive package, in full delivery of our election commitment, within 100 days of coming to office. But more than that, the things that could not wait, if you like, were funded in that first package: additional treatment, additional training, additional resources and some significant law reform as well.

An honourable member — Drug Court?

Mr ANDREWS — Indeed, I am just coming to the Drug Court — the Labor Drug Court, something we are very, very proud of — in Melbourne, and we are expanding it in the member's electorate, for heaven's sake. So the issue here is that we did not just deliver that package. Knowing that this is a big challenge, have gone even further, over and above our commitment made at the election. There was another ice package in this year's budget, and I congratulate my honourable friend the Minister for Mental Health, who has responsibility for these matters, and other members from the task force, who all show the leadership in action — not in commentary, in action — because we have the responsibility to govern our state as given to us by the people of Victoria, a challenge and a privilege that the member for Melbourne would know nothing about.

Supplementary question

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — Given that years of evidence in Europe show that harm minimisation is more effective than a punitive approach when it comes to drugs and that pill testing does indeed save lives, will the government at least commit to a trial of pill testing over the summer at music festivals?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I can only confirm for the member for Melbourne that we are not in Europe, we are in Victoria. Victoria Police have provided consistent advice, and we are following that consistent advice. Beyond that, though, our investment in harm minimisation, our investment in pharmacotherapy and in a whole range of different methods and programs that are about trying to drive down drug use, particularly intravenous drug use, and in other programs that relate more specifically to the question you have asked, is well in excess — I think something like double — of the amount spent by previous governments. We are very proud of that. It is in the order of \$190 million. Can we do more? Of course we can, and that is why we will not be getting so much into

the lecture. Instead we will be delivering outcomes; again, a subject that those who sit on the sidelines would know very, very little about.

Ministers statements: youth control orders

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I rise to inform the house that the Andrews government will introduce a new youth control order to crack down on young offenders. Police have said more intensive supervision of young offenders is needed, and that is exactly what we are doing. A new youth control order will establish a stricter community-based sentencing option for the Children’s Court. But let us be very clear: some young people need to be in custody, and this new measure will not prevent the court from doing that where appropriate.

Importantly, young offenders sentenced to a youth control order must comply with an education, training or employment plan. The Department of Education and Training will work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice and Regulation to ensure young offenders have an education plan that could include access to vocational education and training, Victorian certificate of applied learning programs or school-based apprenticeships and traineeships that will lead to a certificate that can be used to access employment pathways. This will complement the government’s \$8.6 million pilot navigator program for disengaged learners between 12 and 17 years of age to re-engage them with learning through intensive support to connect them to the services and the supports they need.

Young offenders may also attend specialist programs such as violent behaviour programs and drug and alcohol counselling because we know that to make the community safer we need to make sure that young offenders do not get stuck in a pattern of repeat offending. Non-compliance will result in the court being able to place the young person back into custody.

The Department of Health and Human Services will continue to work closely with the Children’s Court, Victoria Police and Victoria Legal Aid to design and implement the youth control order. While those opposite slashed 20 youth justice workers out of the system, we are funding 58 new full-time, specialist youth justice workers and 8 psychologists, and legislation to create the order will be introduced early next year.

Energy prices

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My question is to the Premier. Premier, when the closure of Hazelwood power station was announced you said any power price increase:

... will cause pressure on household budgets, I acknowledge that. But the numbers are more in the order of 4 per cent.

Less than a month later power prices for Victorian households are already increasing by an average of 10 per cent, more than double what you told Victorians any increase would be. Premier, given you have already misled Victorians about this once, will you guarantee — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is unable to hear the member for Caulfield. The member for Caulfield will continue in silence.

Mr SOUTHWICK — Less than one month later power prices for Victorian households are already increasing by an average of 10 per cent, more than double what you told Victorians any increase would be. Premier, given you have already misled Victorians about this once, will you guarantee that power prices will not increase even further after Hazelwood closes on 31 March 2017?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The exchanges between the two members are disruptive and not acceptable. The Premier, to respond to a substantive question as put by the member for Caulfield.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The member for Caulfield, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this question. I have just been accused by the member for Caulfield of misleading the Victorian community. Did Hansard get that? The adjunct professor, ‘I’m really a minister; I am all the things I say I am’ — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is on his feet. I remind members of the standing orders, which provide that when the Chair is on his feet all members, including the Leader of the Opposition, will come to order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition on a point of order, to be heard in silence.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier was asked a serious question. He is debating

the question. I would ask you to bring him back to answering the question.

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS — On the point of order, Speaker, the question included an accusation that I have misled the Victorian community, and I am dealing with that part of the question. The character or lack thereof of the questioner is directly relevant to that.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does ask the Premier to come back to answering the question as put by the member for Caulfield.

Mr ANDREWS — Yes, sadly, it is personal when you say you are something you are not, when you say you are a professor and you are not one, and you say you are a minister but you have not been sworn in.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair called on the Premier to come back to answering the question. The Premier's subsequent response does not correspond to the ruling as put by the Chair. I request now that the Premier come back to answering the question.

Mr Southwick interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I warn the member for Caulfield. The Premier will come back to answering the question.

Mr ANDREWS — It is the only time he can interject. I will comply with your ruling, Speaker, so no doubt the member for Caulfield will interject away now, safe that he is protected from me dealing with him. The member for Caulfield — —

Questions and statements interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Member for Hawthorn

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Hawthorn had been warned. The member for Hawthorn will now leave the house for a period of 1 hour. The Premier is entitled to silence. The Premier is attempting to respond to the member for Caulfield and the Chair is determined to ensure that can happen.

Honourable member for Hawthorn withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Energy prices

Questions and statements resumed.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The member for Caulfield refers to what are called 'standing offers'. These relate to about 10 per cent of households — not all households, as he would assert. That is to say that market offers will be issued in the usual way later on this month, and in a rolling fashion, and we will wait and see whether the doomsday predictions of the member for Caulfield are accurate or not. But the government stands by the modelling done by government agencies, independent of government, as to the impact of Hazelwood's announced closure. The member for Caulfield misinterprets and has been caught out doing that, just as he was back at the time of the closure. He took modelling that if he had even read the title, the title itself talked about the impact on prices if you bought Hazelwood out. That has not occurred. The company has made its own decision. So the member for Caulfield is referring to standing offers in a market system and they are 10 per cent of total bills. Any increase is obviously regrettable — absolutely — but the position put forward by the member for Caulfield is factually incorrect, something for which he is renowned.

Supplementary question

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — Given that your promise of a 4 per cent price rise was completely false, and given your refusal to guarantee there will not be further price increases — —

Ms D'Ambrosio interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will allow the member for Caulfield to put to the house and to the Premier a supplementary question in silence.

Mr SOUTHWICK — Given that your promise of a 4 per cent price rise was completely false, and given your refusal to guarantee there will not be further price increases, what price increases will you now admit Victorians will have to pay for your government forcing the closure of Hazelwood next year?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house will come to order. The Leader of the House will come to order, so will the Deputy Leader of the House.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — One thing is for sure: the member for Caulfield has got plenty of front. His last question was about misleading Victorians; this question is about being completely false. Just pause for a moment and let that rank hypocrisy roll over you. That was completely false from the member for Caulfield — the adjunct professor — with a false claim in it, and then to add to that, at the end a little tweak about how Hazelwood was forced to close down. What a complete nonsense! Frankly, the only thing the member for Caulfield knows is that there is a world and he is in it. Right? That is all he knows. And if he is not lying or actively misleading the community about his qualifications, he is making up matters for which he is apparently responsible as a shadow of a minister.

Ministers statements: police resources

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to update the house on yet another achievement of the Andrews government in fully funding the delivery of an additional 2729 police officers for Victoria. This is a record investment of over \$2 billion for the police force over the next four years, the largest single investment in Victoria Police's history. Together with the additional recruits that we incorporated into the 2016–17 budget, this government has now funded 3135 police.

Those opposite funded no extra police in four years. This unprecedented investment is a clear message to the Victorian people that we are using our AAA credit rating, our AAA economy and our strong budget to ensure that we deliver what Victorians need. We have delivered over 184 000 jobs in two years, nearly double what the opposition managed in their four long years. Those opposite talk tough on crime, but their legacy in government is of destitute administration and of a social deficit for our great state. How else can we reconcile their tough talk in government when they talk about crime with their cutting — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer can generate some engagement in the house, but the member for Box Hill, the manager of opposition business, is entitled to make a point of order in silence.

Mr Clark — Speaker, the Treasurer is now in breach of sessional orders. He is proceeding to debate the matter rather than advise the house of matters, and I ask you to bring him back to compliance.

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

Mr PALLAS — To quote Joe Biden, 'Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value'. Real conviction requires action to match the rhetoric. That is what we delivered and that is what they never did. We have seen it all before. If they could not shut it, sell it or sack it, it was of no value to them.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Treasurer is now defying your ruling, and I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer will — —

Mr PALLAS — Well, Speaker — —

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair has not called on the Treasurer. If the Treasurer is not wishing to speak on the point of order, the Chair then calls on the Treasurer to come back and conclude his ministers statement.

Mr PALLAS — Only Labor values and resources our police. If you want to know what their values were when they cut 350 vital police support staff, that is what they valued. The Andrews Labor government is getting it done.

Ms Neville — On a point of order, Speaker, just in reference to an earlier question asked by the Leader of the Opposition and a response given by the Premier, I want to make it clear that the advice I have received directly from the chief commissioner's office during question time is that there have not been 15 to 16 carjackings on the Geelong Road.

An honourable member — Just making it up.

Ms Neville — They are just making it up. They are making it up.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair is on his feet. I remind all members. There is no point of order.

Ms Allan — Further on the point of order, Speaker, the Premier, during his answer on this issue made a — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — Look, some auditioning is going on. Is it preselection time, is it, chaps?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House on a new point of order?

Ms Allan — Yes, I am endeavouring to.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House will make the new point of order succinctly.

Ms Allan — Thank you. I am endeavouring to, Speaker. On a new point of order, the Premier during his answer on this question around carjacking and the Geelong Road made an undertaking that he would check the accuracy of the question and come back and provide further advice. We have been able to do that during the course of question time, and the Minister for Police is now endeavouring to provide that advice. I appreciate that the advice may conflict directly with the falsehoods that have been perpetrated by those opposite; however, it is still relevant to the house —

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair has heard sufficient. There is no point of order.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Ms Sandell — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I still have several questions on notice outstanding after several months. They are questions 9974, 11 783, 11 785, 11 874 and 11 911. Could I please ask that you direct the Speaker to ask the ministers to urgently answer them, as constituents are waiting for a response.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I shall refer that matter to the Speaker.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I rise again with the regular monotony that comes from asking questions on notice to ministers who refuse to comply with sessional orders — sessional orders that they themselves voted for. Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to sessional order 10, which says that questions on notice need to be answered in 30 days, yet time and time again I stand before you asking you and the Speaker to compel the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to actually answer the questions that were put to him. If he does not understand the responsibilities of a minister, if he does not understand his responsibilities as someone who has been commissioned by the Governor of Victoria to take that position, come into this house and comply with the sessional orders that this Parliament voted on, then I seriously do not know what he is doing with his day. Could you please compel him to answer questions 11 813 and 11 812, which are now overdue.

As the member for Melbourne must agree with me, the fact that ministers across the board on the other side of the chamber are refusing to answer questions in compliance with sessional orders makes a mockery of those orders and indeed makes a mockery of this Parliament, when these questions are asked for the

constituents that we represent right across Victoria. I ask you to get him to comply with the sessional orders as they are written.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I will refer that matter to the Speaker.

Rowville electorate

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — (12 097) The constituency question I wish to raise is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety on behalf of residents in my electorate of Rowville. VicRoads phoned my constituents on 24 November to tell them that VicRoads would pay for the damage to the wheels of their car that resulted from them driving over deep potholes on Ferntree Gully Road, Knoxfield. This is a matter that I raised as a constituency question on 8 November 2016. Minister, can you advise why VicRoads phoned again three days later saying that they had made an error and were withdrawing their payment for the damage after all? Minister, it is hard to understand how this bizarre and cruel mistake could have been made by VicRoads and was not double-checked at the time.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (12 098) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and I ask: what is the Andrews Labor government doing to ensure teachers are provided with the resources and support that they need to provide the best outcome possible for local students?

I recently met with Meaghan Flack, an official of the Australian Education Union (AEU) who works across the northern suburbs, as well as several AEU members from schools within my electorate: Joan McGregor, a teacher from Coburg West Primary School; Janet Dorling, an education support staff member from Coburg West Primary School; and Blake Stanfield, a secondary teacher from Coburg High School. The key issues that these union members raised in our meeting included their ever-increasing workload; the lack of job security, particularly for education support staff — and one example in particular that was provided to me was of someone who had worked in the library for 16 years and has to continually reapply for her job — and of course their salary and other conditions. It was good to have the opportunity to talk with local teachers and hear firsthand the things that they believe will help them teach students.

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

Lowan electorate

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — (12 099) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Minister, when will the new public transport service between Stawell, Halls Gap and Bellfield, which includes at least three bus services per day, be approved and commenced? The Grampians National Park is a major tourism drawcard for western Victoria which offers not only a beautiful environment and bushwalking opportunities but also a range of high-quality accommodation, cafes, wineries, gourmet food producers and activities such as abseiling and rock climbing. One of the greatest barriers to the further development of tourism opportunities in the Grampians is poor access to public transport. The local community, including Graeme Sandlant from Stawell City Bus Services and Tim Wilson from Tim's Place, along with Northern Grampians Shire Council and Public Transport Victoria, have been working closely to develop a tri-daily connecting bus route, which has broad community support. This service will greatly improve connectivity with other public transport services to Horsham and Stawell and assist in expanding tourism in the Grampians. I therefore ask the minister to confirm when this new tri-daily bus service to connect Stawell to Halls Gap and Bellfield will be approved and will commence.

Sunbury electorate

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — (12 100) My question is for the Minister for Planning. What steps can members of my community take to provide important feedback on the recent release of precinct structure plans 1074 and 1075? Recently the Victorian Planning Authority released draft plans for Sunbury's future growth over the next 30 years. These are very important plans, and I am keen to see as much community feedback as possible. I ask the minister: what steps can community members take to provide important feedback on such plans?

Sandringham electorate

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — (12 101) My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Education. The Beaumaris community supports reinvestment in the Beaumaris High School site. At the last state election the coalition committed the greatest capital investment in that site, and that point should not be overlooked. There are a range of stakeholders within the precinct, including the Beaumaris Conservation Society and the Friends of Long Hollow Heathland. The heathland has been described as a living museum, with a rare range of plants, and it has been suggested that that plant regime could be better respected within

the new school precinct, and I ask the minister whether he will give due consideration to the representations of local environmental groups to achieve the best outcome.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Can I ask honourable members to put their question at the beginning of their contribution rather than the end.

Yuroke electorate

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — (12 102) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Noting the recent announcement of funding for a business case for the duplication of Craigieburn Road, my question is: what is the time line for the development of this business case, and what are the next steps to progress duplication of Craigieburn Road? Some weeks ago I was delighted to welcome the minister to Craigieburn to inform local residents that the government would be investing \$250 000 in a much-needed business case. I thank the minister for taking the time to visit Craigieburn for the second time to meet with residents and interested groups on this important matter. I have long advocated for the duplication of Craigieburn Road, as the area continues to grow and welcome new residents. I am proud to represent a thriving area that many families choose as their home, and I look forward to informing all residents of the time line for completion of the business case.

Burwood electorate

Mr WATT (Burwood) — (12 103) My constituency question is to the Minister for Police. After two years of inaction by the Andrews Labor government the latest crime statistics show that crimes against the person in Camberwell went up by 50.75 per cent, Glen Iris by 82 per cent, Ashburton by 84 per cent, Ashwood by 57 per cent, Chadstone by 29 per cent, Surrey Hills by 42 per cent and Box Hill South by 41 per cent. Noting the fact that thousands of my constituents have signed a petition calling for more police, I ask: when will the Ashburton police station, the Burwood police station and the Mount Waverley police station opening hours be restored to the levels they were under the previous coalition government?

Niddrie electorate

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — (12 104) My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask: how will the recent changes to the solar feed-in tariff affect constituents in my electorate of Niddrie? Many locals

and concerned residents in my community have contacted me since my election in 2012 as their cents per kilowatt hour fed back into our electricity grid have continued to decline. The Andrews government has ambitious renewable energy targets of 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025, and continued solar uptake will be a critical part of this. Victorians should be fairly compensated for the power they generate, plain and simple, and I ask the minister to advise me how the recent changes she has undertaken to the solar feed-in tariff will affect constituents in my electorate of Niddrie.

Polwarth electorate

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — (12 105) My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Can the minister reveal why along the Great Ocean Road and on the alternate Otways roads there are no signs indicating that the commercial radio stations at 95.9, 92.7 and 106.3 FM are available to tune into during an emergency? After the disasters of the past 12 months the local radio station in Colac has been a major and important source of information for people and communities along the Great Ocean Road and in the Otways. We have seen many days this year where literally thousands of vehicles have been either diverted or turned around due to natural disasters. Unfortunately mobile phone coverage for most telecommunications companies is still Third World along most parts of this very popular tourist route, so relying on mobile technology to inform and warn visitors of potential dangers is both naive and dangerous. The commercial service out of Colac demonstrated its commitment during the Christmas fires last year when it broadcast information and warnings 24/7 across the region, which was the only guaranteed method of instant communication. The Great Ocean Road is a significant tourism driver for Victoria —

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

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — (12 106) My constituency question is to the Minister for Sport, and I ask the minister: how is the government supporting sport in Dandenong by encouraging greater participation in local sport and recreation clubs? I was delighted yesterday to announce a \$100 000 funding contribution from the Andrews Labor government to upgrade lighting at Greaves Reserve in Dandenong. This project, when complete, will allow the Whitestar Dandenong Soccer Club and the South Eastern Titans Rugby League Club to both train and play matches at

night. Rather than having to turn away prospective players from their clubs, they will now be able to continue to grow their clubs and attract new participants. Investments like this make a real difference to local sporting clubs and should be encouraged. Our local sporting clubs are important social outlets and make a vital contribution to the health and wellbeing of our community, so government support for these clubs is very important.

CRIMES (MENTAL IMPAIRMENT AND UNFITNESS TO BE TRIED) AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997 to implement recommendations of the Victorian Law Reform Commission arising out of its review of that act, to amend that act and the Mental Health Act 2014 to transfer functions of the Forensic Leave Panel to the Mental Health Tribunal, to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I ask the Attorney-General for a brief explanation further to the long title.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I am happy to assist the member for Box Hill, although the long title did have a fair bit of detail in it. As the member for Box Hill well knows, there was a Victorian Law Reform Commission report — one I believe he commissioned in fact — into the Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997, and this legislation implements many of the recommendations that came out of that report, including a new system of mandatory progress reviews, a new test of fitness to plead, making fitness to plead a question for the judge, changing some matters regarding the role of the Attorney-General and passing responsibility for those matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and other matters.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

VICTORIAN PLANNING AUTHORITY BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to establish the Victorian Planning Authority, to amend the Planning and

Environment Act 1987 to abolish the Growth Areas Authority, to make consequential and other amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

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

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — The bill implements the government's commitment to set up a statewide authority that will plan for jobs and developments in priority areas across Victoria. The Victorian Planning Authority will lead integrated land use and infrastructure planning in urban renewal areas, growth areas and regional cities and towns across Victoria.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

BUILDING AMENDMENT (ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1993 to improve the enforcement of that act, to provide for the further regulation of building practitioners and to reform the building permit process and to amend the Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995 to further regulate entry into domestic building contracts, to make consequential and other miscellaneous amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

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

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — The Building Amendment (Enforcement and Other Measures) Bill 2016 amends the Building Act 1993 and other acts to improve the building permit levy system, a registration scheme for building practitioners and the enforcement of that act and other acts, including a regime that will address questions of where illegal demolition has occurred such as in the case, which is well known across the Parliament, of the Corkman matter, and puts in place both a quite stringent monetary penalty regime and a regime around indictable offences which would go before a court, with potential for a person so convicted to be jailed for up to five years.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

CHILDREN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REPORTABLE CONDUCT) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — In representing the Minister for Families and Children in the other place, I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to establish a reportable conduct scheme, to make consequential and other amendments to the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, the Working with Children Act 2005, the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Disability Act 2006 and the Ombudsman Act 1973 and for other purposes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — If the minister has it available amongst his notes or from knowledge, can he provide the house with a brief explanation of the bill?

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) — I can provide a brief explanation or indeed a long one, should you wish it, manager of opposition business. This is a bill that amends, amongst other acts, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to establish a reportable conduct scheme. Under the scheme, allegations of specified kinds of child abuse or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct made against employees of organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children must be notified to the Commission for Children and Young People and investigated by the organisation or the regulator.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PAROLE REFORM AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Corrections Act 1986 to provide for a presumption against parole for prisoners serving terms of imprisonment for certain fatal offences where the victim is a police officer or where the body or remains of the victim have not been located and to amend the Sentencing Act 1991 to permit a court to take such factors into account in such circumstances and for other purposes.

Read first time; by leave, ordered to be read second time immediately.

*Statement of compatibility***Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) 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 Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2016.

In my opinion, the bill, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, may be partially incompatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview

The bill amends the Corrections Act 1986 and the Sentencing Act 1991 to introduce:

parole reforms for offenders who murder a police officer; and

parole and sentencing reforms for offenders in relation to 'no body' cases.

Human rights issues

Clause 3 of the bill inserts new section 74AAA into the Corrections Act 1986 to provide for additional conditions governing the decision about whether or not to grant parole to a prisoner who is serving a sentence for murder of a police officer. The provision applies in respect of a prisoner convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment with a non-parole period for the murder of a person, where the prisoner knew, or was reckless as to whether the person was, a police officer. 'Police officer' is defined as a police officer who at the time the murder occurred was performing any duty or exercising any power of a police officer; or, the murder of whom arose from or was connected with the police officer's role as a police officer, whether or not the police officer was performing any duty or exercising any power of a police officer at the time of the murder. The provision will apply retrospectively to all prisoners sentenced for such offending, and all existing applications for parole from such prisoners, including those lodged but not yet determined.

Relevantly, the provision provides that the adult parole board (the board) may not make a parole order in respect of such a prisoner unless the board is satisfied, on the basis of a report prepared by the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation, that:

the prisoner is in imminent danger of dying, or is seriously incapacitated and, as a result, the prisoner no longer has the physical ability to do harm to any person; and

the prisoner has demonstrated that the prisoner does not pose a risk to the community; and

the board is further satisfied that, because of those circumstances, the making of the parole order is justified.

Clause 6 of the bill inserts new section 74AABA into the Corrections Act 1986 to provide for additional conditions governing the decision about whether or not to release a prisoner imprisoned for certain offences. The provision applies to a prisoner serving a sentence of imprisonment for an offence of murder, conspiracy to murder, accessory to murder or manslaughter. The provision will apply retrospectively to all prisoners sentenced for such offending, and all relevant applications for parole from such prisoners, including those lodged but not yet determined. It will also apply to any decision to re-release an offender on parole.

Relevantly, the clause provides that the board must not make a parole order in relation to such a prisoner unless the board is satisfied that the prisoner has cooperated satisfactorily in the investigation of the offence to identify the location, or the last known location, of the body or remains of the victim of the offence, or the place where the body or remains of the victim may be found. In determining this, the board must have regard to reports from the Chief Commissioner of Police and the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation, submissions from any relevant victims, the record of the court in relation to the offending, whether the body was recovered as a result of the prisoner's cooperation in the investigation of the offence, and the capacity of the prisoner to cooperate in the investigation of the offence (including the prisoner's age, any cognitive impairment, mental impairment, dementia or decline in memory).

Clause 9 inserts new subsection 5(2CA) into the Sentencing Act 1991 to provide that a court, when sentencing an offender who has been found guilty of murder, conspiracy to murder, accessory to murder or manslaughter in circumstances in which the body or remains of the deceased victim have not been located, may have regard to whether an offender has cooperated in the investigation of the offence to identify the location of the body or remains.

These clauses collectively are relevant to the following human rights in the charter:

the right to equality before the law (s 8(3));

the right to liberty (s 21);

the protections against cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment (s 10(b)) and the right to humane treatment when deprived of liberty (s 22);

the protection of children, generally (s 17(2)), and the protection of children in the criminal process (s 23);

the right to fair hearing (s 24);

the protection against self-incrimination (s 25(2)(k)); and

the prohibition on retrospective criminal laws (s 27).

1. Human rights protected by the charter that are relevant to the bill*The right to equality before the law (s 8(3))*

Section 8(3) provides that every person is equal before the law. There is some uncertainty whether this right is intended to operate as a prohibition on unequal treatment by reference to discrimination based on a protected attribute, as defined in the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, or has a broader application beyond protected attributes.

In relation to the parole reforms in clauses 3 and 6, it could be said that removing the possibility of parole for certain offenders (those committing offences against police officers or those whose offending involves a 'no body' case) treats these offenders differently from other offenders having committed the same offences (but against different, non-police victims, or offences where the body is located). Affording equal protection of the law means properly allowing those who have committed the same offences to have equal access to the parole regime.

In my view, the concept of equal treatment has been interpreted in Victoria as being directly tied to discrimination by reference to the protected attributes in the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. 'Equality before the law' refers to the enforcement and administration of laws, rather than their content or enactment, and requires that all court or administrative decisions not be applied in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner. The second limb of s 8(3) of the charter is concerned with the content and substance of a law, and requires that a law provide equal and effective protection without discrimination. This is interpreted as comprising two elements: preventing discriminatory laws from being enacted, and ensuring that laws treat people in the same way except where there is reasonable justification for not doing so.

These reforms to parole treat persons differently based on their conduct and the circumstances of their offending. This is an accepted form of differential treatment, which already occurs in many other aspects of the sentencing and parole system. The very nature of these systems involves differentiating categories of offending (and circumstances of offending) based on the nature and seriousness of the offending, and to deem that different legal consequences and administrative procedures apply to certain categories. As this differential treatment does not engage a protected attribute, I do not consider that the right to equality is limited by these reforms. I further base this conclusion on the fact that there is a reasonable justification for treating categories of offenders differently to recognise that the worst category of crime, murder, in the worst category of case, which includes police officers, is also reflected in the rules that govern whether such prisoners are allowed back into our community — and only when it is safe to do so.

I also note that in relation to the 'no body' cases, the legislation provides for regard to be had to the effect of any disability or immaturity of age on an offender's capacity to cooperate, which in effect, is a form of protection against indirect discrimination.

The right to liberty (s 21)

Section 21(1) of the charter provides that every person has the right to liberty. Section 21(2) provides that a person must not be subject to arbitrary detention. Section 21(3) provides that a person must not be deprived of his or her liberty except on the grounds and in accordance with procedures established by law.

In relation to the parole reforms to police murder and 'no body' cases, the enactment of a severe constraint to an offender's ability to be granted parole may appear to constitute a deprivation of liberty, as an offender will, in most circumstances, not be eligible for early release (or any release at all if serving a life sentence).

However, the constraints on the granting of parole in clauses 3 and 6 do not deprive any persons of their liberty.

That deprivation will have already occurred by way of the relevant offenders' sentences of imprisonment. It is well established that the right to liberty is reasonably and justifiably limited where the person is deprived of their liberty under sentence of imprisonment after conviction for a criminal offence by an independent court after a fair hearing. The provisions of this bill do not set aside, vary or nullify the original sentence of the court, in that they do not alter the head sentences of imprisonment imposed by the court or increase the limitation caused by the court's sentence. The reforms only alter the conditions on which the board may order release on parole during the currency of the sentence, and after the expiration of a non-parole period, which does not change the position that the prisoner has been deprived of liberty and lawfully detained for the duration of the head sentence. As such, the constraints on the granting of parole cannot properly be construed as depriving a person of their liberty.

I note that there is no right or entitlement to release on parole, nor to the continuation of a particular legislative scheme for release on parole for the duration of a prisoner's sentence. The High Court in *Crump v. New South Wales* held that the power of the executive government to order a prisoner's release on parole may be broadened or constrained or even abolished entirely by the legislature of the state, to reflect changeable policies and practices.

Accordingly, I am of the view that the human rights in s 21 are not limited by these reforms, which ultimately permit deprivation of liberty on grounds, and in accordance with procedures, established by law.

Children rights (ss 17(2) and 23)

It is necessary to pay regard to the effect that these reforms may have in the case of child offenders, by way of the protection of children in the charter (s 17(2)), and the protection of children in the criminal process (s 23). Section 17(2) provides that every child has the right, without discrimination, to such protection as is in his or her best interests and is needed by him or her by reason of being a child. Section 23(3) provides that a child who has been convicted of an offence must be treated in a way that is appropriate for his or her age.

In my view, the parole reforms in clauses 3 and 6 will have a limited effect on child offenders. The parole reforms do not apply to the Youth Parole Board, which hears parole applications involving children under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Further, the reform to parole for offenders linked to a 'no body' case allows the board to have regard to the offender's age and mental infirmity when determining whether an offender has provided the requisite level of cooperation to rebut the presumption against granting parole.

Further, there are many protections built into the sentencing system to ensure sentences for children or young offenders take into account their age and prospect for rehabilitation, and allow for alternative sentences such as a youth justice centre order or a youth residential centre order. Further, a sentencing court will have regard to the prospects of parole being granted in a particular case when setting the head sentence.

I note that in relation to existing offenders currently serving a sentence, these reforms will not capture any existing offender who was sentenced as a child.

Right to a fair hearing (s 24)

Section 24 relevantly provides that every person charged with a criminal offence has the right to have the charge decided by a competent, independent and impartial court.

The reforms to parole in clauses 3 and 6 are relevant to the right to a fair hearing, as it may be argued that the practical effect of these reforms is equivalent to replacing a court sentence that includes a non-parole period with an effective sentence that does not include a parole period.

However, I am of the view that the right to a fair hearing is not limited by these reforms. The Chief Justice of the High Court in *Crump v. NSW* found that there is a clear distinction between the judicial function exercised by a judge in fixing a minimum term, and the administrative function exercised by a parole authority in determining whether a person eligible for release on parole, by reason of the judge's sentencing order, should be released. In fixing a minimum term before a prisoner can be considered for release on parole, the sentencing judge determines that all the circumstances of the offence require that the offender serve no less than that term, without the opportunity for parole. The purpose of parole generally is to provide for mitigation of the punishment of the prisoner in favour of rehabilitation through conditional freedom, when appropriate, once the prisoner has served the minimum time.

Once an offender is sentenced, the responsibility for the future of a prisoner passes to the government. The executive decision to release or not to release a prisoner on parole may reflect policies and practices which change from time to time. Although the recommendation of the non-parole period may operate in some circumstances to reduce the period of time which the applicant would spend in prison, it leaves the sentence unaffected as a judicial assessment of the gravity of the offence which the offender committed.

Accordingly, following the High Court's reasoning, I am of the view that the right to a fair hearing is not limited, as the court's determination of the criminal charge and subsequent sentence remains unaffected by these parole reforms.

Protection against self-incrimination (s 25(2)(k))

Section 25(2)(k) provides that a person has the right not to be compelled to testify against himself or herself or to confess guilt.

This right is relevant to clauses 6 and 9, which, in effect, subject an offender in certain circumstances to a detriment if they have not cooperated satisfactorily in an investigation. To the extent that such cooperation requires an accused to reveal information which may expose that person to further criminal punishment, this reform may engage the charter's protection against compelled self-incrimination. Cooperating satisfactorily in a murder investigation to identify the location of the remains of the victim may require the accused to reveal information that may expose him or her to future punishment, for example, for additional crimes connected to the murder, or in the event that the present conviction is quashed and a new trial is ordered.

I am of the view, however, that the right not to be compelled to testify against oneself is not limited by this reform. Clauses 6 and 9 are concerned only with sentencing or parole, and are predicated on a finding of guilt having already been made. A prisoner to whom the proposed parole regime would

apply is not a person facing criminal proceedings who is being compelled to confess guilt, contrary to the right expressed in s 25(2)(k).

Further, while the timeliness of an offender's cooperation is taken into account, the offender is not precluded from cooperating at a later time, for example, after conviction or after the expiration of appeal rights, which can still be taken into account. This includes the scenario where an offender may not have cooperated at all before sentencing (such as pleading not guilty and exercising their right to silence), but subsequently cooperates while serving a sentence of imprisonment. The reform will allow such cooperation to be considered by the board in an application for parole, which allows preservation of the privilege against self-incrimination while proceedings for a criminal charge are still being determined.

Protection against retrospective criminal laws (s 27)

Section 27(2) provides that a penalty must not be imposed on any person for a criminal offence that is greater than the penalty that applied to the offence when it was committed.

Clauses 3, 6 and 9 apply retrospectively to existing offenders and charged persons, and thus is relevant to the right not to be subject to retrospectively applied punishment.

In my view, the right in s 27(2) is not limited by these reforms, as the denial of parole in accordance with the new conditions should not be characterised as punishment. Parole is administered by the board under the Corrections Act 1986. Although a sentencing court fixes the non-parole period, the fixing of such a sentence exhausts the relevant court's judicial function. Parole then becomes a matter of executive discretion, within the confines of a legislative scheme, such as the Corrections Act 1986. As discussed above, the High Court has acknowledged that it is open to the legislature to alter the circumstances in which particular persons may be released on parole, even during the currency of their prison term. Further, the sentencing reform in clause 9 simply enshrines the existing sentencing practice that deems conduct involving hiding or disposing of a body to be an aggravating factor in relation to sentencing, and any subsequent cooperation of an offender with an investigation to be a mitigating factor in sentencing.

I note that issues about unfairness may be seen to arise in relation to the retrospective effect of these reforms; however, I will address this within the context of the protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to humane treatment, discussed below.

2. Human rights that are limited by the bill*Cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment (s 10(b)) and inhumane treatment (s 22(1))*

Section 10(b) provides that a person must not be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. Similarly, s 22(1) provides that all persons deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

The effect of the reforms to parole in clauses 3 and 6 is that certain prisoners (who are serving life sentences) may remain effectively ineligible for parole until they are either close to death or permanently incapacitated, or cooperate with police to identify the whereabouts of a victim's body. This may be

considered to constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or inhuman treatment when deprived of liberty, as the reforms will have the effect of removing the prospect of release of certain offenders and diminishing their possibility of rehabilitation. While the Victorian statute book already provides for the possibility of life in prison with no prospect of parole, I accept that introducing restrictive constraints on the granting of parole to certain prisoners may induce a sense of hopelessness in an offender that may constitute a limit on the rights in ss 10(b) and 22(1) of the charter.

Sections 10(b) and 22(1) rights have been interpreted as being collectively limited in circumstances where an offender serving a life sentence is given no real prospect of release, which may be contrary to human dignity and amount to inhuman and degrading treatment. Constraining parole for offenders not serving a life sentence, while not resulting in an 'irreducible' life sentence, may similarly be considered 'inhuman' through the hopelessness that serving a full sentence may engender for that offender.

However, these rights must be interpreted in the context of the Victorian legal system, where there is no prisoner right or entitlement to parole. The expiry of the non-parole period simply marks the earliest point at which a prisoner may be released on parole; it does not mean that the prisoner should or will be released on that date. The Corrections Act 1986 does not prescribe specific criteria governing the decision to release a prisoner on parole, and the only statutory guidance on the exercise of the discretion provides that the board must give 'paramount consideration to the safety and protection of the community in determining whether to make or vary a parole order'. It is necessary to recognise that when a court makes a sentence, an offender may be required to serve the whole of the head sentence that is imposed, even if there is a fixed minimum.

Clause 3 — parole reform in relation to the murder of a police officer

In relation to clause 3, the objective for the reform is directed at strengthening parole laws in relation to a particular class of offending, in order to further enhance community safety and protection. Stricter parole laws already apply to prisoners who are convicted of serious violent offences. The type of offending targeted by the bill is the murder of police officers, which is the most serious offence within that category. The Supreme Court in various cases of police murderers has indicated that, in light of its seriousness, the murder of a police officer is an offence that ordinarily warrants the harshest sentence that can be imposed, being life imprisonment. Murdering a police officer is a particularly appalling crime constituting an attack on the foundations of society. The policy intent is to cover murders where the officer was targeted because of their job, which is considered in the worst category of offending and causes the most harm to the community. A safe and functioning society depends upon its police force. An attack upon a serving police officer is an attack upon society itself. The new tough constraints on the granting of parole in relation to such offences sends a necessary message that such offenders should not be able to access the privilege of parole.

I note that the extent of the limitation in the corrections system will be fairly confined. The reform will only affect the parole applications of three prisoners currently serving life sentences with non-parole periods for the murders of police officers. The reform will also apply to deter any future

relevant offending, as prospective offenders will be fully aware of the consequences that flow from such actions.

The limitation is rationally connected to the purpose of the reform, which is to deny parole to any offender who knowingly or recklessly murders a police officer, in order to reflect the seriousness of the offending and its impact on society. The reform provides for a safeguard to address potential cases where an offender has no knowledge that the victim was a police officer and/or it was pure coincidence that the victim was a police officer. This factual information will be known from the court record at trial and sentencing, which the board will take into account when considering parole decisions.

However, I accept that the nature of the limitation is severe in relation to the individuals affected, as in certain cases (where the individual is serving a life sentence) it will prevent that offender from being released on parole except in very limited circumstances, and those circumstances are not conducive to leading any useful life post-release. I also accept that the nature of the limitation is aggravated by the retrospective effect of the limitation, as an offender would have had an expectation at the time of sentence that they had some possibility for release in the future (or for release at an earlier stage, if not serving a life sentence) and the capacity to live a useful life post-release.

I also accept that there may be alternative less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose, for example through parole conditions which facilitate an increased possibility of release. In this regard, it may be argued that clause 3 is incompatible with the ss 10(b) and 22(1) of the charter, in light of the particularly severe retrospective effect the limitation will have on certain individual offenders and the potential availability of less restrictive alternative measures.

However, I intend to proceed with this legislation, notwithstanding the possibility that clause 3 is incompatible with the charter, as I am of the firm view that there is a need to strengthen parole laws to counter this particular abhorrent form of offending and send a clear message that the murder of police officers is unacceptable. I consider that the bill appropriately targets the worst kind of offending that exists in Victoria. As I have noted, murdering a police officer constitutes an affront to society itself.

In proceeding with this legislation, I note again the High Court's findings on the grant of parole, including that it is an executive decision which may reflect changeable policies and practices. While clause 3 may be partially incompatible with the charter, I believe it furthers the legitimate objectives of enhancing a critical aspect of community safety and protection and addressing community concerns regarding the release of prisoners who commit the worst kind of crimes.

Clause 6 — parole reform in relation to 'no body' cases

Clause 6 serves an important objective in addressing the particular distress to victims' families that results from murder cases where the victim's body or remains cannot be located. These cases exacerbate the acute pain and suffering experienced by persons connected to a victim and act as an obstacle to bringing closure to victims' families.

Convicted prisoners serving a sentence currently have no real incentive to assist in the resolution of such matters. The

reform serves the twin aims of providing greater opportunity for closure for victims' families and also incentivising offenders to cooperate. Families are rightly entitled to recover and bury their loved ones, and to the small degree of closure that this may provide. New tough constraints on the granting of parole in relation to offenders who choose not to cooperate sends a necessary message that such offenders should not be able to access the privilege of parole.

I accept that the nature of the limitation can be severe in relation to an individual affected, most likely preventing an offender from ever being granted parole. However, the extent of the limitation in the corrections system will be fairly confined. There are currently eight prisoners serving custodial sentences for murder in cases where the victim's body was never found, and approximately four parolees. The reform will also apply to any future relevant offending. The retrospective nature of the reform is alleviated in part by the ability of an existing offender imprisoned for a 'no body' murder case to elect to cooperate following the enactment of this reform.

I am satisfied that the limitation achieves, and is rationally connected to, its purpose. Prisoners who cooperate, including years after sentencing, will be considered positively by the board in relation to their parole applications and those who do not cooperate will have their parole constrained.

I am also satisfied that there are no less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose. The presumption against parole will take into account the individual circumstances of the prisoner to cooperate, including their capacity to cooperate (such as mental or physical infirmity), their capacity to cooperate based on their role in the offending (ie whether, due to the circumstances of the offence, the offender has the requisite knowledge or not) and the significance and usefulness of the offender's cooperation. The bill ensures that the board receives all the information it needs to make an informed decision about the complexities and difficulties in each case. A prisoner's prospects for parole have always been linked to their level of cooperation (which can form part of the assessment of rehabilitation), and this clause provides an incentive for a prisoner to escape any constraints being applied to their application for parole by cooperating with an investigation and providing grieving families with some measure of closure that they rightfully deserve.

Accordingly, I conclude that clause 6 is compatible with the charter.

The Hon. Lisa Neville, MP
Minister for Police

Second reading

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

The main purpose of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2016 is to strengthen our sentencing and parole laws to further enhance community safety and protection. As outlined in the provisions contained

in part 1, the bill will amend the Corrections Act 1986 and the Sentencing Act 1991 to introduce:

- a. parole reforms for offenders who murder police officers, and
- b. parole and sentencing reforms for offenders in 'no body' cases.

I now turn to the first purpose of the bill.

Murder of a police officer — parole reform

Any murder is abhorrent and the murder of a police officer for simply doing their job is a crime that shocks the Victorian community. It is an affront to our society.

Our parole system has been substantially overhauled to strengthen oversight and decision-making. Community safety is the absolute priority for the adult parole board. It is the toughest parole system in the country. Parole is a privilege, not a right.

The bill will, however, further strengthen these parole laws. It will do so in relation to those prisoners who were sentenced for the murder of police officers in the line of duty. This crime is in the worst category because police officers are targeted for simply doing their job.

Part 2 of the bill will amend the Corrections Act to insert new section 74AAA to ensure that prisoners who have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment with a non-parole period for murdering a police officer are not granted parole. The prisoner may only be released on parole if the adult parole board:

- a. is satisfied (on the basis of a report prepared by the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation) that the prisoner:
 - i. is in imminent danger of dying, or is seriously incapacitated, and as a result, no longer has the physical ability to do harm to any person; and
 - ii. has demonstrated that he or she does not pose a risk to the community
- b. is further satisfied that, because of those circumstances, the making of the order is justified.

These restrictions on the grant of parole for police murderers have been modelled on the Julian Knight legislation, but apply to a category of prisoner for a class of offending and are designed to ensure the validity of the bill from legal challenge.

The new provisions apply to the murder of a police officer, which will mean:

- a. at the time the murder occurred the officer was performing any duty or exercising any power of a police officer; or
- b. the murder of whom arose from or was connected with the police officer's role as a police officer, whether or not the police officer was performing any duty or exercising any power of a police officer at the time of the murder.

The bill draws on section 10AA of the Sentencing Act which deals with sentencing for serious assaults of emergency workers 'on duty' including police officers. Also, the bill deals with situations where the offender could have aimed to harm all police officers or a particular police officer based on past dealings with police. The officer need not be uniformed at the time of the murder. For example, a police officer who is murdered while at their home. If there is any known connection between the murder and the victim's role as a police officer, it will be captured by the bill.

Under the bill, at the time of the murder the offender must have known or been reckless as to whether the victim was a police officer, which is an important safeguard. The bill will also not apply to a murder case where the victim happened to be a police officer but their police officer role was irrelevant to the offending or merely coincidental or incidental. This is a balanced and responsible approach.

The fact that the victim was a police officer will be known at trial and sentencing. In accordance with existing practice, the court record, including the sentencing judgment, will be contained in the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation's advice to the adult parole board as part of the report assessing whether or not the prisoner is suitable for release into the community on parole.

The most serious offenders in prison, such as murderers and rapists, are already subject to a strict two-tier parole assessment process under the Corrections Act. Prisoners who are serious violent offenders and serious sex offenders can only be released into the community on parole by a special division of the adult parole board overseen by the chairperson, known as the serious violent offender or sexual offender division or SVOSO division. This means those prisoners who murdered a police officer will have to pass two separate hearings of the adult parole board as part of their parole application. If the prisoner's application fails one hearing, no parole will be granted.

As I said earlier, the adult parole board's absolute priority remains community safety. The bill explicitly reiterates that paramount consideration be given to the safety and protection of the community in these and all parole decisions.

These important parole reforms will apply to at least three sentenced prisoners, all of whom murdered police officers who were exercising their duties as officers at the time. This legislation has been brought forward to ensure these reforms apply to this category of prisoner for this category of crime as soon as possible.

I now turn to the final purpose of the bill.

'No body' cases

Part 3 of the bill contains the final purpose of the bill, which is to ensure persons who have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment with a non-parole period for certain fatal offences are not granted parole if they do not satisfactorily cooperate with police in the investigation of the offence to identify the location, or last known location, of the body or remains of victims of the offence and the place where the body or remains of the victim of the offence may be found.

It is recognised that these cases, often called 'no body' cases, cause particular distress to victims' families and our laws must not provide false hope. Families are rightly entitled to recover and bury their loved ones and to the small degree of closure that this may provide.

The sentencing and parole reforms introduced by the bill in 'no body' cases aim to provide an incentive for offenders to cooperate and also an opportunity for closure for victims' families. Division 1 of part 3 of the bill will amend the Corrections Act to introduce a new presumption against parole, in new section 74AABA, unless the adult parole board is satisfied that the prisoner satisfactorily cooperated with police in these 'no body' cases.

Under the bill, the adult parole board will be required to consider a range of matters in deciding whether or not to grant parole in a 'no body' case. This will ensure that the adult parole board has all relevant information when making its decision. For example, the adult parole board will take into account reports from both the Chief Commissioner of Police and the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation, the court record, as well as any victim submissions, the capacity of the prisoner to cooperate in the investigation of the offence, and any other information about whether the victim's body or remains were recovered as a result of the prisoner's cooperation in the investigation of the offence. These are complex and difficult cases. The bill ensures the adult parole board receives all the information it needs to make an informed decision.

Importantly, the bill will also introduce sentencing reforms. Division 2 of part 3 of the bill will amend section 5 of the Sentencing Act to expressly allow the courts to take into account whether or not an offender has cooperated in the investigation of the offence in 'no body' cases when determining an appropriate sentence for the offending. The sentencing reforms in the bill will apply to the sentencing of an offender irrespective of when the offence was committed or the finding of guilt was made.

The 'no body' cases reforms in the bill will apply to murder, conspiracy to commit murder, accessory to murder and manslaughter. This is a broader range of offences and these are all serious crimes. The circumstances of offending in such cases may involve an offender disposing of the body or remains of a deceased victim or having knowledge of the location of the deceased victim's body or remains. The inclusion of these offences will therefore provide the opportunity for closure to the greatest number of victims' families.

Prisoners sentenced for these four fatal offences will be serious violent offenders who can only be released into the community on parole by the serious violent offender or sexual offender division of the adult parole board overseen by the chairperson under the two-tier parole decision-making process that I outlined earlier.

This is a much more comprehensive way of addressing the complex and difficult issues raised by 'no body' cases. The inclusion of sentencing amendments, along with the parole reforms, will provide the greatest opportunity to incentivise offender cooperation, and bring closure to victims' families as they rightly deserve.

Re-parole

The two parole reforms in the bill will also apply when the adult parole board is deciding whether or not to re-release a prisoner on to parole under section 78 of the Corrections Act. This is intended to cover cases where the relevant prisoner is or has been released on parole but has their parole subsequently cancelled. If parole is cancelled, the adult parole board may only re-release the prisoner on parole if satisfied in accordance with these new laws.

Future cases

The parole reforms in the bill will apply not only to the relevant existing cases of sentenced prisoners in prison, but will also apply to any future such cases.

The parole and sentencing reforms in the bill are directed to a category of offender who committed a category of crime, not an individual offender. It is not intended to alter the original sentence of imprisonment after conviction for a criminal offence made by an independent court after a fair hearing. The bill does not intend to alter the court's sentence. Rather, the bill introduces additional conditions that must be satisfied before the adult parole board may grant parole to prisoners sentenced for the relevant offending, or in the case of the sentencing reform, introduces an additional factor for the courts to take into account when determining the appropriate sentence for the relevant offending.

Clause 2 of the bill provides that the two parole reforms in the bill will commence on the day after the bill receives the royal assent. This ensures our parole laws are strengthened as soon as possible to boost community safety. To give sufficient time to prosecutors, legal practitioners and the courts, the sentencing amendment will commence by no later than the middle of 2017.

Conclusion

This bill represents another step this government is taking to keep our community safe. The families of victims of murderers and other killers deserve the respect, dignity and closure of a funeral of their loved ones. And those men and women in blue who swore to uphold our laws, and died in the line of duty, also deserve the utmost protection of our laws.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr CLARK (Box Hill).

Debate adjourned until next day.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Equal opportunity legislation

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents in the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house their concerns that the Andrews Labor government is removing the rights of Victorian faith-based schools to employ staff that share the values of the school community.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Andrews Labor government to withdraw the Equal Opportunity Amendment (Religious Exceptions) Bill 2016.

By Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) (37 signatures).

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that Premier Daniel Andrews must not hand control of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

Volunteer firefighters have protected Victorians for more than 100 years, and as a community we support the volunteers and send this message to Daniel Andrews and the Victorian Labor Party: keep your hands off the CFA.

By Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (43 signatures).

South Valley Road school crossing

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

This petition of the local school community and residents in the electorate of South Barwon and the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the house the dangerous traffic situation that exists at the school crossing on the South Valley Road (Kennedy Grove) school crossing.

Motorists often speed through and at times do not stop at the supervised crossing.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria support the installation of a signalised school crossing at the above intersection.

By Mr KATOS (South Barwon) (470 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for South Barwon be considered next day on motion of Mr KATOS (South Barwon).

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**Victorian oversight agencies 2015–16**

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) presented report.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE**Alert Digest No. 17**

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) presented Alert Digest No. 17 of 2016 on:

**Administration and Probate and Other Acts
Amendment (Succession and Related Matters)
Bill 2016**

Climate Change Bill 2016

Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016

Heritage Bill 2016

**Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking
Ban) Bill 2016**

**Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment
(Development Victoria) Bill 2016**

**Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child
Abuse) Bill 2016**

together with appendices.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

**INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED
ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION
COMMITTEE**

**Performance of Independent Broad-based
Anti-corruption Commission and the Victorian
Inspectorate 2015–16**

Mr WELLS (Rowville) presented report, in lieu of
report tabled on Thursday, 24 November.

Tabled.

Ordered to be published.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

National Environment Protection Council — Report 2014–15

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

Bayside — C124

Greater Geelong — C316

Knox — C137

Melbourne — C259, C270, GC59

Melton — C145

Mildura — C89

Monash — C128

Port Phillip — GC59

South Gippsland — C81

Whittlesea — C205

Victoria Planning Provisions — VC131

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Confiscation Act 1997 — SR 141

Environment Protection Act 1970 — SR 136

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 — SR 137

Supreme Court Act 1986 — SRs 138, 139, 140, 141

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under s 15
in relation to Statutory Rules 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001 —
Notice of request for an assessment under s 26C.

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

*Police and Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous)
Act 2016* — Parts 2 and 3 (except s 23) — 1 December 2016
(*Gazette S368, 29 November 2016*)

Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Act 2016 —
Parts 4 and 7 (except ss 22 and 24) — 1 December 2016;
Part 8 — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S368, 29 November 2016*)

Livestock Disease Control Amendment Act 2016 — Part 1
and ss 3, 5, 11 and 12 — 1 January 2017 (*Gazette S368,
29 November 2016*).

**COMPENSATION LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2016**

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to
amendments.

Ordered to be considered later this day.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 29 November
to:

**Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions
Bill 2016**

Road Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2016

**Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous)
Amendment (Abolition of the Penalty Fares
Scheme) Bill 2016**

Working with Children Amendment Bill 2016.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

Climate Change Bill 2016

Consumer Acts Amendment Bill 2016

Resources Legislation Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2016
Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2016.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Standing and sessional orders

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

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the matter of public importance due on Wednesday, 7 December 2016, to be omitted from the order of business on that day.

Motion agreed to.

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 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 8 December 2016:

Climate Change Bill 2016

Creative Victoria Bill 2016

Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016

Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016

Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2016.

As you can see, there are five bills on the government business program for debate, consideration and hopefully successful dispatching to the upper house on this, our final sitting week for the year. There is certainly a significant amount of policy detail in those bills to be worked through by this chamber before we rise on Thursday afternoon.

Can I just make a couple of other observations about the program? An indication has been made that this week we would like to conclude the debate on the budget papers. There is a take-note motion on the notice paper around the successful 2016–17 budget; however, as we are heading towards the end of 2016, it would be appropriate to conclude the debate on that motion. I signal that if any member wishes to speak on that take-note motion, we would love to hear from them. They should speak now or forever hold their peace on this matter.

Can I also indicate that there has been some discussion with the manager of opposition business. A request has been put forward to take into consideration in detail the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016. I would hope to be able to accommodate it in the program of this week. It is a busy program and we anticipate that that could be accommodated on Thursday afternoon. I should also say we would be looking at also accommodating the remaining budget speakers on Thursday afternoon.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of the house to the debate around the passage of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2016. We have just had the first and second readings of the bill and immediately signal that we would like to have that bill concluded no later than a quarter to 4 or 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon to enable its passage to the upper house. I acknowledge the agreement so far through this process from all members of the chamber and hope that this can continue with the passage of the bill and its final consideration by this place tomorrow. With those few comments, I commend the motion to the house.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — The opposition does not oppose the government business program this week. We note the intentions of the government as expressed by the Leader of the House for the house to consider the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016 in detail. That is certainly the bill which this side of the house believes would most benefit from consideration in detail by this house. We also note that the government is forgoing the opportunity to debate a government matter of public importance this week in order to accommodate the bill that it is bringing in in relation to no body, no parole and in relation to Craig Minogue and others convicted of killing police officers.

I do make the point that this side of the house has been for a long time highlighting the need both for no body, no parole legislation and for legislation to deal with Russell Street bomber Craig Minogue. Having defeated the opposition's no body, no parole legislation without even allowing debate in this house, and having been silent up until now on the question of legislation in relation to Craig Minogue, belatedly the government has seen the merits of what the opposition has been calling for and is now seeking to get the legislation through the house this week.

Our side of the house is willing to accommodate that timetable, but it is a reflection of the disarray and the fluctuating state of the government's approach to law and order matters that, having run a soft-on-crime

policy for the first two years of it being in office, it has now decided to have what appears to be a week talking about crime and justice issues. I very much fear the government will then go straight back to being soft on crime again once it has had its flurry of media announcements.

However, we will deal with each of the pieces of legislation that the government brings to the house on their merits. We do note the fact that out of all the items that the government has been talking about this week in terms of getting tough on crime and bringing legislation to the Parliament, the only piece of legislation that is actually turning up to be dealt with this week is the no body, no parole and Craig Minogue legislation. All the other material that the government has referred to with a great flourish is legislation that is not going to be dealt with this week. Indeed most of it we are not going to see this week. Indeed I think I heard the Attorney-General on radio saying words to the effect that he is still going to work out the detail of a number of the measures that he has announced before introducing it next year. While we have had a week of announcements and media conferences on law and order matters to try to do something about the soaring crime level that the government has unleashed in this state, in fact we have really only seen a very modest amount of legislation arriving in this chamber and we will see even less of it being dealt with by the chamber this week.

The other bills on the notice paper will all merit careful attention and deliberation by this house. The Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2016 is a further measure that comes out of the parliamentary inquiry into child sexual abuse by non-government organisations that led to the *Betrayal of Trust* report. That is an important measure and we need to make sure that it operates effectively to achieve what all members of the house would want it to achieve. There are also matters to be examined in relation to each of the other bills, but the opposition does not oppose the government business program.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to make a contribution on this, the last government business program debate for 2016. I had bold visions and aspirations that I would make my contribution in iambic pentameter, which is a form of prose used by Shakespeare, but sadly there were two problems with that strategy: firstly, I ran out of time, and secondly, I have a manifest inability to be able to write in iambic pentameter — but I live in hope.

Before the house are five bills plus obviously the bill that we will be debating and dispatching to the

Legislative Council tomorrow hopefully. I think it demonstrates yet again that there is a solid work program before the house brought forth by the Andrews Labor government.

I am reminded of the story of Derrick T. Tuggle. Derrick T. Tuggle is an Afro-American actor who was actually going to be an extra in the *Lonely Boy* film clip by the Black Keys. He was milling around, waiting for the band to come to film his spot as a cashier at a hotel, and he started dancing. He started dancing away, and they said, ‘Now, can you just pause there? We’re just going to run this and we’re going to film it’, and that became the film clip of what has been a very successful song.

Deputy Speaker, what, you might ask, has this got to do with the government business program? I think it is fair to say that it is a very rare occurrence to defeat a first-term sitting government — a very rare occurrence in Victorian history — but we did it. And like Derrick T. Tuggle we have embraced it; we have embraced this opportunity and we are getting on with it, and it is just absolutely fantastic.

This is the 34th government business program debated in the 58th Parliament. I am very pleased that I have spoken on most of them, as I think has the member for Broadmeadows and others. It is a great honour and privilege to come before this place and to advocate and to talk about all the great things that we are doing and getting on with for the state. It is a very good business program. I am pleased that there have been productive conversations in the house with the various parties to ensure a smooth and speedy passage, and on that note I commend the government business program.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) — I will just speak briefly on the government business program. We will not be opposing the government business program in this instance. There are five bills on the program. I understand we are going into consideration in detail on the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016. It is good to see they are going into consideration in detail again. We would have liked to see it on the climate change bill, but certainly we will be asking some questions on that in the other place.

I note that there is another bill to come forward with changes to parole, which has been first and second read. I do not think there was a need for that to be first and second read this week. The government had plenty of time, if they had wished, to introduce that in previous weeks. It is clear — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — Well, there have been plenty of weeks beforehand. We had the Premier saying he was going to leave it up to the parole board the other week. He said he was going to introduce no body, no parole in the new year. Clearly the government is making it up as it goes along, responding to the political pressures and letting the opposition set the agenda.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr HIBBINS — Who is in charge of law and order policy? I think it is the opposition. It is certainly not you guys. It is these guys. So you are not setting the agenda; you are responding to the political pressures of these guys.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I ask the honourable member not to say ‘you’, because when you say ‘you’, you actually refer to the Chair.

Mr HIBBINS — Of course. I note we will be debating those bills in matter of public importance (MPI) time. It is actually not a bad use of that particular time. I think MPIs are generally wasted in this place on typically partisan issues. I think that time would be better spent on substantive motions, private members bills or other substantive things put before this house rather than the partisan MPIs that are put before this house in two out of three weeks. I think there is probably room to move on MPIs and say there are actually better things to do in that time. So the Greens will not be opposing the government business program in this instance.

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) — The government’s business program defines the Andrews government’s economic and social priorities from day one to its second anniversary, to the final week of this session: making Victorians safer, protecting children from abuse and delivering more jobs, economic growth and prosperity. These are the priorities this government has been driving and delivering. Responsible government is about defining remedies, passing laws and then implementing the required reforms. The laziest politics is whipping up anxiety and fear that solves nothing and then trotting out clichés.

The Andrews government is being smart on crime, not soft on crime. On the parole reform that the Attorney-General has introduced, this should be a bipartisan proposition for the Parliament because I think that is clearly what the public expects. It is introducing parole reform to ensure that anyone who murders a police officer will not be released from prison until they present no threat to the community.

Our police officers risk their lives every day to protect all of us and are entitled to the highest level of protection under the law. This law is an urgent priority for the government, and this is why the legislation has been introduced before the end of this year.

An opposition spokesman has raised the proposition that this was their issue alone. Well, I have previously raised the issue about what should happen as well, so in this debate — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! This debate is a very narrow debate. It is not a matter of putting on the record what others have said or debating the matter before the house. I ask you to come back to the motion before the house.

Mr McGuire — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I was just wanting to put that on the record to respond to that point. The higher point that I am going to is that this should be something that this Parliament welcomes and the people of Victoria want and that we should not be seen divided in partisanship. That is the position that I am looking to land on. I hear some ‘hear, hears’ from the other side, and I welcome that.

On the other issue — the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016, to be looked at in committee — I think that should resolve any questions that the opposition has and is appropriate.

As we are rounding off this year, we see the government introducing bills into this Parliament to get the job done. Given that the opposition will be supporting the government business program, I just want to commend it to the house in a way of rounding off two fantastic years and setting up the Andrews government.

Mr Katos (South Barwon) — I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the government business program. We have five bills that were listed and now another bill that has come up, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and Other Matters) Bill 2016. That bill is a direct result of the opposition leading the government when it comes to law and order policy, whether it be no body, no parole or keeping behind bars people that should be behind bars indefinitely. This side of the house, as the member for Prahran even stated, has been the leading the government on these issues.

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr Katos — Well, sometimes I do agree with the member for Prahran. Then we have got the Creative

Victoria Bill 2016, the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016, the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016, the Climate Change Bill 2016 and the Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Bill 2016, so it is quite a reasonable government business program.

I am also pleased that the government will be allowing some members on this side of the house to make contributions on the budget papers. In fact the Leader of the House even stated earlier she would love to know how many there are. I think there are at least, as I have had indicated to me, seven or eight who want to make contributions, so I am not sure if the Leader of the House will allocate sufficient time before that notice is discharged.

It is also pleasing that there will be consideration in detail on the urban renewal authority bill, which is most welcome considering that for a very long time the government had broken its commitment to going into consideration in detail as standard practice. I am very pleased that the government is finally honouring that commitment.

I look forward particularly to the debate around the justice legislation amendment bill. As I said, the opposition is leading the government on law and order policy yet again, and you could not find a better example than that bill. With that, I will finish my comments on the government business program.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

East Malvern Tennis Club

Mr M. O'BRIEN (Malvern) — The East Malvern Tennis Club has nearly 1200 members, a proud 130-year history and is the largest community club of its type in Victoria. Last week, I am pleased to advise the house, Tennis Australia awarded the East Malvern Tennis Club the title of Most Outstanding Tennis Club in Australia. This award recognises the tremendous success of the club in promoting tennis in the local community. I congratulate club president Ralph Muir-Morris, the committee and all of the club members on this wonderful achievement.

Stonnington planning scheme amendment

Mr M. O'BRIEN — The Andrews Labor government's campaign to force high-rise, high-density overdevelopment into my electorate has taken another worrying step. Planning scheme amendment C223

currently being considered by Stonnington council would allow development of up to 12 storeys near Glenferrie Road in Malvern. Areas of High Street and Wattleree Road would also be affected. Community reaction has been strong and overwhelming in its opposition. Council admits that 95 per cent of submissions have opposed amendment C223.

While Labor and the Greens support high-rise, high-density overdevelopment, my community does not. Amenity matters. Neighbourhood character matters. Open space and community matter. I call on Stonnington council and the Andrews Labor government to listen to the clear voice of the local community: 'We don't support inappropriate development in Malvern and the community does not support amendment C223'.

Racial discrimination legislation

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — On 8 November 2016 the federal Liberal government announced a parliamentary inquiry into free speech and section 18C of the commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975. Critics of section 18C argue that the bar is set too low because 18C uses the words 'offend' and 'insult' to define the threshold for unlawful racial vilification. However, this completely misunderstands the harm threshold in 18C. Section 18C was introduced in 1995 in recognition that racial vilification is a problem that must be tackled. It has operated for over 20 years with little fuss or fanfare.

In a recent case against three Queensland University of Technology students the court found that the comments made by the students did not meet the threshold in 18C and therefore were not unlawful, and in other cases the courts have consistently held that the bar is not a low one. To fall under 18C the speech must have profound and serious effects, not to be likened to mere slights. Those seeking to weaken 18C on the grounds that it unreasonably limits freedom of speech are deviously and deliberately misleading the public and, sadly, pitting communities against each other.

The wording of 18C says that we recognise the human dignity of all, irrespective of colour, ethnicity or country of origin. Weakening section 18C would send a very disturbing symbolic message to the communities that section 18C is supposed to protect: that the Turnbull Liberal government feels those communities should bear the burden of harm and injury so others can enjoy free speech.

Any threat to repeal or weaken the wording of section 18C must be challenged. That is why the

Andrews Labor government will be making a submission supporting 18C and its role in protecting vulnerable people against bigotry and hate speech. I note that the opposition leader has previously agreed that there should be no changes to the Racial Discrimination Act, and I call on him to make a submission to that effect.

Brumbies

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — I have been presented with a petition by the Justice for the Alpine Brumbies group, containing 467 signatures, which is calling for better ways to manage the alpine brumby population in the High Country than the shooting strategy that is currently being proposed. The group is not opposed to a reduction in the numbers of brumbies but would like to see more humane ways of controlling the population explored, including trapping by corralling and roping rather than shooting from the ground. This allows for education and rehoming of the horses. The group is also rightly appalled by the recent shooting of some brumbies by recreational hunters.

Some are also calling for the brumbies to be totally eradicated. I oppose this, as these people are not appreciating or understanding that these horses have become part of our High Country traditions. It is another case of city-based Greens wanting to tell us how to live our lives in the country and what we can and cannot do and what we can and cannot have. There is agreement that a reduction is required, but total eradication is not supported by myself or, I would suggest, the vast majority of my electorate.

East Gippsland mineral sands mining

Mr T. BULL — I also wish to make comment on another petition being tabled this week, one which calls for the government to initiate an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed mineral sands mine at Glenaladale. I wrote to the minister several months ago outlining my firm view that if a proposal were submitted, it should be put through the EIS process. I am aware the proposal has now been submitted and I support the petition being tabled today, which is strangely being done by the member for Melbourne.

Sebastiano Pitruzzello

Mr J. BULL (Sunbury) — I rise today in condolence of a great man, Mr Sebastiano — Sam — Pitruzzello, OAM. I was first introduced many years ago to Sam through the former member for Yuroke, Liz Beattie. They say you only get one chance to make a good first impression, and Sam certainly did that. He

was immediately warm, welcoming and generous, the kind of man who would welcome you into his heart and home and sit down and share a meal with you.

Sam moved here from Sicily in 1963 with what his family described as ‘a suitcase and a dream’. He founded the Pantalica Cheese Company in Tullamarine in 1973 before going on to establish one of Sunbury’s finest vineyards, the Pitruzzello Estate. Sam valued hard work and the business he created, but he always maintained a deep sense of justice and generosity. He was an incredibly hardworking man who strived every day to create the very best for his family. He was a great man who will be greatly missed by his family and friends. Sam, it was a privilege to have known you.

Kirstin Bull

Mr J. BULL — In other great local news, Sunbury is proud to have produced a world champion. On 27 November Kirstin Bull competed in the world ultramarathon championships in Spain. Running in an Australian record-breaking time of 7 hours, 34 minutes and 28 seconds, she took out the gold medal in her third ever 100-kilometre race. In addition to being a hardworking nurse and cardiac educator at Epworth hospital, Kirstin has committed countless hours to achieve her goal. At a time when we are striving to promote women in sport, I think it is immensely important that we recognise the achievements of our Victorian women. I am proud of Kirstin’s drive, her determination and her heart. She has excelled in her chosen sport, and I am immensely proud to call her my sister.

State Emergency Service Emerald unit

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) — I am not sure if I broke any records this weekend, but I may have worn the world’s ugliest suit. I was wearing my ugly Christmas suit at the Cockatoo market this weekend. If you had the unfortunate pleasure of seeing it on social media, it is based on the ugly jumpers you can wear for Christmas. The reason I wore that suit this weekend — —

Mr Edbrooke — Danny Pearson would have been jealous.

Mr BATTIN — The member for Essendon would have been very, very jealous. This suit is so ugly and stood out so much whilst I was walking around the Cockatoo market that every person noticed it. But what a great opportunity it gave me. It gave me a great opportunity to emphasise that I had to raise money for the local State Emergency Services (SES) unit because

the Andrews government will not fund its new building. It is a new building that has been required for so long. They have put plans in place, they have spoken to the minister and they keep getting told no. All they are calling for is \$1.8 million. Why can the government not put this \$1.8 million in just before Christmas, announce that it will do it before Christmas and give the SES the gift it deserves?

I spoke about the Emerald SES unit last sitting week in my grievance; it does an amazing job. There was another car accident in the Emerald ranges just this week. The Emerald SES will continue to work through summer. It supports the Country Fire Authority (CFA) up there. The volunteers of our CFA brigades and Monbulk fire and rescue services come out whenever there are fires, storms or accidents. I am calling on the government to fund this. The community needs this facility; it needs it urgently. I will wear that Christmas suit in this Parliament if the government commits to the facility before Christmas.

Yuroke electorate community facilities

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — Last week I was thrilled to attend, with representatives from Hume City Council, including the mayor, Drew Jessop, and representatives from PEET Limited and the Craigieburn City Football Club, an announcement of a government contribution of \$2 million to the Aston recreation reserve from the Growing Suburbs Fund. This reserve will feature soccer pitches, cricket facilities, a sports pavilion and a playground. I give a big thank you to Craigieburn City Football Club, which provided me with a custom jersey. This clearly means I am now on the team, and I will put it to good use once this new facility is completed.

The Growing Suburbs Fund is a terrific program that provides funding for many worthy projects right across the state in areas that are experiencing rapid population growth. This is particularly important in Hume, where the population is expected to grow by almost 100 000 people between 2016 and 2031.

I was delighted to tour the Annadale interim community facility some months ago. It is a vital project that was made possible due to a \$500 000 commitment by the Andrews Labor government. Once open it will give residents in the rapidly growing estates in Mickleham access to a preschool room, a multipurpose community meeting space and a maternal and child health room. In total the Hume local government area has received a phenomenal \$6.12 million in this round and \$3.6 million in last year's round. This is a total of \$9.72 million to fund a

wide range of important projects throughout the Hume municipality. Well done to all involved, and I very much look forward to again visiting the Annadale interim community facility and Aston recreation reserve once they are up and running.

School swimming program

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — I speak on behalf of St Joseph's Primary School in Hawthorn and in particular about the concerns that its principal, Mr Gilbert Keisler, has raised with my office regarding the government's compulsory swimming announcement. Mr Keisler has raised a number of concerns that he and his school have about the program. This includes the decision-making process, the complexities around pool facility access and travel time for students to venues, the fact that swimming consumes a significant time allocation from an already crowded curriculum and its funding, because appropriate swimming instruction is very expensive.

With budgets already set, the school is concerned that it has to work very hard to rearrange its internal affairs to accommodate the government's announcement. In particular the school is very concerned, as I am sure other school leaders are, that at the time of being advised Catholic schools in particular had received no formal communication of the government's decision, and they have had little time to react to media commentary on the matter.

Mr Keisler is seeking better engagement from the government with independent schools, and the Catholic schools sector in particular, early and clear communication with all stakeholders about government policy, robust policy development via educational authorities, transparency and accountability, and passionate politicians engaging with and advocating for education. St Joseph's is a terrific local primary school, and I think its concerns deserve to be heard. I hope the Minister for Education takes them seriously.

Jobs and growth

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — It is time to put aside partisanship for a unity ticket between the Australian and Victorian governments on national issues of common cause. Australians are crying out for a shared vision, especially on the federal government's priority one: jobs and growth. I have written to the Prime Minister and the federal Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science seeking such a collaboration. Opportunities are significant, challenges are daunting and threats are dangerous if wilful blindness and a lack of a coordinated plan prevail. Nowhere is such a

strategy more critical than in Melbourne's north, which is struggling under de-industrialisation in a time of terror. Put simply, the political system must change to avert a social catastrophe.

Funding is available — a total of \$1.324 billion remains unspent in a federal scheme whose purpose was to help automotive supply chain businesses survive the industry's demise by finding new markets. It has failed where it was needed most, so I am asking the Australian government how much it will reinvest in collaboration with the Victorian government and the private sector as a catalyst for jobs and growth in Melbourne's north, where 1 in 20 Australians are expected to live within two decades. The extra half a million people will increase the population to match the current size of Adelaide.

When Tony Abbott visited the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation his prime ministerial photo opportunity identified Campbellfield as a potential hotspot for terrorist recruitment. Home to the Ford Motor Company's Australian headquarters, Campbellfield is where the iconic assembly lines are being dismantled. Mutual obligation on jobs and growth must begin in Broadmeadows. There should also be a unity ticket for Melbourne's Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery at St Vincent's Hospital.

SPC Ardmona

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — The Shepparton district was shocked to learn of the fallout between SPC and supermarket giant Woolworths. Anger spread beyond Shepparton across the Australian community, because the SPC brand is one that many associate with their childhood. It is a staple in the pantry of most Australian homes. The Minister for Agriculture, Jaala Pulford, and I visited SPC as negotiations continued into SPC's canned fruit agreement. While the fate was sealed for the tomato line, it was pleasing that Woolworths agreed to a formal contract for its canned fruit on that night.

Remembrance Day

Ms SHEED — The day of that visit and announcement was Remembrance Day. We paused on site at the factory at 11.00 a.m. as the surrounding community attended various commemorations across the Shepparton district.

It is interesting to note my electorate's link to the Second World War. Each town has its own story of mateship and courage during the war. The Numurkah mob was a group of 15 soldiers from the town who

went to war together. As Singapore fell, the men were captured and served time in Changi Prison, then many laboured on the Burma Railway. Three were killed, while the others returned to Numurkah. A memorial to these men was unveiled two years ago and is just up the road from the Numurkah Secondary College, where I had the honour of being a part of its student awards presentation night.

Shepparton electorate schools

Ms SHEED — This is a busy time for end-of-year school celebrations, and I have really enjoyed attending a number of award nights, with more to come. It is good to see the enthusiasm of our young people being rewarded on these occasions and to see the graduation of those students who are now moving into adulthood. I wish all those students well and commend the schools for their efforts.

Diamond Valley Basketball Association

Ms WARD (Eltham) — What a wonderful night we had last Saturday celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Diamond Valley Basketball Association (DVBA). We heard some great stories, some hilarious, throughout the night, many of them pre-recorded from ex-DVBA players on basketball scholarships at various US colleges. Over these 40 years the association has ballooned to now include 5500 playing members across all age divisions. Members of the DVBA have become Olympians, competed at the world championships and played in the National Basketball League and the Women's National Basketball League.

All of this amazing growth, participation and success has been built on thousands upon thousands of volunteer hours. DVBA has a strong executive in place, with president Steve McCabe, vice-president Jason van Hout, secretary Joe Crupi and treasurer Peter Sharp. Along with CEO Ross Wignell, they are determined to keep the friendly and family-focused culture of their association and are ambitious for their future.

While the initial two courts at the Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness Centre have grown to six with the massive growth in local participation in basketball, the DVBA are planning for bigger and better facilities — as they need to. I have every intention of helping them achieve this goal.

Melbourne Polytechnic Greensborough campus

Ms WARD — The Andrews Labor government is continuing to invest in TAFE, with multimillion-dollar boosts ensuring our TAFEs are ready and fully equipped to hit the ground running for the Skills First

implementation in 2017, including \$20 million for Melbourne Polytechnic, a fantastic announcement by the Minister for Training and Skills for my community. We know the former government slashed TAFE funding, resulting in mass redundancies, closed campuses and neglected basic infrastructure. This government is ensuring people have access to real training so they can get a real job, including the reopening of the Greensborough campus of Melbourne Polytechnic in 2017 after it was shamefully closed under the previous government in 2013. Greensborough TAFE will be offering certificates in community services and mental health, business and accounting, floristry, bookkeeping and property services. I thank my fellow Greensborough TAFE community consultation group members Howard Kelly, Nancye Harrison, John Fecondo and John Collins for all of their work this year, and I also thank my awesome staff.

Avenel intersections

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — I draw the attention of the house to a dangerous intersection on the Hume Freeway at Avenel. During the 2014 election campaign the now Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the member for Narre Warren North, visited the intersection with Labor's candidate and said he was supportive of safety improvements being made. He also supported improvements to the intersection of Bank Street and Queen Street in Avenel. The minister stated at the time that safety improvements would largely be the responsibility of the roads minister and VicRoads to work out. After two years with no action forthcoming, I call on the minister to explain what he is doing about these issues.

Euroa electorate crime

Ms RYAN — I am greatly concerned by a drastic increase in crime across my electorate. Earlier this year thieves broke into Guy Cameron's property at Gooram and stole \$35 000 worth of farm equipment. According to Guy, the person charged with the crime was bailed and is now at large after failing to appear in court three times. Guy says it is not just his equipment that has been stolen; so too has his sense of security. The justice system has become a revolving door. People are fearful and local police are stretched.

Benalla police station

Ms RYAN — While I am on the subject of police, after doing nothing about law and order for two years I was utterly gobsmacked that this government, in trying to play catch-up on the weekend, has completely disregarded the dire health and safety issues at the Benalla police station. The Benalla police station has

the worst facilities in the state. It is not just old and outdated, it is unsafe. When the crime statistics were released in June this year, Benalla had the second highest increase in crime of any local government area in the state. The station should be at the top of the government's list for replacement. It is an absolute indictment of this government to put the safety of local police in jeopardy.

Narre Warren South electorate student achievements

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — The holidays are almost upon us, and that means it is awards season at the many outstanding schools across Narre Warren South. This year's recipients of my community spirit and leadership awards include: Tiran Siriwardane, Berwick Fields Primary School; Ewan Dorning, Brentwood Park Primary School; Masha Savelyeva, Coral Park Primary School; Kobe Swinburne, Hillsmeade Primary School; Charlotte Bamford, Narre Warren South P-12 College; and Vanshdeep Daler, St Kevin's Primary School. Bright, caring and interested in what is happening in the world, these students are all shining stars.

Vanessa Phillips from Hampton Park Secondary College is this year's very worthy recipient of the Joan Kirner AC Memorial Education Award. Vanessa is a hardworking and dedicated student who aspires to study at university and is giving it her all to realise this dream. Whilst working towards this goal Vanessa has also taken on leadership positions as a peer support leader and reading coach. Next year Vanessa will take on even more responsibility as school captain. I have no doubt she will continue to excel, just like Narre Warren South P-12 student Anagha Ramachandra, who received the prestigious Denese Bartlett Memorial Scholarship. Anagha, a year 11 student, completed two year 12 subjects this year, going above and beyond to achieve outstanding marks, as well as supporting her peers through study groups. Anagha's teachers all told me that she is often the first to arrive in the morning and often the last to leave. What an outstanding young woman and a fine example to us all.

With a bit of hard work, grit and determination any one of us can make it — yes, just look at the mighty Bulldogs this year for inspiration! These award winners are our own very young leaders and superstars.

Christmas felicitations

Ms GRALEY — To everyone, a merry Christmas, and may 2017 bring happy, healthy and prosperous times.

Minister for Families and Children

Mr WELLS (Rowville) — This statement condemns the Andrews Labor government, the Premier and particularly the incompetent Minister for Families and Children in the other place for grossly misleading the public over the youth justice system and the former coalition government's reforms. Why did the Minister for Families and Children only mention the 2010 Ombudsman's report but not follow up the report of the Ombudsman of early 2014? Was the Minister for Families and Children so incompetent that she was not aware of the 2014 Ombudsman's report and its praise for the former government's actions?

The Ombudsman found in February 2014 that the coalition government had implemented all recommendations from the 2010 report. Further, the Ombudsman said that the action had a 'significant impact upon the operation of the youth justice precinct and the youth justice system' and that the 'response of the department and the impact this has had on youth justice services for children has been both effective and commendable'.

The Premier must take charge and acknowledge that the Minister for Families and Children has not only been incompetent but also deceitful and do the right thing by Victorians, particularly young Victorians, and sack his minister.

Frankston Football Club

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — It was a seriously good day down at Frankston Park on the weekend for the Frankston Dolphins' big kick. Congratulations to the steering committee, the creditors, the sponsors and everyone involved in organising the day, with the aim of getting the club back on track. I was extremely happy that I was able to help the club find a path forward by organising for the largest creditor, which is the state government, to write off the majority of the approximately \$470 000 owing to it. On the weekend we formalised that deal with the obligatory novelty cheque. We have one year to go and a lot of hard work to get the licence back. This is only the beginning — get on board!

Aldercourt Primary School

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — I visited Aldercourt Primary School to celebrate the opening of the new access ramp with principal Kathie Arnold, the school captains and the school council president. Our government funded the access ramp to ensure that the

whole school community, no matter what their ability, can easily access this wonderful school.

Derinya Primary School

Mr EDBROOKE — I would like to wish the pupils and the school community at Derinya Primary School a very merry Christmas, and congratulations on receiving funding for your kitchen garden, which I cannot wait to see in the new year. Students at Derinya will be able have the paddock to plate experience in their own school grounds.

Monterey Secondary College

Mr EDBROOKE — This week members of Frankston North Rotary club and Monteract and I officially cut the ribbon and opened the new playground equipment at Monterey Secondary College. Monteract is a club for young people aged 12 to 18 who want to join together to tackle the issues in their community that they care most about.

I heard from the current outgoing president and vice-president of Monteract that they had listened to year 7 students making the transition from primary school to high school who said that they would feel a lot more comfortable if they had new equipment.

Selectronic Australia

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — Whilst I was somewhat surprised to be asked by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change's office to make an announcement of a \$250 000 grant to Selectronic Australia, as you can imagine I graciously and with some delight accepted the invitation. Selectronic is an excellent, innovative company in my electorate which I am confident will use the funding wisely in their project to make renewable energy storage systems more efficient and cost effective. It was, however, rather disappointing that this unusually generous partnership offer by the minister was marred by the final sentences in her press release accusing the Liberal-Nationals at both state and federal levels of neglecting the renewable energy industry.

While we on this side always support job creation, and the grant news is good for 17 people, it is shameful that this government has turned the energy sector into a zero-sum game and has sold out more than 1000 jobs by closing down Hazelwood power station. Victoria needs a job strategy that is not solely based on one person's good news resulting from the loss of other people's livelihoods. So, Minister, I am more than

happy to do your work, as obviously your Labor upper house members did not care enough to do it for you.

Christmas felicitations

Mrs FYFFE — I would like to wish everyone in this place a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope everyone has a restful time, and most importantly I wish to thank all the staff who look after us the whole year and who put up with all of us with our little demands. I thank them very much.

Wooranna Park Primary School

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — Last Friday night I had the great pleasure of attending and opening a trivia night fundraiser organised by the grade 2s at Wooranna Park Primary School. All of us in this place are pretty accustomed to attending and even hosting fundraisers, but this one was special.

The grade 2s have been doing a lot of work this year on the concept of change. They have been interested in how our ancestors experienced life and the big ideas that have changed and influenced human existence over time. They have also shown great interest in the Rio Olympics and the Paralympics, which got many students thinking about what it is like to live with a disability. The kids mimicked this experience by wearing goggles that impaired their vision and earmuffs that stopped them from hearing. They were each gifted a teddy bear with a special need, and these teddy bears competed in their very own Paralympics. From all this they learnt that their ideas can change the world.

They decided to share their learnings through a trivia night, but most importantly they decided to do this to raise money for one of their classmates, a little girl called Farida, who has spastic cerebral palsy. Farida's dream is to walk, and she will be able to do this with the help of some new technologies: a Power Plate machine and a Therasuit. But they are expensive, and the grade 2s were keen to help out. And, boy, did they put on a good show! There were trivia quizzes, raffles and silent auctions. There was even a policewoman circulating among the tables to check that no-one was cheating. This was all organised by grade 2s.

Congratulations to this wonderful group of kids for their incredible altruism and sense of community, and to their teachers Melissa Brighton, Cassandra Thomas and Jessica Thaller. You do our community proud.

Energy prices

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — As a result of the damaging policies of the Andrews government, last

week it was revealed that Victorian residents will face electricity price increases of around 10 per cent, resulting in an average increase in annual electricity costs of \$160 per household. According to the industry this increase in power prices is a result of the \$252 million coal tax increase imposed by the government in its damaging energy policies and its oppressive renewable energy targets.

This significant increase once again adds to the cost-of-living pressures for all Victorians and certainly for the residents in my electorate of Forest Hill. These increased costs and financial pressures come at a bad time for Victorians, with Christmas just around the corner. This major cost increase will of course hit large businesses and high energy consumers the most, who will then pass these increases on to customers and consumers who will then be hit with the additional costs for the second time. Cost-of-living pressures are a real issue for my constituents, and I call on the Premier to work to reduce these pressures, not deliberately add to them.

The Premier recently stated that electricity prices would only increase by 4 per cent, but the 10 per cent increase shows that either the Premier deliberately misled Victorians or he just does not know what is going on in this important area. The forced closure of the Hazelwood power station by this government will have huge ramifications for the state not only financially but also with certainty of electricity supply issues.

Forest Hill electorate police numbers

Mr ANGUS — Concerns regarding law and order continue in my electorate with many in the community now changing their daily habits to make themselves more secure. With both levels of crime and the youth justice system in Victoria out of control under this government, Victorians are left wondering who is in charge here. Residents in my electorate of Forest Hill are telling me of their concerns with law and order issues, with the government failing to keep up with the needed police numbers since coming to office. I have spoken to several local victims of crime, and they are concerned at the level of violence being seen in the community and the government's poor response.

Rosanna Golf Links Primary School

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — I would just like to commend Kelly Morrow, the principal at Rosanna Golf Links Primary School, where I was pleased to visit with the Premier just last Friday to acknowledge them and provide them with their award for the ResourceSmart Schools 5Star program. In record time the school has

moved from two-star to five-star status. They have got a great sustainable garden. They practice what they preach; they have the right values. There was a great opportunity to meet school leaders Ava and Daniel and also to be entertained by the school band.

Can I just say that they have done great work at Rosanna Golf Links Primary School, and their \$6 million-plus redevelopment, of which they are moving into the first couple of stages before Christmas, is going to ensure that the facilities match the great quality of teaching that is provided there at the school. I wish them well.

West Heidelberg public housing

Mr CARBINES — One-hundred-and-fifty-four new public housing units have also been announced for the Bell Bardia and Tarakan estates, which Acting Speaker Dixon would know well. I am really pleased that that announcement has been made by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing; it will make a very big and significant difference to the community of West Heidelberg and particularly to those housing estates that could do with those extra 154 new public housing units.

Wannon Water

Mr CARBINES — I spent the past couple of days at Wannon Water in Warrnambool, which has 200 employees and 42 000 customers. My thanks to Andrew Jeffers, managing director; Jacinta Ermacora, the board chair; and Mick Murphy, OAM, for their briefings.

Mitochondrial disease fundraiser

Mr WATT (Burwood) — On Sunday, 4 December, I played netball for almost 5 hours while participating in the Ashwood Netball Club's netball marathon to raise money for the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation. This year life member and current Leopards player Jacinda Cadman, her husband, Pete, and daughter, Autumn, lost their son and brother to mitochondrial disease. Huon was only seven months old. The website amdfchallenges.everydayhero.com/au/ashwood-netball-club-netball-marathon states:

Huon was a beautiful boy, who loved playing with his big sister, going on holidays and hanging out with his huge extended family. We will always remember the special times we had with our little boy and it is our dream that one day we will find a cure for mito. Huey touched so many lives in his short time here and we hope that as we raise funds for this worthy cause, Huey's legacy will continue to change the lives of others.

I had the pleasure of having a conversation with Jac following the event and found her strength to be inspirational. I encourage people to get onto the site and donate to the cause.

Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone Public Tenants Group

Mr WATT — The Frances Penington Award celebrates individual public and community housing tenants or groups of tenants who have made outstanding voluntary contributions to their community. In this regard I congratulate the Ashburton, Ashwood and Chadstone Public Tenants Group on their nomination for the award on Thursday. If there is any justice, of course the group will win. They are a fantastic group that I have dealt with over the last seven years in my time as a member of Parliament and also as the previous candidate. They are a great group. I hope they win. Fingers crossed. I am sure they will.

Victorian certificate of education

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — One of the best parts of an MP's job is visiting our great schools and seeing the great work that is done by students in our community, and I want to wish all students undertaking the Victorian certificate of education (VCE) who are anxiously awaiting their results all the very best next week. Remember that an Australian tertiary admission rank score does not define you. And I say this not only to the students in my electorate.

Donald High School

Ms GREEN — I also had the privilege of visiting students in Donald and Charlton yesterday, and what a great bunch they are. Donald High School has featured at the top of VCE results and gets metropolitan media each year for their great results. I visited them yesterday to have a look at their plans for rebuilding — a major upgrade — with \$3.5 million funding by this government. We are pleased to be getting on with the job. We are part of the education state. We had the Victorian schools plan when we were previously in government, which was cruelly cancelled by those opposite. When I looked at the cracks in the buildings and the standard of the buildings at Donald — and they are actually seeing a drop in students — I thought I would go back and look at whether anyone on the other side has ever advocated for them. No, never. The only reference I could find to Donald was to Donald Trump. I am glad that Donald secondary college is getting the resources they need.

COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 2, line 5, omit "11(2);".
2. Clause 2, line 11, omit "11(3)" and insert "11(2)".
3. Clause 20, line 22, omit "11(3)" and insert "11(2)".

Mr SCOTT (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — The opposition will not be opposing the amendments. I make the comment in passing, though, that the manner in which we became aware of those amendments was unfortunate. I understand that there was a little bit of a mix-up, but it took some time to have us briefed. Admittedly, the nature of the amendments was entirely typographical and they make very little difference in substance to the intention of the bill, so we do not oppose them.

Motion agreed to.

CREATIVE VICTORIA BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 November; motion of Mr FOLEY (Minister for Creative Industries).

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — I rise to make a contribution on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016, and I do that as the coalition's spokesperson for the arts. I have got to say that this is probably overdue, in that the Arts Victoria bill — obviously when we still had an Arts Victoria — and the name change of the department has facilitated the need for this. But there were great promises made by the other side when in opposition as to a revamp of the Arts Victoria bill and what it would look like and I am afraid that this bill in front of us could have been better. There are a lot of missed opportunities. I am going to go through it bit by bit, and I will explain why I have said that I think there are missed opportunities.

This bill repeals the Arts Victoria Act 1972, so it disbands the arts fund, the position of the director of Arts Victoria and the Victorian Council for the Arts. Essentially it will replace the old act with the Creative Victoria Act, which recognises the role and value of culture, art and the creative industries to Victoria. It

establishes principles relating to the arts and creative industries. It provides for the preparation of an arts and creative industries strategy every four years. It sets out the functions of the Secretary to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and it sets out the function of the newly created chief executive of Creative Victoria.

However, aside from recognising the role and the value of the arts — which is something I am very proud to say that I was a practitioner of some 20 years before coming to this place; I believe I was the only Minister for the Arts, or whatever they call it now, who has actually been qualified in the arts, and I wear that badge with a lot of pride — the bill also acknowledges the role of Indigenous arts, which is very important. But I wonder whether this whole concept of bringing in this name-changing bill was just about rebadging. This is another bill where the government can be seen to be making an announcement, 'Hey, we've done something', but really the only people who are truly going to benefit from this are going to be the printers, the sign-writers and those in the printing industry who are going to facilitate those sorts of changes.

The bill has a particularly extraordinary failing in it other than creating a chief executive position — it essentially just changes the title of the director of Arts Victoria; Andrew Abbott was the person I helped put in place when I was minister — because it does not make any reference to creating jobs. That is one of its greatest shortfalls. I will discuss that in more detail a little bit later. Additionally, there is no reference to implementing strategies, and overall there is very little tangible benefit to the arts and creative industries as far as I am concerned.

As has been stated, the opposition will not be opposing the passage of this bill. But we have said right from the start of the parliamentary term that we will be a constructive opposition. However, I think it is incumbent upon me, as shadow minister for arts and culture, and also upon the opposition to help point out things that could have been made better and could have been made stronger. If there is opportunity to do that — maybe while the legislation is between here and the upper house — then we would certainly welcome that.

The minister has moved a bill rather than, I guess, slaying the vampires of his factions or supporting massive job losses in the Latrobe Valley to keep the Greens at bay in Albert Park. This is something that he has actually done that might be a little bit proactive. It is good to see a bill, even if the bill, in true Labor fashion, is more about spin than substance. This really is a government that believes that if you get media releases

and press conferences right, that is all that matters. Unfortunately in this case there are a lot of jobs at stake. There are a lot of people employed in this industry. It is worth a lot of money to this state, and we could have done so much more.

The government is not particularly concerned about real outcomes. If you have a look at the content and the clauses of this bill, you see that they do not really say terribly much at all. The bill is very much concerned with what the headlines say and whether the daily quota of media releases has been met. This is a government that believes in rebranding and reorganising the public service; somehow that equates to tangible outcomes. Well, where I come from, that actually does not equate. Of course the creative industries and the arts are looking for so much more than that. The artists and creative types who design the new logos will, as I said, be doing a roaring trade out of all of this, so there is something in it for some of them. There will be new websites, new stationery and that type of thing as a result.

There are plenty of issues people in the arts and creative industries would like resolved, but this bill does not resolve any of them. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, granted that the Arts Victoria Act 1972 is outdated, and there were certainly things about it that needed to be changed and there are some changes in this that go partly towards that, this is definitely a bill of missed opportunity. Let us look at the bill in a bit more detail. Part 1 provides the definitions, commencement provisions and purposes. The purposes are:

- (a) to recognise principles relating to the arts and creative industries in Victoria; and
- (b) to provide functions of the Secretary to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources relating to the arts and creative industries; and
- (c) to establish the office of the Chief Executive, Creative Victoria; and
- (d) to provide for the preparation of a strategy for the arts and creative industries; and —

of course —

- (e) to repeal the **Arts Victoria Act 1972**.

Those intentions are, I think, quite reasonable enough. Part 2 is important and worthwhile. The arts and creative industries make a very significant contribution to life in Victoria. As I said, financially they are incredibly important to our state. But of course as the backbone to society, the arts play a part in every single one of our lives every single day. Some people do not recognise that. They do not understand the part that

architecture and design and fashion and all of those sorts of industries play in our daily lives, but they are all part of, as the government has termed them, the creative industries.

I do not intend to read the whole bill out, but it is worth reading clause 4, because the general principles are something I do support in this:

Principles relating to the arts and creative industries

- (1) The Parliament recognises that —
 - (a) the arts have an intrinsic value that contributes to the cultural depth, diversity and life of Victoria; and
 - (b) the arts and creative industries contribute significantly to Victoria's wealth and prosperity.

I agree with all of that:

- (2) The Parliament further recognises that —
 - (a) the arts and creative industries are means to improve the quality of life for all individuals in Victoria and improve the community of Victoria as a whole ...

I agree with that. And:

- (b) all individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the arts and creative industries in Victoria ...

I agree with that as well. And:

- (c) all individuals should be free to express their ideas and opinions through the arts and creative industries.

I might come back to that one; it is a little more challenging. Of course we could mention that it does not say anything about tourism and how important the industry is to the tourist market here in Victoria, but that is not surprising.

One of my concerns is clause 4(2)(c). That was the last point I brought up — that 'all individuals should be free to express their ideas and opinions through the arts and creative industries'. One question from the industry that has been asked of me is where this leaves offensive graffiti or racist jokes. I thought that was an interesting question, one I was happy to take up. As one person within the arts said to me, 'If someone was strolling down the street naked with a balloon or a sign, they could just claim that they were expressing their ideas through art'. That was a challenging question. Arts and creative industries are not defined. The bill briefing says:

The act does not define 'creative industries' or 'the arts'. A definition is not needed for Creative Victoria to perform its role and fulfil its functions. The Arts Victoria Act 1972 does not include a definition of 'the arts'. The absence of a definition allows the government to continue to develop new and relevant initiatives.

Yes, I agree in part — in fact mostly — with that. The problem is that the Arts Victoria Act did not say all individuals should be free to express their ideas and opinions through the arts and creative industries. Clause 4(2)(c) creates the need for a definition or at least some guidelines, otherwise we are not quite sure whether anything goes. I know that one of the parts of the bill does in fact say that that ability to have freedom of expression does not overrule any other law that is in existence here in the state. But having been a practising artist and having been through art college for four years, I know that some people like to well and truly push the boundaries, so we have to question that.

Clause 5 in part 2 says:

The Parliament does not intend by this Part to create in any person any legal right or to give rise to any civil cause of action.

Aside from being, I guess, annoying legal garble, I do not think that is really clear enough. What expression would we deem as unacceptable in this day and age? We know that the boundaries have changed. From 1972 to now is a long time. Saying the word 'bloody' on TV would have been an absolute no-no back in the 1970s, but of course we had that fantastically successful tourism advertising campaign saying, 'Where the bloody hell are you?', which struck a chord all around the world. So by whose standard are these ideals being established? I think there needs to be some sort of guidance in there.

Part 3 of the bill covers administration. It outlines the functions of the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. It also creates the position of chief executive of Creative Victoria. I did ask a little bit about this during the briefing. I hope it is clear, but I am not sure from the way it is written that there is no ambiguity in there. The provision I ask about, clause 7(3), says that:

The chief executive —

- (a) holds office for the term, not exceeding 5 years ...

It continues:

- (c) is eligible for reappointment as chief executive.

Does that actually mean two terms of two and a half years or is it a multiple of five-year terms? What happens at the end of the five-year term? The bill says

the term cannot exceed five years. Is that the initial contract or is that the contract in total? Again, it is ambiguous as far as I am concerned. It is one of those examples of the law of unintended consequences. We do not want to get to the stage of finding that there is a major payout of a contract of somebody who has not done their job. I am certainly not saying that about the incumbent, but in decades to come are we setting up an issue for future arts ministers and secretaries of the department when they are questioning whether or not a person should continue in that role? I think we need to be a little clearer on that.

Clause 9 sets out the objectives of the chief executive and clause 10 lays out their functions and powers. This is perhaps the weakest part of the bill. It says that the chief executive is to do many things, but it does not say 'create jobs'. Again, this is something that we are talking about constantly. You have got to be able to implement strategies, but it does not say that this person needs to implement strategies such as the *Creative State* strategy, which was released in the last year or so.

Labor's 2014 policy platform says Labor will:

Replace Arts Victoria with a new state agency to lead whole-of-government investment activity in the creative sectors to drive innovation and investment. The role of this agency is to facilitate artistic and cultural benefits as well as generate new jobs and industries of the creative economy.

It is a little bit like the failed Back to Work strategy — again we see the government wiping its hands of its commitment to growing jobs. It says one thing, but does not necessarily follow through. If the chief executive of Creative Victoria is not obliged to encourage job growth or indeed facilitate job growth, then who within the Creative Victoria agency is? That is quite a valid question and one I hope will get answered during the debate. The only person in the agency the government can directly instruct to encourage job growth is the chief executive. They are given seven functions to perform but, again, jobs are not mentioned at all.

The government spruiked that Creative Victoria would have two roles: to 'facilitate artistic and cultural benefits' and 'generate new jobs and industries of the creative economy'. Well, two years later, jobs are not in those top seven functions of the chief executive. With another thousand or so people looking at being out of work in the Latrobe Valley, thanks to Labor, in my mind jobs continue to be the single biggest issue in this state. There are lots of issues, law and order of course being one of them, but ongoing job creation is absolutely vital to our wellbeing in the future over

decades to come. So again this is an absolute failing of the bill.

Similarly, implementing strategy is surely a critical role for the chief executive; one would think that was primarily his or her function. If Creative Victoria is not implementing the *Creative State* strategy, then you have to ask yourself who is. I would have thought that was their primary role. Whilst the chief executive is clearly charged with developing strategies, if you look at clause 10(1)(e), there is no reference to actually implementing those strategies — and there is a very big difference between the two. At many points in these clauses you have to ask yourself who is really in charge: the minister or the chief executive? It is an interesting question, and I hope in two years time I get to find out firsthand.

Whilst clause 10 is not the strongest part of the bill, clause 9 does importantly have a subclause which sets as an objective ‘to support and promote the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in Victoria’. I have to go back to that just for one second, obviously also being the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, which is something I am very proud of. I will read out some of the feedback I got a little bit later, but one person who was working within the Indigenous arts space came back to me and said, ‘If we’re going to support and promote the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in Victoria’, the question from them was ‘Why?’. I said, ‘I would have thought you’d be thrilled about that’, and they said, ‘But Torres Strait is nowhere near here — why are we not promoting Indigenous artists born, bred or working permanently in the arts down here, not those from another part of Australia? Could we be adding the Tiwi Islands? Could we be adding in all sorts of different people from Arnhem Land?’. So it was somebody working within that space that actually did ask that question.

Clause 11 provides for an acting chief executive should the chief executive officer be vacant. This is obviously a critical provision when the Andrews Labor government is involved, because there are lots of boards and CEOs and ministers who have had to quit or have been sacked over the last couple of years, so I think that is a good provision to have in there.

Clause 12 is interesting. It requires that the minister must ensure a strategy for the arts and creative industries is prepared no later than 1 September every fourth year. It is fairly explicit as to what the strategy must consider: one, improve the knowledge, understanding, appreciation and practice of the arts in Victoria; two, encourage and assist the growth and

impact of the arts and creative industries; three, promote and improve access to and participation in arts and creative industries; four, encourage and assist the provision of facilities for the development, performance and display of the arts and creative industries; and five, support and promote the practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders — as I said before, there have been some questions asked about that — in the arts in Victoria.

Let me go on to part 4, which manages the repeal of the Arts Victoria Act 1972. There are lots of different provisions in there; I am not going to go through them all. Clause 15, however, considers the Arts Fund, the Victorian Council of the Arts and the position of director, Arts Victoria, all of which will cease to exist when the act ceases to exist. I did ask questions about the Arts Fund and also the Victorian Council of the Arts. The bill says that the Arts Fund is going to be abolished and that any money in there will go back to consolidated revenue. I have been assured by the department that there is no money sitting in that fund, so there is nothing to go back to consolidated revenue.

Also the Victorian Council of the Arts is going to be abolished and any membership of it will cease. I have been told, again, that there are no council members of the Victorian Council of the Arts, so if there are positions and funds that are inactive, then this is obviously a good thing to repeal. The position of director of Arts Victoria ceases to exist, although obviously we anticipate that the creation of the chief executive position at Creative Victoria will probably be a swap over: the current director of Arts Victoria will go on to be the chief executive of Creative Victoria, although I take nothing for granted, and I am sure Andrew does not either.

Clause 17 transfers records and information from the director of Arts Victoria across to the chief executive of Creative Victoria, so obviously this is a facilitation measure.

I want to say that the government have done ‘very little’ consultation on this bill; they have actually done zero, by their own admission, and I can say that categorically because it was a question that I asked during the bill briefing. So they have done no consultation directly on this bill, by the department’s own admission. They argued that they had consulted on the *Creative State* strategy and that parts of the bill are actually based on that consultation, but this bill has had no consultation within the industry. I think the bill could have in fact benefited from some consultation, something that I have certainly done. The bill shares some

characteristics of the strategy, but they are different documents, with different purposes.

I did put this bill out to consultation with the arts sector, to as many different parts of the sector as I could, and again the reviews have been mixed. Some of them have been appreciative of what has been going on but, as I have said, there have been multiple answers. For example, within the fashion industry, for one person who turned up to, as they put it, 'the consultation', it appeared that they were the only working practitioner in that industry; they were the only one who was there as a commercial person. They did not say that the government consultation was a sham — I might use that word loosely — but they did say that there was no consultation. They did turn up at a meeting. Other people from within the industry, but not exactly in the field that this person was in, turned up; a couple of things were said; and that was the consultation. There was no asking for feedback; there was just nothing there.

There were all sorts of things — and I have got one here — from the classical music sector. This person says that they found the bill strange. They say that it seems the primary purpose of the bill is to consolidate control of the administration and funding, rather than dealing with the real principles. They go on to say they believe that strategically arts should be a whole-of-government approach rather than in the department, where it will end up competing with others. If the government is serious about the quality of life of Victorians, there should be a whole-of-government approach to education, including, say, music in the curriculum. Existing research has shown the benefits music can have on children's cognitive ability and creativity. It also has a great impact on the elderly, providing enrichment of life.

In fact that reminds me of something that has been brought up by somebody within the industry. If we are talking about a whole-of-government approach to the arts, again there is a missed opportunity here that this could have addressed. When we talk about anything elite, it conjures up various reactions. If we talk about, for example, elite sport, if we talk about people going off to the Australian Institute of Sport or the Victorian Institute of Sport, it is what every sportsperson desires to be. When we talk about elite athletes going off to the Olympics, we commend them for being elite athletes. However, the connotations around being an elite dancer or an elite musician seem to conjure up in people's minds, wrongly, that elite means of a different class. Elite in this circumstance, as opposed to in sports, does not mean the best in your field, and I am not quite sure why.

We have only got to look at what is happening at the National Theatre Drama School — a school that has been running for the best part of a hundred years — and the problems that they are having in that a whole lot of their students, for example, next year will not qualify for vocational education and training (VET) loans. It is absolutely horrendous. If we look at the VET student loans, there is something the state government can do with this, and if we have a look at the approved courses — courses that can get that funding — they need to have a least two states or territories to be on the skills list. The skills list in Victoria does not add in the sorts of programs that are actually being used at the national theatre school — for dance, for acting, for those sort of things. Again, it is where the arts are being treated almost as second fiddle, and they are not being treated as an equal. It is something that is equally important to our fabric of society as, for example, the sports. We are a very sports-mad society, but it should not preclude others who are not sports practitioners — those who are choosing a different field — from getting that sort of funding.

Going back to some of the feedback, it says that they — being the government and the bill — talk about the intentions of Parliament and of not wanting to open up any sort of litigation issues. However, this is a faint hope as the bill invites litigation based on the charter of human rights, particularly in clause 4(2)(b) and (c). One of the biggest issues in the arts is the power imbalance between artists and organisations. It fosters favouritism. The government needs to have transparency and integrity at the forefront when implementing policies. Organisations are usually only helpful when you are contributing to them, and as this person goes on to say, with audience development — how to incorporate the community — there needs to be a lot more detail about partnerships with philanthropic organisations.

Some of the sector feedback was neutral, which is great. That is the best you can ask for when you are in government. If it is encouraging, you say, 'Yay' and really embrace it. But some of the feedback from the sector — from those within dance, from those within theatre and certainly those in the commercial theatre — was scathing about the opportunities that were missed here with classical music. All the different facets of this sector expressed very mixed emotions.

As I said to begin with, we are not going to oppose this bill, but what we need to do is be able to ask what we could have done better, and I think the government needs to listen to this. The bill is acceptable at the very best, but it could have been better. Ultimately it could have done a lot more. It misses the point in quite a few areas. Aside from recognising the role and value of the

arts and the importance of the Indigenous arts, it really is just a rebranding exercise. It is another media release, another announcement and another set of printing, but the only people who are going to benefit are those involved in web design and perhaps graphic design. Overall there is very little tangible benefit to the arts and the creative industries. There are plenty of issues that people in the arts and creative industries would like to see resolved, but unfortunately the bill before the house does not resolve a single one of them.

Ms WARD (Eltham) — What a great piece of legislation to get up and speak about, and what a fantastic policy area to be able to speak about. On this side of the house we absolutely understand the real value of the creative industries, which is why we have a fantastic minister who is prepared to devote so much time and energy to ensuring that we have a vibrant creative industries area in this state. Last night I had a community Christmas drinks session in my office, and it was fantastic. We had well over 100 people from the local community come and share their Christmas cheer, and the entertainment they received was from the wonderful Senior Strings ensemble from Eltham High School. These terrific, talented kids played beautiful music throughout the evening. I have to tell you that I had a great many guests come up to me and tell me how great these kids were and how proud they were of these Eltham High kids who were playing such beautiful music and who played it for so long and who played it so joyfully. This is just one small example of how vibrant our creative community is.

We have outstanding talent in this state, and I am sure that many people in this house know the area I represent has absolutely outstanding talent. We have fostered talent in our area for well over a century — in fact for nearly 200 years, and that does not include the creative impact of our Indigenous communities and the Indigenous people who lived in my area. We have had members of the Heidelberg School paint my community in beautiful ways. In fact Walter Withers house is still located in my community, and guess where it is located? It is located on Bolton Street, which of course this government is in the process of upgrading. But I digress.

We have also had many people from the Angry Penguins come through our community. We are the home of Montsalvat. We have Dunmoochin just up the road. We have a fantastic local arts community, and we have a vibrant music industry. In my small electorate, in my large city and in my beautiful state we have absolutely outstanding talent. This outstanding talent contributes to our economy, this outstanding talent contributes to jobs and this outstanding talent

contributes to telling the stories and showing us who we are. It is worthy of celebration, and it is worthy of this legislation.

This is a government that believes in getting things done, and with our creative industries you can get a lot done. This bill helps us get there. But first, let us talk about consultation, because those of us on this side of the house know how to work with people. We know how to talk with people, and we know how to achieve things that this community wants to get done. We had over 200 written submissions about this legislation. Over 10 000 people had input into this legislation and how we would get there. We had the first-ever creative state advisory board. The former government did not think about creating something like that, but we did. We did, because we have a minister who wants to get things done and who takes these industries seriously. In fact I would say that this minister has consulted with more people in the last six months than the previous minister did in the time that she was a minister. We want to make things happen, and you make things happen by talking to people and finding out what they need to have happen. That is what this legislation will do.

The bill expresses our whole-of-sector approach to creative industries. It gives recognition to the value of culture and the creative industries in this state, and it provides legislative support for Creative Victoria and its CEO. It repeals the Arts Victoria Act 1972. It requires the minister to prepare a strategy for the arts and creative industries every four years. I would have thought creating a strategy every four years would be a very strong demonstration and indicator of the seriousness of this government, so I have absolutely no idea what the previous speaker was banging on about. I have no idea, because she was not actually speaking about creative industries in any real detail or depth. She was not talking about the potential of this legislation and the potential of what creative industries can bring to this state.

The creative economy in Victoria is worth \$23 billion. That is really a lot of money in the back pocket of Victoria. That is 8 per cent of our total economy, and it is 220 000 jobs. This government is about a lot of things, but this government is definitely about jobs. With jobs we have a strong economy, we have a strong community and we have a strong state, and this government is the government that is investing in jobs.

I have no idea why the previous speaker brought up the spectre of training. I dare any member from that side of the house to stand up and show pride in their four-year record of nothing — of the destruction of TAFE and

training. The skills deficit that we see on that side and the skills deficit that they brought to this state in their four years of unlovely inaction is just terrible. It is just crazy that they would say this legislation and what we are doing affects training.

The creative industries are worth more than \$1 billion a year to Victoria in cultural tourism. This comes to my community. I have tourists who come through my community. I have tourists who go to the Yarra Valley. In fact not only did I have the work of Eltham High School students on display in my office last night but I also had local artists showing their artwork, showing what they can produce. These are people who live five doors from my house. These are people who live in adjoining suburbs. It is wonderful to have so many artists in my community. To think that I or this government does not want to do everything possible to promote the creative industries is just madness — it is madness and it is ignorance.

We have over 400 000 domestic and international visitors a year in Victoria, which is around 61 per cent of international visitors. On Sunday I went to see *Kinky Boots*, and the theatre was packed. People loved it; they loved the talent on show. They streamed out of the theatre; some went into local cafes. There were people who were shopping. Our creative industries and the creative things that we make bring much money, vibrancy and excitement to our city and to our state and they need to be actively encouraged. This is what this minister is doing, this is what this legislation does and this is what this government is doing. I urge those on the other side to yet again try to get on board, get with the program and help make things happen in this state. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to make a contribution on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to set out the functions of the Secretary to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and those of the newly created chief executive officer of Creative Victoria. According to the government's statement of compatibility the purpose of the bill is:

... to recognise the role and value of culture, art and the creative industries to the state of Victoria ... The bill establishes clear principles relating to the arts and the creative industries and provides for the preparation of an arts and creative industries strategy every four years.

It repeals the Arts Victoria Act 1972. In the second-reading speech the government argues that the Arts Victoria Act from 1972 is outdated. The minister says it:

... contains redundant provisions providing for an arts fund trust and the establishment of the Victorian Council of the Arts, neither of which are actively used or needed.

According to the government the new bill is 'both symbolic and functional' in so far as it outlines the value of arts in Victoria, creates the office of the chief executive of Creative Victoria, provides functions for the Secretary to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and demands strategies be provided. But really I think this is rebranding by bill. Yes, the 1972 act does go back a while, but this is really just a reworking. However, we will go through some of the main provisions.

Clause 2 outlines the importance of the arts to Victoria. Clause 5 does not give a person any legal right or give rise to any civil action with respect to the principles outlined in some of the clauses. Mostly it is just administrative.

I think with this particular bill I am going to take the opportunity to talk about the arts and those people involved in the arts in Mildura. Firstly, Mildura is not devoid of cultural and artistic talent or of people dedicated to the arts and being creative. Arts Mildura is an independent, not-for-profit community organisation which for more than 20 years has been presenting arts festivals and events in Mildura and the surrounding region. Currently they present an annual calendar of festivals and events which includes contemporary visual artists, musicians, writers and performers from all around the world in addition to providing opportunities for talented local artists. Each year Arts Mildura raises the funds for hundreds of arts events. Since its inception in 1994 Arts Mildura has grown from one small weekend arts festival into an annual suite of major cultural celebrations across all art forms.

The Mildura Country Music Festival has been running for 31 years. It is 10 days of events with over 70 artists involved, most of which is free entertainment. It rates alongside the Tamworth Country Music Festival and the Gympie Music Muster as one of the big three in regional Australia, the major point of difference being that the Mildura Country Music Festival is the biggest showcase of independent entertainers.

The Murray River International Music Festival has been running for 11 years. It is a music festival presenting world-class Australian and international musicians along the Murray River, and it includes some regional food and wine experiences.

The Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival is one of the leading regional arts festivals. It offers a very wide program and has been recognised with major festival

status by Arts Victoria, support that under this legislation hopefully will not be altered. The festival is held in March each year and it has workshops, theatre, a big-screen outdoor cinema, music, exhibitions, parades and comedy at a diverse range of venues, including for many years the Perry Sandhills.

The Mildura Writers Festival is something I have had a little bit of association with over the years as well, particularly when it was being supported by the US consulate in Melbourne, and I thank them for their support over the years. It had a very humble beginning in 1994 in Stefano de Pieri's cellar restaurant, and it has grown to be something quite unique from that point. The Palimpsest, again, is a significant festival in Mildura. The Mildura Jazz, Food and Wine Festival appeals to that very unique group of people who are jazz enthusiasts.

One that is very different and rather new is the Patchewollock Music Festival. Like most good ideas, the beginnings of the Patchewollock Music Festival were formed at the local bar when one evening in September 2012 one bloke said to another, 'We need some live entertainment in this part of the world'. Initially it was thought to be a celebration of the Australian Year of the Farmer, but the event was so successful it was subsequently decided to turn it into an annual event. At this stage it has improved enormously, because at that first festival even I appeared, and it was not pretty. It was late in the night, and I was reminded of a particular scene out of the *Blues Brothers* — at one stage I thought that it was just as well it was only a short performance because there was no wire screen for what the patrons were probably going to do. However, such is the life of a local member. My advice is that if you ever get called upon to do this, take a late slot, but not too late. The festival has grown from strength to strength from that point and now has very talented artists there, much to my and the locals' relief.

The Sunraysia Multicultural Festival is unique too, and Mildura has a long and diverse history and culture. The festival is based around food and brings people together around food for discussion. I think in forming a strong community sharing food with each other is very, very important.

Finally we have got something unique happening in both my electorate and the electorate of Lowan, and I know the member for Lowan is with me. The people in Brim in the electorate of Lowan decided to put a mural on their 1940s grain silos. What a brilliant idea that was, and many people said they wished that someone had thought of it sooner. Like all good ideas, it has been very quickly shared. In time for its latest music festival,

Patchewollock has had a mural painted on its silo and, similarly, Sheep Hills, Lascelles, Rosebery and Rupanyup are all going to have murals. I will have to talk to the member for Lowan, who is next to me, about where the Rosebery silo is; that is the boundary of our electorates, and I cannot remember which side of the road it is on.

These things can make such a big difference in these small communities. If someone stops and takes a photo and then goes into town to buy a cup of coffee, it makes a difference to the local economy. This again shows how a bit of creativity can have a very strong economic effect. Every time I have been through Brim I have passed by plenty of cars with people taking photos of both the silos and themselves. This is one of those great things that has come about and is something that I am very proud of for our Mallee communities. Many of the arts festivals and events that I have talked about here are ones that have been created within such communities. That people have these ideas, get them started and then turn them into something special that makes a difference to their community and to their economy is to be commended, so I pay tribute to their work and wish this bill a speedy passage.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — It really is a pleasure to rise to speak today on this bill for the establishment of Creative Victoria. In doing so I commend the Minister for Creative Industries for his work in bringing this bill to the house. While the member for Mildura was speaking I was scratching my head trying to think of the name of an artist who does the most extraordinary aerial photographs. She operates either within the electorate of the member for Mildura or the electorate of the member for Lowan, but her name is just not coming to me. But never mind; I will look that up and discuss it with the member for Lowan at a later date.

This is a great bill, and it has come about from a commitment the minister made when he was in opposition to establish Creative Victoria in recognition of the diverse creative ecology that this state hosts as well as the vital contribution these industries make to Victoria's economy.

Creative Victoria was established administratively on 1 January 2015 as a division of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and it replaced Arts Victoria. It was established to pursue a more integrated approach to the creative industries, encompassing a focus on arts, culture, screen and design.

The Creative Victoria Bill 2016 provides a legislative foundation for these arrangements. It will not affect Creative Victoria's governance arrangements, nor will it affect its status within the department, and it will not alter its relationship to the responsible minister.

One of the important things that this bill does and the rationale for it is that we in this place need to acknowledge the significance of the creative industries to our state as a whole and to individuals within it. I want to quote from the minister's second-reading speech, where he says:

We know that human expression, through arts and culture, is fundamental to the unique development of societies and economies. It provides us with a source of inspiration and pride and contributes to a unifying culture for communities, states and countries. Engagement in the arts and cultural activities enriches individual lives and brings greater cohesion to communities. It is important for the full participation of every citizen in public life.

As I read those words I reflect on the fact that we perhaps do not always take enough time to understand the centrality of the arts and creativity to the human experience. To me, what makes us human is the capacity to create, admire, understand and connect with what is beautiful and what is challenging, to inspire us on to bigger and better things and indeed to reflect on the nature of human existence and to question our purpose. As you can perhaps tell, Acting Speaker Thomson, I do enjoy the creative industries as a consumer. I wish I had some talents as a maker, but I have none. I will leave that to others, and I will continue to be a person who can appreciate art.

In his second-reading speech the minister goes on to say:

In addition to these critical cultural and social qualities, arts and culture and the creative industries have a wider impact on our economy, health and wellbeing, and education. From research undertaken in 2015, we know that the creative economy is worth \$23 billion to Victoria and that it employs around 220 000 people. We know that it provides the state with more than \$1 billion in cultural tourism every year.

That is quite extraordinary. I ask members to reflect on the embarrassing comments made by one of the newly elected senators for Victoria, James Paterson, who I have to say strikes me as a person who is nothing short of a philistine for suggesting that the federal government sell off *Blue Poles*. What does this tell you about the paucity of imagination, creativity and humanity in the Liberal Party today, that a senator would propose such an act of creative vandalism?

Mr Morris — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, the matter of a senator's taste in art is not a matter for this bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — Order! There is no point of order. We do have broad debates. The member can continue.

Mr Morris interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — Order! You can resume your seat. I get the point. The member will return to the debate.

Ms THOMAS — I will conclude those comments by saying that on this side of the house the Labor Party has always stood up for creative industries and for the arts because we understand the importance of creativity to human experience. But we have also got an eye on the bottom line, and we understand absolutely the economic benefit of investment in our cultural sectors.

As discussed, this bill replaces the Arts Victoria Act 1972, an act that has been an important symbol of the government's recognition of the importance and role of the arts and one that has enjoyed bipartisan cross-sector support since it was introduced. However, you would have to say that it is no longer a close enough reflection of government policy and activity in relation to the arts, culture and the creative industries and does not take account of contemporary views about the role and value of the creative industries — including, for example, as an instrument for improved social outcomes — and nor does it acknowledge their economic contribution.

This bill is a new act to update the Parliament's formal recognition of the creative industries. This legislative recognition will send an important message about the enduring impact of participation in the arts and acknowledge that the value of arts and creative industries crosses cultural, social and economic domains.

When I was looking at the bill I also noted the minister's change of title to Minister for Creative Industries — quite a deliberate change. I note that Creative Victoria broadly defines the creative industries to include craft, fashion, literature, theatre, visual and performing arts, music, design, film and television and games — all of which, I might say, I have a very keen interest in — but on this note and in conclusion, I was very pleased to see design in there.

I want to take a moment to pay tribute to my friend and yours — and from all of us on this side of the house — the Honourable Lynne Kosky. As we know, Lynne was

a minister for 10 years in the Bracks and Brumby governments. She was the Minister for the Arts from 2006 to 2010, at which time she was instrumental in major developments there, including the redevelopment of Hamer Hall, Melbourne's successful bid as a UNESCO City of Literature and the completion of the Melbourne Recital Centre, which also houses the Melbourne Theatre Company building in Southbank, but she was also the minister responsible for design from 2002 to 2006.

Acting Speaker Thomson, I know also that this is an area that you were very passionate about in your previous responsibilities, and so I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to both your work and in particular that of our friend Lynne Kosky. I was really delighted that the minister created a craft award in honour of Lynn — it is a biennial award that in 2005 was presented to the very talented jeweller, Natalia Milosz-Piekarksa — because as we know our friend Lynne Kosky not only was a great political thinker but was also a maker and made jewellery that many of us have the great pleasure to own. On that note I commend this bill to the house.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — I rise to speak in the debate on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. I find this bill quite interesting, because the opening line of the second-reading speech refers to this bill being an:

... explicit recognition and support of the Parliament of Victoria for the arts, culture and creative industries in Victoria.

It is more about support rather than about making some real change and driving the organisation forward. It certainly recognises the enduring role and value of culture, arts and creative industries, but it says that mostly it is 'symbolic and functional'. And I always worry when something is symbolic, because that is code for spin, and this bill I really think is nothing more than rebadging. It is tinkering and fluffing around the edges a little bit with very little tangible benefit and missed opportunities.

What this bill does do is establish principles — I think there are four of them — in relation to the arts and creative industries. Then it goes on to describe the role and functions of public service office-holders, and I would think that most of those functions would be in the job descriptions of those office-holders. It describes the functions of the secretary of the department — as I said, as would the role description. And it also establishes the role of the chief executive with functions and objectives. I note that Andrew Abbott has led Creative Victoria since January 2015, and I certainly want to acknowledge the great role that Andrew has

played, because I know that he is a man of great integrity and high intellect and he has a passion for the arts.

If we think about arts in the bigger scheme, it like sport plays a huge role in our community. Sometimes it is perhaps less visible in the role that it plays, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing. It has been said — and this is noted in the second-reading speech as well — that this is a \$23 billion industry to Victoria employing 220 000 people with \$1 billion from cultural tourism visits annually. But what this second-reading speech fails to mention are the enormous efforts by volunteers in this sector — and they are enormous. In many country areas and rural and regional areas, and I am sure in the city, most of the art projects are driven not through Creative Victoria but through volunteers with a passion for their arts.

Before I talk about some of the arts projects more locally and in Victoria, I do want to provide the house with some feedback, because we on this side of the house in opposition, in scrutinising this legislation, sought the opinions of those who work in the field and know this area very closely. This feedback is from a professional music practitioner. First and foremost the question needs to be asked: when the government repeals an existing piece of legislation, what is being lost? We know that the 1972 bill is being repealed, but what is being lost? This person raises concerns that one part they have noticed is missing is Creative Victoria's continual surveillance and assessing of the position of arts in Victoria and reporting to Parliament at least once in every year on the condition of the arts in Victoria and to suggest ways that it may be further and better assisted. So that is missing. They thought that this would certainly help the arts being front of mind within the Parliament of Victoria, but that is missing. I think this person actually sums up by saying there is not too much to get excited about from the sector's point of view, and it could be seen as a lost opportunity to move forward and to give the sector more stability.

An arts institution manager thought that the principles that are outlined might benefit from a clear articulation of excellence in arts practice. They would like to see Victoria's significant international engagement given more focus. With regard to the role for Creative Victoria, there does not seem to be a role in the research and evaluation space, which they thought would have been a priority to ensure economic diversity, excellence and audience development, as well as having outcomes reported on.

For one philanthropist it really appears to be a statement of purpose. In summary, that philanthropist thinks that

the legislation will have little impact because it is nothing more than statements. Feedback from the live music industry indicates that while the structural arrangements are important, what is more important is the output that the structure delivers. A cultural heritage professional says heritage is often left out of the policies despite it making a significant economic contribution. Another philanthropist has said that the bill essentially is going to be a motherhood statement, against which more policy will be framed, but they do not see the bill linked at all to innovation. The second-reading speech certainly does not recognise or use the words 'regional' or 'rural'. So there is quite a bit of feedback out there, and it seems to be overwhelmingly underwhelmed by this bill, and it is an opportunity missed.

I want to mention that there are a couple of wonderful projects that were driven by the coalition. There is the Small Town Transformations, and I am really pleased to see that the minister has continued the \$350 000 funding to projects in small communities to really change the town to get people to come and visit those towns and to really celebrate the arts. The other one is the White Night Melbourne festival. It was extremely disappointing last time that the surety of funding was unclear. Basically the professionals had six months to do a job that really takes 12 months.

I want to take the opportunity to talk about some wonderful projects in my electorate. In the main, they are all volunteer-driven. One of the most recent projects, which helped celebrate Aboriginal culture and art, was the Toolangi Sculpture Trail — 15 artists, 14 days, 1 town and 20 years in the making. This project marked the 20-year anniversary of the 1996 trail, which was led by the renowned sculptor, Ernst Fries, in my electorate just out of Yarra Glen. Ernst is a wonderful artist with worldwide acclaim. He drove the project in 1996, and 20 years later his daughter Reggie Clark, who was involved in the original project, Sharon Plummer and a huge project team got on and created some wonderful art. Indigenous artist Brooke Wandin, who has kept alive the weaving culture that she learnt from her great-grandmother, was involved. Mick Harding — Uncle Mick — a Taungurung elder, was also involved and did a wonderful smoking ceremony.

The Worawa Aboriginal College is a boarding school for Aboriginal girls at Healesville. They have a wonderful art program, and the girls' art is often on display and available for sale. They have a great gallery there that exhibits and sells art from not just the school but also from the communities where the girls come from. It was wonderful to have the shadow minister, the

member for Bayswater, with me on Friday last week to visit Worawa.

Arts Mansfield is wonderful. There are some fantastic events in Mansfield. Its residents are keen on the visual arts — sculpture, dance, theatre, musical performance and glass art. They recently had a pop-up art market, and they have the most wonderful spring arts carnival.

We have other art shows. There is the Yea Rotary Art Show, and there are art shows in Alexandra, Kinglake and Marysville. At Yea there was hay bale art, which was something amazing. There are open studios in the shires of Nillumbik and Yarra Ranges, and in Nillumbik at the Bend of Islands there are some wonderful artists. Syd Tunn and Ona Henderson have done some great work with emus. They have Jessica Rae, Tim Read and Sally Howell in this small community.

The gallery at Tarrawarra hosts wonderful exhibitions. It has had the Archibald Prize — the Archies — and Healesville has hosted Not the Archies. We have chainsaw art. In fact there are a couple of great chainsaw artists. You will see examples of this in both Kinglake and Marysville.

Art is very much alive in rural and regional Victoria. It is not only in the cities, although I certainly acknowledge that we have some wonderful galleries and wonderful events in Melbourne. They bring people to the city, and that is a great thing. People visit the city for the cultural experience and for Melbourne's art scene, which is so vibrant. But we need to have these great art events in country areas. I know the Bendigo Art Gallery has hosted some arts programs that have been a terrific driver to get people to visit Bendigo. Karen Quinlan has done some amazing stuff in Bendigo.

Whilst the art and creative scene is vibrant and is doing very well in Victoria, I think this bill — from the feedback that I have received and put to the house today — is underwhelming.

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) — It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. The purpose of this bill is to repeal the Arts Victoria Act 1972 for the purpose of giving legislative recognition to the status and operation of Creative Victoria and to strengthen the government's commitment to policy and support of the creative industries.

The bill supports the establishment and operations of Creative Victoria and promotes the arts and creative industries in our state. Specifically it establishes the

office of the chief executive, Creative Victoria, and outlines a range of objectives, functions and powers in respect of this position. It establishes clear principles relating to the arts and creative industries, it provides for the preparation of an arts and creative industries strategy every four years, and it ensures that government support for the creative industries remains effective and current, regardless of who may be in government.

The bill provides for the ongoing support and growth of the arts and creative industries in Victoria, including culture, screen and design. It also recognises the important cultural and economic contributions that Victoria's arts and creative industries make to this state and within its local communities and the significant value of participation and engagement in the creative arts sector.

Melbourne is truly the culture capital of Australia, and this bill further supports this status by helping grow and promote Victoria's arts and creative industries. The bill also recognises the important contribution by many people in the community involved in the arts, and I acknowledge the contribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The bill provides specifically for the support and promotion of their cultural arts practices.

This bill is designed to grow Victoria's cultural and creative activity, while recognising and boosting its economic, social and cultural values. It is true to say that Creative Victoria and arts in Victoria really boost the economy and provide so much more, including thousands of jobs. The bill provides the support for stronger business, tourism and economic focus, as I have mentioned previously, in delivering Victoria's creative agenda.

Melbourne is not just the sports capital or the style capital of Australia, which we are very proud of; it is also the capital when it comes to culture. No other state has as rich a culture as Melbourne does, and I am sure that most people will agree with that. Our city has world-class entertainment facilities, including the National Gallery of Victoria, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Federation Square, the Melbourne Museum, and our well-known live music venues.

Melbourne is also home to outstanding events which include significant attractions; indeed we have a proud tradition of embracing arts and culture throughout this state. This bill will ensure we continue to expand and develop our world-class events and cultural infrastructure now and into the future, so that we can

ensure that Melbourne continues to be the vibrant and absolute cultural hub that it is.

We have seen the importance of creative industries as part of the arts and culture of our state. I have previously spoken about the economy. The creative economy in Victoria is worth over \$22 billion and it employs around 220 000 people. That is significant for our state. It provides the state with more than \$1 billion in cultural tourism every year and is a vital part of the Victorian economy.

A prime example of this economic impact is our famous lighting projects festival, White Night Melbourne, and I know many in this house would have seen firsthand what a fantastic show is displayed each year in our city. This injects nearly \$17 million into the Victorian community each year. The success of White Night can be credited to the ongoing collaboration and engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, which range from local communities to major arts institutions. It provides artists with valuable opportunities to express their creative vision and to reach new and larger audiences. It is a truly unique setting, and I think it has also become a tourist attraction for many to see such a creative show as White Night being displayed. I know the show will continue next year in Melbourne and Ballarat.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to see firsthand the exclusive Australian season of Jurassic World — the Exhibition at Melbourne Museum. Let me say it was very exciting to attend and to see firsthand the technological company producing such extraordinary and lifelike results. I took my niece and nephew, and it was such an experience for them to see what they genuinely thought were lifelike dinosaurs; that is how much they really thought the show was real life. I saw so many people attend that show, and as I said, it looked incredibly realistic. It was amazing to see the dinosaurs and how they were developed right here in Melbourne. Most people would probably know that they were developed by the Creature Technology Company, which is known for its sophisticated approaches. It produced *Walking with Dinosaurs — the Arena Spectacular*. These are global attractions that are taking place in Melbourne.

I think it is important to note that Creature Technology's involvement in Jurassic World — the Exhibition showcases Victoria's creative industries and focuses attention on the employment of this world-leading company to construct these sorts of shows and presentations. As I said previously, we are very excited about this bill. The bill is about enhancing and improving Creative Victoria and making sure that

we continue to attract people. The season opening at Melbourne Museum in March attracted over 400 000 people to that particular show. Jurassic World — the Exhibition is also touring internationally. These are fantastic opportunities for artists. It is a fantastic opportunity for Victoria to showcase its industry and cultural offerings not only to the state but globally.

The Andrews Labor government is absolutely committed to strengthening our state's arts and culture industries, to providing employment, to providing an opportunity for tourists and to making sure that Melbourne is globally attractive to everybody and has international world-class arts and entertainment events for many years to come. I commend this bill to the house.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I rise today to add my contribution to the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. Looking through the content of the bill, it is actually quite disappointing how limited the changes outlined within the proposed legislation are. Essentially the main purpose of the bill is to set out the functions of the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, and those of the newly created chief executive of Creative Victoria.

I do not understand why we need legislation in order to write up what is essentially a position description for a chief executive and secretary, and why we need to put into legislation that a government department requires a strategic plan to be done every four years. Perhaps it is just reflective of how out of touch with modern business practices some of our public sector organisations and departments are, if they need legislation to know that they need a strategic plan to be done regularly. This is something that would just happen ordinarily in the private sector, and it is something that we should be trying to achieve in the public sector. Rather than legislating these sorts of initiatives, they should just be a part of normal, everyday practice of good business operation — to ensure that you are fiscally sound, that you have your priorities in order, that you are meeting the needs of people within Victoria and that you develop a plan for how you deliver on those needs.

It is disappointing that this is more about talk and looking at those lower levels of administration than actually setting out additional funding or other strategies on how we can create more jobs in the creative arts and creative industry sector in Victoria. I therefore think this is a disappointing piece of legislation. I think that it is more about getting a quick

media release out to show support for the arts and cultural industries within Victoria, but as we heard from the member for Bayswater in her opening remarks, the arts community are very disappointed in this legislation. They really thought that there was going to be a lot more content in it that would make a real difference to supporting the arts and culture scene in Victoria. This strategy to make some minor amendments and rehash existing legislation to just make it seem like you are doing something may have backfired for this government.

I would like to raise some arts and cultural events across the Lowan electorate that show how we can better support and celebrate the fantastic skills and talents of our local people right across Victoria. Something that was mentioned earlier by the member for Mildura is the silo art trail, which is currently being painted across north-west Victoria. This was initiated by the Brim community action group. I am sure that many people have seen the fantastic artwork on the silos in Brim which was done by Guido van Helten. Four locals were captured in their day-to-day activities around the streets of Brim and have been painted on these enormous silos.

The result is that tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people have travelled from right across the world to see this magnificent artwork. If there is anybody who has not seen this art yet, then I certainly recommend that they make the journey out to Brim and have a look at it because it is absolutely breathtaking to see, particularly at sunset. I think that is my favourite time of the day to see it, but at any time it is just quite amazing.

This work initiated the establishment of the silo art trail in the Yarriambiack council area. Silos have been painted in Patchewollock by artist Fintan Magee and featuring local farmer Noodle. It looks absolutely fantastic, and it is quite a different style from the silo artwork that is at Brim. Sheep Hills are just getting their silos painted at the moment. That is being done by artist Adnate and is a tribute to our local Indigenous culture in the region. It is fantastic to see Aunty Regina Hood painted up on the silo with Uncle Ron Marks, who will be looking over to younger Aboriginal children. The vibrancy of the purple and of the facial features is just remarkable. When you meet these people in real life and look at the images, you can see that it really is a great representation.

We have got more silos to come though. Other communities that are going to have their silos painted are in Lascelles, Rosebury and Rupanyup. I am yet to go through Brim and not see a couple of cars pulling

over or people taking some photos. I see images on Facebook all the time. This is going to be a way that we can not only beautify these landmarks in our community but also attract a number of tourists out to our part of the world. It is something that everybody has got behind and will certainly assist to support business and industry in our part of western Victoria.

I would like to acknowledge some of the other artistic and cultural events across our region. I recently went to Tarrington for their Laternenfest and had an opportunity to look over their hay bale art. They do this every year. My favourite piece of art this year was a *Where's Wally?*. Wally had actually fallen into a pothole in western Victoria. I note the Minister for Roads and Road Safety is in the chamber at the moment. It would be fantastic for the minister to come out and visit me, and we could find Wally in that pothole. Maybe we can rescue him. We will fix up some roads on the way.

We have also got the Horsham Regional Art Gallery. I was very fortunate to recently open the Future Memories exhibition. This is a fantastic initiative. It is now in its second year. The exhibition was proposed by Adam Harding, who is the director of the Horsham Regional Art Gallery. It is a mechanism where our gifted and talented students across western Victorian schools have the opportunity to be mentored by professionals in photography, in writing and in curating as well. It is great for those younger people who are skilled and talented in the arts to have that opportunity to be mentored up. They are treated in the same way that an elite athlete would be if they were very good at cricket or football where they would go away to a special school event or a special intensive class. This is an opportunity for our art students to do exactly the same thing.

The exhibition is on until the end of January, and I certainly recommend anybody who is in Horsham to go and see that exhibition because it is absolutely outstanding, and the students have done all of it by themselves. I would like to also acknowledge the curator, Alison Eggleton, and the education officer, Debbie Moore, because they have both done an exceptional amount of work to pull that program together, and it has had enormous success in its second year.

Hamilton Gallery in Hamilton has a fantastic collection of works that are often on exhibition there. They recently had the Streeton Australia Felix exhibition. Every exhibition that I have been to in Hamilton has really blown me away. Important is the support of the local community, who want to be involved in this. They

see it as an expression of their emotions and feelings, and they really enjoy going and soaking up these cultural events. Perhaps people from the country are sometimes seen as not being that cultured, but I think that is far from the truth. We actually have some of the most creative and artistic people going around. It is great to see that celebration, whether it is at professional events or curated events or whether it is things we have designed ourselves.

Something that I have promoted in the past is the Woolly West Fest, which is focused on locals in the Hamilton and district region who actually knit. It brings people together. This year we saw the fantastic diorabaaas of the local communities. They were featured at the Hamilton Sheepvention this year. That is a fantastic opportunity for not just that artistic expression of our local people but also an opportunity to communicate what is happening in our towns and to bring people together in a social framework. It is an excellent program, and I commend everybody who has been involved in Woolly West Fest over past years and wish them well for next year. I think they are looking at having a 1970s woolly jumper theme, which will be fantastic.

I would also like to mention some of the musical talents in our region and how we can attract high-level artists to our region. On Sunday I went to Halls Gap Hotel to see the Black Sorrows and Taylor Sheridan. The Grampians provided a fantastic backdrop there. So many people locally were there to celebrate the great music, and it also attracted people from around the whole of the state. Halls Gap Hotel, which is operated by Matt and Mary-Ann Humphries, does a fabulous job of boosting tourism in the region. They recently also had the Peaks and Sounds Festival, and I understand they have got another musical gig lined up for April. Well done to Matt and Mary-Ann for really celebrating our arts and culture scene in the Grampians region and for helping to boost tourism as well.

I do think there are ways we can best support the arts and culture industries in Victoria. I do not think that this bill meets that need, but certainly I will continue to support any industry which comes to our region for an exhibition or that supports the talents of our local people.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — Etched in marble on the wall of the library honouring US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy is an insight into the significance of art, industry and politics:

There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts. The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age

of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Elizabeth also the age of Shakespeare. And the new frontier for which I campaign in public life, can also be a new frontier for American art.

Put simply, art is often the flame of progress, the inspiration of enlightenment. For Melbourne to remain the world's most livable city, art and culture must flourish. Looking at how important it is to bring these two propositions together, it is most easily summed up when you see that 8 per cent of the economy in Victoria comes from the arts and creative industries, which contribute almost \$23 billion and 220 000 jobs.

This bill that we have before the house, the Creative Victoria Bill 2016, provides the administrative architecture to help the arts flourish, and that is the proposition. There have been some criticisms from the opposition, which does not, I think, understand the reality of what this bill is seeking to achieve. It helps give effect to Victoria's existing *Creative State* strategy and provides for the preparation and periodic revision of the state's creative industry strategy.

Legislation is necessary to reflect the government's relationship with, and responsibilities for, the new creative industries portfolio and the role of Creative Victoria. The bill is a clear indicator of the government's support for Victoria's creative industries; an acknowledgement of the value of these industries and what they actually contribute to Victoria, cultural life and the economy; and a commitment to ensuring that support for the sector is strategic and secure. I think that is a critical point, because we have these incredible institutions that have evolved over generations, and what they will need is to have that security of funding so they can actually look at how to evolve into the next era.

This type of legislation is common when establishing governance arrangements for an office within government. Recent examples include Infrastructure Victoria, Transport for Victoria and, prior to these, Regional Development Victoria. This is part of the evolution. The bill itself is based on an enormous amount of feedback, directly opposing the proposition put by the opposition's lead speaker. There was invaluable feedback and ideas from extensive statewide consultation conducted in 2015 as part of the development of the *Creative State* strategy. This consultation process engaged almost 10 000 people from across Victoria's creative sectors and the general public. In addition, the creative state advisory board was consulted on the principles that appear in the bill.

I just want to refute that argument that was put forward by the opposition's lead speaker. The principles chosen

represent the key values that emerged during the consultation process for the *Creative State* strategy. This included more than 20 industry-specific workshops, an online forum and public central business district workshops, as well as other workshops in the outer metropolitan and regional areas, to make it as inclusive and consultative as possible. In fact more than 10 000 people contributed to the consultation, including peak bodies such as the Game Developers Association of Australia, the Arts Industry Council of Victoria and the Australian Institute of Architects, individual practitioners, business people and Victorian cultural institutions big and small.

The creative state advisory board also provided feedback on a draft set of principles which informed the strategy within the bill, and these were chosen to best reflect the role, contribution and intrinsic value of the arts and creative industries to the Victorian community and individuals. They also reflect the importance of access to the arts and creative industries for all Victorians and the importance of freedom of artistic expression.

On this point I think there is a real opportunity for the community that I represent, Broadmeadows, to look at how we actually bring innovation and arts into this community. The proposal that I am putting forward is looking at how some of the empty factories can be repurposed. One of them is Ericsson's, which has been used as a set and production office for the US television series *Hunters*, the Emmy Award-winning children's program *Nowhere Boys* and the Australian commercial television series *Molly*. The ABC produced *Shaun Micallef's Mad as Hell*, a comedy program, and the drama *Seven Types of Ambiguity* there.

Upcoming ABC legal drama *Newton's Law*, starring Claudia Karvan, features the Hume Global Learning Centre in Broadmeadows, and its managing company is negotiating with a film producer to relocate to Melbourne. The proposition that we need to address is that the Ericsson site features key requirements for our creative industries hub and a logistics centre for the film and television industry. It can provide jobs, training, set design and building, art department storage, truck security and a cinematic location for film, television and commercials. Infrastructure is already included, so I think it has enormous potential, and I call on creative industries to scope the opportunity to establish how we could actually have a Broadywood proposition to complement the Docklands as the hub for film and television production and logistics. It also has the benefit of location and access to blue-chip infrastructure; that is important.

It comes at a time when the sector is changing. We have seen television stations move into the Docklands. The ABC is about to sell its Ripponlea site as well. Here is an opportunity where we can look at how we can create jobs, how we can have greater development where it is needed most and how we can bring the arts into this community in a more inclusive way with jobs, with training and with career paths.

This bill provides the structural reform that is needed and sets up the administration to do it. I think that is really what the minister has brought to the Parliament — that is his strategy for it — and I applaud him for that. I think this really sets the Andrews government up, once we have got the framework in place and the structure right in terms of how you actually evolve and the policies.

This is a proposition that will benefit various electorates right throughout the state. How do we actually get people more involved in the arts?

I will just finish my contribution as I began — by quoting John F. Kennedy. He said:

... the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is very close to the centre of a nation's purpose — and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilisation.

With that I commend the bill to the house.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) — I am pleased to rise in support of this bill. It is a piece of legislation that repeals the Arts Victoria Act 1972 and really provides the structure and framework for arts in Victoria. It is a great opportunity to hear members in this house talking with some passion on the issues surrounding the arts in their own areas. It is great to hear from regional members in particular about the richness of the arts in our communities and the way people come together and support each other.

I think the principles of the act are important, and I would like to refer to them. In particular:

... the Parliament recognises that —

the arts have an intrinsic value that contributes to the cultural depth, diversity and life of Victoria —

is so true. Also:

... the arts and creative industries contribute significantly to Victoria's wealth and prosperity.

On that note it is really important to understand the extent to which the arts contribute to tourism. As someone from Shepparton I often think about the great

value the development of the arts in a city like Bendigo has had. A city which has 20 trains a day travelling between Melbourne and Bendigo is able to offer to the people of that area the choice of their local arts and the ability to access arts in their closest metropolitan centre. That accessibility, I think, is very important and indeed one of the principles. The principles go on to say:

... the Parliament further recognises that —

the arts and creative industries are meant to improve the quality of life for all individuals in Victoria and improve the community of Victoria as a whole.

I think we would all wholeheartedly agree that that is what it does — it brings people together. The principles also state:

all individuals in Victoria are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the arts and creative industries in Victoria ...

I would like to talk about Shepparton on that note because we take the arts very seriously, and at this particular point in time we are working very hard to finalise funding for our new Shepparton Art Museum. This is a process whereby the Victorian state government has already committed \$10 million through regional development, there has been \$10 million from local government and \$10 million is also to be raised through the philanthropy of the local Shepparton Art Museum Foundation. There was also a commitment from the National Party during the recent federal election to a further \$10 million from the federal government.

The Shepparton Art Museum was established in 1936 with a £50 grant from the Victorian state government. It is good to see that here in 2016 we are still receiving support and now have the opportunity to grow and build something truly remarkable. It is perhaps not so well known but it is a fact that the Shepparton Art Museum houses Australia's leading collection of historical and contemporary ceramics. It currently holds over 3000 works of art. Much of this, unfortunately, is down in the depths of the museum, hidden away and not able to be displayed. This is another important reason why we would like to have our new museum built on the edge of the lake in Shepparton — to be a true showpiece of architecture and also to provide the ability to put on display so much of the wonderful work that we have.

I think it is important to mention the business case for the Shepparton Art Museum, because it outlines that after 10 years of operation it will be contributing \$3.1 million in economic activity to the region. The overall economic impact on the region at the end of

those 10 years is presently valued at \$9.15 million, with that impact continuing to grow in the future.

Construction of the new museum is estimated to lead to \$58.1 million in economic activity and create about 181 jobs. That is so important in a region like Shepparton, where jobs are always sought after and where we, unfortunately, have a high youth unemployment rate. It has been terrific over the last few years to see the development of our courthouse, which is employing a lot of people, and on which there has been a commitment to use local contractors and employees. We will be working towards the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health — our hospital. Again, jobs will be an important feature of the success of those sorts of developments in our region, which we are so glad to have.

The year 2016 also saw the Indigenous Ceramic Art Award winner come from Shepparton. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Gallery Kaiela and its two artists, Jack Anselmi and Cynthia Hardie, for the piece of work they did which won the Australian award. The winner of the \$20 000 acquisitive prize was announced by Mr Rupert Myer, AO, during the exhibition and opening event. That was on Saturday, 26 April, this year. It was a great pleasure to be there to see such an amazing piece of art, which has now been acquired by the gallery and which belongs there.

The other feature of Shepparton and my electorate is the number of festivals that are held throughout the region. These festivals could not happen without the support of Creative Victoria. They include the Shepparton Festival, held annually. This festival started out in 1994 but 1997 was the first time that it was formally held, and it has continued each year since that time. I have to say that it has been a great pleasure to be a member of that community throughout the whole time and to see year after year that festival emerge and grow. It has been successfully staged every year and is seen as a major calendar event within regional Victoria. It has played a major role in changing the face of arts culture in the region, giving the arts a greater profile.

There are some aspects of it that are outstanding. One is the Emerge Festival, which is usually held on the Saturday night beside Victoria Park Lake. As members will know, we have a very significant multicultural community and it is amazing to see members of all our communities, especially our more recent African, Afghani and other Middle Eastern communities, come together at the lake to share their food, share their music and share their culture, as well as the local Indigenous community, the Yorta Yorta, and their dancers, and of course the many other displays that are on. It is the sort of thing that really does bring people together on the

ground in a way that is not esoteric. It is not the arts where you go along and specifically and individually enjoy looking at a piece of art or theatre. It is a real bringing together of people in the community. It is that walking around, talking to people, watching what is going on but really feeling a cohesiveness that is often not so apparent in some forms of our arts.

Then there is the Numurkah Food Bowl Festival. Numurkah is a town in my electorate, which this year staged the food bowl festival once again. It is a wonderful opportunity for our smaller towns to showcase what is happening. On Saturday morning the whole town was alive. The streets were alive. All the shopkeepers had their wares out. There was music, including brass bands, concerts in the park — all sorts of things. You could have spent the whole day there; indeed I was lucky enough to spend quite a bit of it enjoying those things.

Just a few years ago we had the Dookie Earthed Festival. A significant grant enabled the little town of Dookie to show what it had. The most amazing thing, I am told, that came out of that was at night, in a quarry, on a silo up on the hill, the lights came on and an opera singer started singing from the top of the silo. It was a truly skin-tingling sort of event. People still talk about that as being one of the most amazing nights they have ever experienced.

We hold the OUT in the OPEN Festival in Shepparton each year. This is a tribute to our local LGBTI community, who bring this festival to Shepparton and a whole range of acts into the community. There are shows on in local hotels, in the park and the like. Again, this is an opportunity to show the sort of diversity we have in our community.

We have the local Shepparton Theatre Arts Group, which performs plays throughout the year for amateur dramatics. That has been a wonderful tribute. In fact I had the opportunity many years ago to strut the stage and say one line in a play called *Twelve Angry Women*. It is a surprise that here I am now, talking endlessly. I never thought I would do it, but those of us in Parliament do get the opportunity to be actors a lot of the time. Maybe those few moments on stage helped. I am pleased to support this bill. It is a very important mechanism for arts in Victoria.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — It is with great delight that I join the debate on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. I sometimes try to shock people in the arts arena by telling them, ‘You know we do not have an arts portfolio in the Andrews Labor government, do you?’. There is an intake of breath, and then I say: ‘We’ve got

something much better. We've got a creative industries portfolio'. No longer are the arts just somewhere that is up there for the elite to stand back and look at and pontificate about, talking about 'the arts'; it is something that we acknowledge is not only a significant cultural contributor but a significant economic contributor and generator in this state. We can say to young women and young men and boys and girls growing up, 'Don't be deterred. If you want a career in arts, music or any other creative purpose, don't be deterred. Don't be told, "You need to get a real job"'. The arts, music and every other form of creativity are part of an industry, and they deserve respect, and this bill puts respect around that concept.

It also is a message to those who would exploit artists and think they should give away their work for free. I have got many, many friends who are performers — musicians — and the number of times they are asked to perform or that other friends are asked to MC an event, which might be a conference put on by the big end of town which has enormous fees to participate in, where the organisers try to get away with paying peanuts to the creative artists that perform there just astounds me. So this is one of the proudest things for me. There are so many things to be proud about in our first two years, but not having an arts portfolio and having a creative industries portfolio makes me really proud.

Post Black Saturday I have seen the arts in a much different light. I used to think, 'What on earth does a music therapist or art therapist do?'. The scales have fallen from my eyes. My cynicism about that has been completely driven away. That was because I saw the role of creativity in telling the story and in ensuring that it was enshrined in our history so that we could learn from that terrible time and so those stories could be handed down to future generations so they would understand and know particularly about the 173 people who lost their lives and the tens and thousands of others — the ripple in the pond — who were impacted on. It also helped those people to recover to tell the story. It was part of a process. I know that with my own grief after that — dealing with grief on a mass scale — live music was the only thing that made me feel better in those first 12 months. I know many of the bereaved who could barely speak for a long time about what had happened to them, but then being involved in a community choir meant they found their voice again; they found happiness. It was like hearing the birds in the trees again.

I get to go all over regional Victoria as part of my portfolio responsibilities, and it is just a delightful thing for me as someone who grew up in regional Victoria. I have had the great pleasure of opening

some new initiatives and announcing funding. There is one thing I have particularly noticed. When I grew up in regional Victoria you never heard Indigenous voices — never, ever. They were at the sidelines. When I think about it, I think that if my younger sister, who was born in 1974, had been born of an Indigenous mother, she may well have been stolen. She may well have been removed, as may I and as may my two middle sisters. So it was only a few short years after that time when I was living in Mildura. I went to school with Indigenous kids, but aside from the rare times they were asked to present in class you never heard their words. But now wherever you go over regional Victoria we are hearing that creative song. We are hearing it in a welcome to country. And it is soothing us, I believe. It is making us make reparations for what we have done. But also it is opening up this world of culture that we never knew about. It is going to be a great driver for the further development of our culture and our understanding of ourselves, and it is also going to be a major tourism driver.

I am delighted to be following the member for Shepparton's contribution and talking about the future possibilities for Shepparton. I am really pleased and privileged that part of my electorate, being the Shire of Mitchell, is in a tourism arrangement, called the Heart of Victoria — which is the City of Greater Shepparton and the shires of Strathbogie, Murrindindi and Mitchell — to promote the region that is all around the Goulburn River in the heart of Victoria.

The member for Shepparton spoke about the Shepparton Art Museum. With the investment this government has put into the Shepparton Art Museum, I have absolutely no doubt that Shepparton, with its great, rich reservoir of Indigenous culture, has the possibility to absolutely outstrip anything we are seeing in Bendigo, as magnificent as the Bendigo Art Gallery is as a driver for economic development for that city and its arts and culture — and what a brilliant place it is. I see Acting Speaker Edwards is in the chair and is looking a bit shocked: 'Shepparton is coming to get Bendigo!' But I will say lovely things about Bendigo.

I was there quite recently and stayed in the magnificent Art Series Hotel Group hotel, the Schaller Studio. Just staying in a hotel like that where all around you is art — how magnificent it makes you feel. That is part of what is driving that economy and making it such a great place to be.

The member for Shepparton is absolutely right: with the right transport links and the improvements on the rail line that I know she, Jacklyn Symes in the other

place and I are absolutely dedicated to, we will grow the arts and culture and we will grow that economy, and it will be a showcase for the whole state. Gerry Ryan has also been a great contributor to the Heart of Victoria with his investments in the Nagambie Lakes. I went to an event at Mitchelton winery for Halloween called Hallowine. It had dance, all sorts of installations, sculpture and music, and it was just brilliant. There are so many of these examples across regional Victoria. The government's support for creative industries means that these things will grow even more. The member for Lowan mentioned the silo art trail. What she did not mention was this was made possible by a \$200 000 investment from our creative industries fund because we actually care about those things. That area of the state has really struggled with drought and a declining older population, but visitors are going there in droves, and we as a government are supporting that.

I really want to pay tribute to the fabulous artists in the town where I live, Diamond Creek, and the magnificent Diamond Creek Traders Association, who have created a gallery called Cube Z. It is a gallery in a shipping container, and it moves around the township of Diamond Creek and holds different exhibitions — any week you can go and see anything. It blows your mind, what is there. It is engaging the community. There has been art in all the cafes. Diamond Creek is a destination for the arts that you are going to see more about, particularly with the framework that we have around creative industries.

In conclusion, I would really like to commend Amanda Gibson, the architect and creative driver of these initiatives in Diamond Creek. She was also the blacksmith who pulled together the group of people who created the Blacksmiths Tree in Strathewen — welders and ironworkers from all over the world but specifically those that were bereaved in the bushfires. It is talent like that this bill before the house harnesses. We are doing it. We are not standing back and looking at it. We are getting involved in the creative industries. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — I am very pleased to rise to speak on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. This bill is important as it consolidates and enhances Victoria's cultural and arts capacity, and it is an integral part of the Victorian government's whole-of-sector approach to our creative industries. Our creative sectors and accompanying occupations account for around \$23 billion in gross value added, and they make up about 8 per cent of the Victorian economy. They employ around 220 000 people and they provide Victoria with over \$1 billion in cultural tourism annually. The Andrews Labor government recognises

that our arts and cultural sectors are integral to the overall wellbeing of all Victorians, and this includes mental and physical health, as well as providing social and recreational benefits.

Quite frankly, who would want to live in a society that does not have a vibrant, active, well-funded and thriving cultural heart? Our creative industries are many and varied, ranging from craft, design, fashion, film and television, games, literature, music and theatre to visual and performing arts. A society that does not cherish its theatres, galleries, museums or its music, literature and art would be a sterile and mundane society in which to live. Although it is difficult to quantify, there is also no doubt that creative industries have a profound effect on the science and technology and environment and sustainability sectors and in areas such as education and communication. Of course, attempting to quantify the value of our creative industries in terms of numbers and dollars often misses their true intrinsic value to the recreational, social and also educational life of all Victorians. That is why the government has clarified and consolidated our approach to Victorian arts and creative industries with the creation of, and increased funding for, Creative Victoria.

The computer games industry is a perfect example of how Victoria's creative industries are adding significant value to both our economic growth and the cultural enrichment of our community. There are easily quantifiable numbers and statistics I can cite to demonstrate the economic value of this industry to the Victorian economy. These statistics include the fact that over 47 per cent of Australia's digital games developers and related companies are based in Victoria — and this figure grows every year. These companies create jobs and wealth for thousands of Victorians and serve to boost Victoria's economic fundamentals. Melbourne is where Australia's first digital game was created, and Victoria was the first state to provide government investment in game development.

Today, the state's games sector comprises nearly half of Australia's games industry and includes leading global companies and boutique developers. Nearly 96 per cent of Victorian-made games are made for the international market. Victoria is home to more than 120 games companies and has a growing pool of talent, with more than 1000 graduates emerging each year from games-related courses offered at 20 educational institutions. It is also home to the Game Developers Association of Australia, Australia's peak games industry body, and the Arcade, a collaborative working space in Southbank that houses over 30 companies working on entertainment, games and gamification projects. This combination of

enterprise and education is the lifeblood of our local industry. It draws to this state young and talented people who want to develop their careers and contribute to this ever-growing sector. More than just providing tech-related jobs, games require skills from a range of creative disciplines, from musicians to visual artists, sound designers and actors. This has manifested in the creation of game-specific motion capture studios, game-specific publishing companies and even public relations firms. There is also significant collaboration with other IT and creative sectors.

The sector comes together with national and international peers annually during Melbourne International Games Week, an initiative of the Victorian government that this year was experienced by more than 60 000 people. Throughout the week, games made locally were displayed to the world via the Apple App Store, which led to a locally made game, *Agent A*, hitting number one on the games download charts that week in Australia, New Zealand and China.

Many of my constituents in Yuroke are avid computer gamers, and they range in age from young children to young adults and even many older people who are discovering the many and diverse benefits of gaming. This increase and interest in computer gaming is indicative of the trend throughout Victoria, Australia and the rest of the world. As technology develops and games become much more sophisticated and visually appealing, there is no doubt that many more of my constituents will explore this exciting new technology. I had my father over the other week and he used my son's virtual reality system. He was completely taken aback by how he could sit in the room and turn the chair around and see 360-degree graphics in 3D with real-life scenes. He did an under the sea tour and thought it was amazing.

I recently attended the PAX gaming event in Melbourne, and it was a fantastic exhibition of what the computer games industry has to offer people from all ages and backgrounds. I was pleased to meet and see so many Victorian games companies represented and showcasing their world-leading and world-beating products. From large, well-invested gaming companies to struggling independent, or 'indie', developers, Victoria is now the central hub for these industries in Australia. The indie showcase at the event was an eye-opener to just how many talented Victorians are focusing their careers in the computer games industry, and many of them were very excited about Creative Victoria's support for their industry. I was pleased to hear that Victoria has secured the PAX Australia event through to 2019.

I am also thrilled that nine Melbourne game developers will share in more than \$440 000 thanks to the latest round of Andrews Labor government investment funding. With games spanning a diverse range of topics, from a virtual reality journey through 1950s America, to adventure and detective games, to a story about a mother searching an alien planet for a cure to her son's illness, the strength and diversity of Victoria's game developers and the important contribution they make to the state's creative reputation is clearly demonstrated.

As every parent knows, computer games have a value far beyond numbers, dollars and jobs. They provide recreation and enjoyment, as well as education, for our children. Given the prize money that was up for grabs at the recent PAX event, I am not sure that my constant harping to get off the computer was the best parental advice I could have been giving. Victorian schools also recognise the value of computer games, and that is why many schools are utilising computer games as an essential part of their curriculum. They are incorporating these games into school curriculums so that they can make learning fun, and it assists children with learning difficulties.

The Arts Council England's report titled *The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society* indicates that there is also growing evidence that engagement in structured arts and cultural activities improves the cognitive abilities of children and young people. It also states:

Research has evidenced that a higher frequency of engagement with arts and culture is generally associated with a higher level of subjective wellbeing.

As more tertiary students are choosing IT degrees, Victoria's universities are responding with specific game design courses offered to students. Universities such as La Trobe, RMIT, Deakin and Swinburne all offer dedicated game-related courses. There are many other Victorian educational institutions also offering game-related content. The extraordinary success and growth of the Victorian computer games sector means that many of these graduates will choose Victoria as a place to work and reside. As Victoria is now the go-to place for skilled game designers and developers, we are attracting some of the world's most skilled and talented graduates from all over Australia and the world.

The Andrews Labor government recognises that Victoria's cultural growth is an essential part of what makes us unique, and modernising our legislative and structural approach to the many and varied creative industries and sectors is a fundamental first step in this process. As I previously indicated, this legislation will

provide a new, whole-of-sector approach to focus on and recognise the private and public benefits of our arts and creative industries. It is an expression of this government's vision and a tangible contribution to modernising our creative and arts sectors.

The legislation appears before the house as a reflection of the many views expressed during the concerted process of public and industry consultation, and the government is proud to be enhancing the cultural diversity and enrichment of our great state. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — I am very pleased to rise today to contribute to debate on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. The bill before us today repeals an earlier act, the Arts Victoria Act 1972, and I am certainly very glad that it does that because what we are seeing today is legislation which fully recognises this government's commitment to the arts and creative industries in Victoria. I would like to absolutely commend the Minister for Creative Industries for his focus on and attention to recognising the extraordinary contribution and the enormous potential of the arts and creative industries for their economic, social and cultural value to Victoria.

Before the 2014 election Labor announced that it would rename the arts portfolio 'creative industries' and move it from the Department of Premier and Cabinet into economic development. We said we would create a new, overarching and integrated cultural body, combining Arts Victoria and Film Victoria into Creative Victoria. And we have done just that. This new state entity is dedicated to growing, supporting and promoting Victoria's arts and creative industries, which includes culture, screen and design.

This bill is clear and unequivocal recognition and support from the Victorian Parliament for the arts and creative industries in Victoria, for their financial as well as intrinsic value to all Victorians. Sadly this is not something that we have seen from the opposition, nor are we seeing this at the federal level. Recently the federal education minister, Simon Birmingham, referred to creative arts courses as 'lifestyle choices' which are not worthy of government support, and we have heard that the federal government plans to scrap support for more than 470 courses, including courses at the National Theatre Drama School in St Kilda, which the member for Bayswater referred to in her contribution. It seems that the member for Bayswater supports that decision to cut that support and that funding. Well, we on this side of the house do not, and neither does any state or territory arts minister who recently called on the federal minister to reinstate that

support for those courses, because we absolutely recognise the value of a diverse and vibrant arts and creative industries offering for all Victorians.

The purposes of the bill are set out in clause 1. As well as repealing the 1972 act, they recognise principles relating to the arts and creative industries in Victoria; establish the office of the chief executive, Creative Victoria; and provide for the preparation of a strategy for the arts and creative industries. I am genuinely excited by this development. I have long believed and advocated that arts and creative industries have such an intrinsic value that they contribute to our overall wellbeing and quality of life, and that the arts improve our communities and provide enormous opportunity for expression of creative thought, for critical thinking, for analysis, for challenging boundaries and just plain awe, amazement and enjoyment.

We have heard that the arts and creative industries in Victoria make an enormous contribution to Victoria's wealth and prosperity through the visitor economy, tourism, jobs, trades, training and education. Victoria's creative industries generated more than \$22 billion in 2013, creating over 220 000 jobs, so we have come a long way since 1972 and the original act. The extraordinary contribution made by creative industries to Victoria's economy and cultural landscape needs proper acknowledgement and a steadfast commitment to make sure that support for this sector is strategic and secure, not just now but obviously for generations to come.

The role of creative industries and our view of them have changed dramatically. No longer are creative industries a niche activity, too often perceived as being just available for the privileged few. Contemporary creative industries are there and should be there for all Victorians. Most importantly creative industries are jobs — more than 220 000 jobs — and they are pathways for alternative views and the expression of ideas. Creative industries provide opportunities for social cohesion and improved social and community outcomes. They are emerging and evolving all the time.

As I maintain, it is not just about galleries and museums; it is about stories as distinct as the people who make up our Victorian communities. In that respect I would like to think that in the creative industries there is a place for every Victorian and that every Victorian has access to the creative industries. I believe it is incumbent upon us to make sure that every Victorian is able to find their place in the creative industries. We have heard how broad that is, including film, design, television, radio, gaming, internet, software development, theatre, visual and performing

arts, dance, education and training. Obviously this list will continue to grow as we recognise and accommodate emerging art forms and creative systems, arrangements and practices.

Most notably this bill creates the legislative foundation that will help us support, grow and mature the arts and creative industries, and it will make sure that we continue to identify and nurture new art forms and new creative industries. By repealing the 1972 act we are saying that the new approach, the growing appreciation for Victoria's creative industries and the enormous potential afforded by creative industries in Victoria need a new act. Our creative industries traverse cultural, social and economic fields and we need legislation that reflects this and we need legislation which supports the whole of our creative industries in all their creative intricacies and differences and in all the possibilities.

We have heard that we have not got here by accident, that the work in this bill represents the culmination of significant and extensive community consultation which was generated through the *Creative State*. More than 10 000 people contributed to this consultation process last year, and we know there is a tremendous amount of goodwill and support for this new path, which has renewed, energised and strengthened the focus on creative industries in Victoria, because more and more we are beginning to understand and appreciate the wideranging and comprehensive value our creative industries make to our everyday lives.

Undeniably creative industries can have a cultural element to them, but I think they can be defined much more broadly. If we accept that the cultural industries have knowledge as their major input, then the extent of their reach, their influence and their potential is enormous. This bill recognises that and creates the framework that is going to support that.

The bill establishes the office of the chief executive and specifies that the chief executive will, among other things, develop policy, including the provision of research, reporting and advice for the relevant minister and secretary of the department, to consult broadly to understand the opportunities and challenges facing people in the arts and creative industries and to develop strategies to respond. Importantly, this legislation will require the minister to ensure that a strategy for the arts and creative industries is prepared every four years. We have just gone through this process where we have developed the *Creative State*, and the strategy will include things like improving the knowledge, understanding, appreciation and practice of arts in Victoria; encouraging and assisting the growth and impact of the arts and creative industries; and

promoting and improving access to the arts and creative industries.

In this year's budget alone we included \$152 million for a strong and creative cultural sector and our centrepiece is *Creative State*. Creative Victoria will grow and support Victoria's arts and creative industries. We are now really well positioned to harness the power, the strength and the enthusiasm that is our creative sector. I am delighted to commend this bill to the house. This legislation and this government recognise all the different forms of value that creative industries bring to Victoria.

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — I am pleased to rise to make a contribution on this very important bill before the house this afternoon, the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. I note that speakers before me have mentioned how important this change has been. Indeed it was a promise that we made coming into government that we would establish Creative Victoria and that we were publicly committed to introducing this new law, which would repeal the Arts Victoria Act 1972 and establish legislative recognition of the status and operation of Creative Victoria, which of course expresses this government's commitment to policy and indeed enormous support for the creative industries.

This has been a remarkable two years when it comes to creative industries in Victoria and the arts more broadly. I note that many of the speakers for the opposition referred to many, many events — artistic events, exhibitions, dance concerts et cetera — across their electorates, including some Indigenous contributions as well. I think it would be really important for members of the opposition to note that many of those were funded by Arts Victoria.

I note that in May this year the federal government made some significant cuts to the arts across Australia. If I can, I would just like to read a little section from an article that was in the *Monthly* in May. It says:

The Australian arts community could be forgiven for being triskaidekaphobic.

I have no idea what that means, but I felt I needed to say it. It continues:

Last Friday, 13 May —

Black Friday as it was known in the arts community —

around 65 arts organisations, including many thought to be essential to our cultural ecology and unassailable in their artistic output and fiscal stability, lost their federal funding.

As the news spread, so did the shock and dismay. Everyone was braced for grim news, but the outcome was worse than most people expected.

It then says:

The problem with arts funding is that it's an arcane and intricate subject that's about as sexy as a cheese grater.

I would have to argue the opposite because I think it is pretty sexy. It continues:

Worse, the ad hoc policies applied by the coalition government since 2013 make it difficult even for insiders to follow the vagaries of funding. Yet it's impossible to understand the anger of the arts community without understanding some of these complexities, and in particular the history behind Friday's bloodbath.

That is, Black Friday. It continues:

Because, although the money counts in very real ways in what has happened over the past three years —

federally —

it's not just about the money.

I just want to refer again to this article because it refers to:

The distress that swept through the Australian arts —

community, and it came —

after a year in which the broader arts community has been fighting for its life —

federally. The article continues:

There's a deep anger about the perceived contempt the federal government shows towards its knowledge industries, which encompass the sciences as well as the arts, although they are worth billions of dollars to the Australian economy and employ hundreds of thousands of people.

This is where I want to cut to the chase, because it says:

And it comes in stark contrast to the Victorian government's recently announced Creative Victoria initiative, which is pumping an extra \$115 million into the arts as drivers of a \$23 billion state cultural economy.

I think that is a really important point. The contrast could not be starker when it comes to what the Victorian government is investing in creative industries and what the federal government is cutting from those very industries.

This bill is extremely important, and I want to refer if I can to the member for Yan Yean, who mentioned Bendigo in her contribution. Of course in Bendigo we know that Bendigo is indeed the cultural and arts centre of Victoria, whether you like that or not — the member

for Shepparton may agree or disagree. But clearly not just Bendigo but indeed the whole central Victoria region is becoming well renowned for its arts and culture. Just one event that I know that many in this chamber are familiar with is the Castlemaine State Festival, the largest regional festival in Victoria and probably indeed in Australia. It is held only every second year, but gee, it is a big festival. It attracts artists, dancers, singers, performing artists, circus performers and talented people from right across the world and indeed across Australia.

Of course every year, every season, the Bendigo community and the surrounding regions see festivals, celebrations, expos, markets and parties, and indeed I think the world comes to Bendigo in our region. There is a growing calendar of quality events, festivals, exhibitions and markets such as the annual Bendigo Easter Festival, held in conjunction with the Maldon Easter Fair, which is also a fantastic event. We have fantastic regional food and wine events — I will get to some of those in a moment — and of course our sport and cultural celebrations. I am sure that for many members if they want to pop along to Bendigo or our region on any weekend, there will be something on that will tease their interest.

Of course you cannot go past talking about our fabulous Bendigo Art Gallery. I hope you have all been along to see the Maticevski exhibition — I can never pronounce it! This of course comes on the back of the Marilyn Monroe exhibition, which brought huge economic benefits to Bendigo. That was preceded by the white wedding dress exhibition. We have had so many fantastic exhibitions and art galleries that have drawn people from all across Australia to Bendigo.

On top of that we have in Bendigo the fabulous Ulumbarra Theatre. If members have not been to Bendigo to see the Ulumbarra Theatre, then I suggest that they do. This is the re-establishment of the old Bendigo jail into a fabulous internationally renowned theatre. Never a day goes by that the theatre is not booked out for one event or another, and not just events from across Victoria and Australia, but also local events. In fact many of our local schools are using Ulumbarra Theatre for their local concerts and for their graduations.

In Bendigo in my electorate we have the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, which is the largest Buddhist temple in the western world — in fact the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere. If anyone has not seen our Great Stupa, I would encourage you to get along and see it, because it truly is magnificent. It attracts Buddhists and other religious organisations and

people from right across the world — not just Buddhists, but indeed people from all sorts of religions.

I could go on and on about the number of events that we have in Bendigo: the Bendigo International Madison, the Bendigo food and wine festival, the Bendigo Craft Beer and Cider Festival, the Festival of Cultures and the Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival. There is the Scots Day Out, which is a more recent festival that attracts people from all over who are interested in Scottish music — there are bagpipes everywhere. The Bendigo Easter Festival I already mentioned, and there is the fabulous Bendigo Queer Film Festival, which is attracting more and more people every year. Of course there is Groove in the Moo. We have the winemakers festival; the Festival of Light, which is also held at the Great Stupa; the Festival of Lamb, the Australian Sheep and Wool Show and the women of wool show; the Bendigo Writers Festival; Bendigo on the Hop; and the list goes on and on.

Ms Knight — Is there nothing at Castlemaine?

Ms EDWARDS — I am getting to Castlemaine. Of course I have mentioned Castlemaine, indeed the Castlemaine State Festival. Maticevski: Dark Wonderland is currently at the art gallery, and of course there is the wonderful Bendigo Spring Racing Carnival. There is the Bendigo Blues and Roots Music Festival and the Bendigo National Swap Meet, and more broadly across the region there is Newstead Live Music Festival, the Maldon Australia Day celebrations, Fryerstown Antique Fair, Rock in the Vine at Sutton Grange winery — the list goes on and on.

What I want to say about all of these events is that they are supported by Creative Victoria — by the enormous amount of funds that this government is putting into making sure that our regions are thriving and growing, that we have economic development and that we have jobs. These are so vitally important to our regions. Creative Victoria is a fantastic initiative of the Andrews Labor government, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — It is indeed a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Creative Victoria Bill 2016. This bill builds on the exceptional work of the Minister for Creative Industries in launching in May this year the document *Creative State — Victoria's First Creative Industries Strategy 2016–2020*.

I cannot launch into the main part of my contribution without commenting on the input to the debate in this chamber given by the shadow minister for arts and culture. I have to admit that I was sitting there thinking,

‘What would Margaret and David say about that performance?’. I am a bit of a fan of *At the Movies*. David is a pretty harsh marker, but I think he would have been sitting there thinking, ‘What the heck did all that mean?’. I think he would be struggling to give it one star. My husband actually says, ‘You’re more like Margaret than David when it comes to film choice’, but I even think Margaret would be saying, ‘Oh David! On this occasion you are right. It was barely a one-star performance’.

The shadow minister failed to see that not only is this bill the result of an incredible commitment by the government, in consultation with more than 10 000 people, to bring a bill to the house that updates legislation to put the arts at the forefront of government decision-making but also that it provides an incredible legislative environment for the flourishing of the arts in Victoria.

The shadow minister said that government members failed to talk about jobs in this space. If you go and look at the Creative Victoria Bill 2016, you see that Creative Victoria is actually located in the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. Creative Victoria is about acknowledging the value of people who do creative things and saying that they should be rewarded and be well regarded. When they need it they should have the support of government and other sectors, including the philanthropic sector, that want to get behind them and make sure that Victoria’s reputation as the cultural capital of Australia is recognised and promoted. I think the minister actually says it very well in the foreword of *Creative State*. He said:

Creativity and cultural activity enriches our human condition. It defines who we are. It changes and reshapes our world. It inspires us, helps us build stronger, more cohesive communities. It increasingly drives new jobs and innovation. Creative and cultural industries —

and I really love this —

can be life affirming, life changing and lifesaving.

The minister is committed to growing the creative industries portfolio into something that is more than a jobs creation package. It is about creating the vitality, the environment and the ecosystem that will drive creative people to put their hands up and say, ‘I will give it a go’.

I would like to say to the shadow minister that when she is next talking to Senator Birmingham or Senator Fifield, she should have a talk to them about how they should be providing vocational education and training help and supporting the Victorian certificate of advanced learning sector in providing pathways for our

young people. In fact it should not just be about providing pathways only for young people. We should include mums returning to work who think, 'I'm going to give this creative space a go and try to make a living out of it' — or perhaps they could just have a little bit of fun in pursuing an endeavour they could not afford beforehand.

The coalition should get behind the Victorian government's desire to make sure that students who want to study in the creative space are supported. Currently, if you look at the federal minister's decision on this, the government has suggested that the eligibility for inclusion rests on courses being on the skills needs list of at least two states — that is a ridiculous criterion — and aligned with our national priorities in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and agriculture. What is missing from that statement? The creative industries are missing from that statement. We need to have a creative Victoria, but we need to have a creative Victoria that has educational pathways to make sure that people who want to study in the arts and culture space have the same access to the educational experience as other people who want to study science, technology and engineering.

Why is this important? The Minister for Creative Industries has identified it: it is life changing and it is life affirming and lifesaving in many ways. The member for Bayswater, the former minister, actually said it has taken a long time for this legislation to come to the house. Last time I looked she was the minister and she had an opportunity to deliver such a package. It is time, and we knew that this was needed, because when we were in opposition the present minister was actually out there talking to thousands of people in the sector. I am not referring to the people who somehow went to the former minister and said that they were overlooked or not heard, although that is really hard to believe when you look at how many people have been consulted for the Creative Industries Bill and also the *Creative State* document. The Arts Victoria Act was passed in 1972, so the former minister is right — it is about time — but she had that time on her hands to do something about it and chose not to.

When people on this side of the house make election commitments, we actually think it is important to deliver on them. It may not be about the delivery of a school or a hospital which people are intensely interested in, but it is about delivering for sectors like the arts sector, the creative industries sector, which deserves our commitment, our esteem and our dedication. The creative industries portfolio is an important portfolio, and this bill is an important bill. It establishes an entity that will have a CEO that will be totally focused on making sure that the creative

industries are well supported and expanded. Yes, we need to do this because it creates jobs, but lots of people will also benefit from this.

Here in Victoria we actually lead the way in making sure that not only does the creative sector create jobs but also involves everybody — including the community and business — in growing the enjoyment, the pride and the experience that you get from going to an art gallery, a fashion show, a games industry exhibition, a craft activity or a film. Victoria accounts for over half of Australia's television drama production and half of Australia's digital game sector. These are the new creative industries; they need government support and they need to be recognised.

I have a very interesting statistic. We often go down to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and see what is happening down there. The cultural collection that is in the art gallery is actually worth over \$5 billion. It is an extraordinary collection. I read in the *Saturday Age* — I think it was two weeks ago in the review section — that the national gallery is developing the talents of local artists.

We have to pay tribute here to the late Lynne Kosky. She said that Melbourne should not only be the creative state, a place where arts, culture, books, plays and film are very highly valued, but also the design capital of Australia. I think that Victoria, and Melbourne especially, is very well positioned to be the design capital of the Southern Hemisphere. When you go to Scandinavian countries you see wonderful art galleries, wonderful precincts, artists and artisans beavering away in their shops and in their studios producing some amazing work. That is happening in Victoria as well. I was very pleased to see the NGV extending the range in its shop recently. You can actually go down to the NGV shop and buy a piece of jewellery, a piece of pottery, a silk scarf or whatever might be your predilection in beautiful things. It is a really strong focus on promoting Victorian design.

This is a terrific bill. Yes, it is about time, but it has taken this minister and this Labor government to deliver again on one of its election commitments. I have no doubt that Victoria will continue to thrive and be the creative state of Australia. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

OWNER DRIVERS AND FORESTRY CONTRACTORS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 November; motion of Ms HUTCHINS (Minister for Industrial Relations).

Opposition amendments circulated by Mr CLARK (Box Hill) under standing orders.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — This is a bill to update references to bodies that are entitled to nominate members to serve on the Forestry Industry Council and to provide a mechanism for nominating bodies to be changed in future for the Forestry Industry Council and the Transport Industry Council. Both of these councils are established under the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act 2005, and they each provide a forum in which different parties within the transport industry and the forestry industry are able to canvass views and address issues faced by the industry and, in the course of that, to exercise their official functions under the act to advise and make recommendations to the Minister for Industrial Relations on the content of codes of practice, information booklets and rates and costs schedules; to develop, publish and promote model contracts; and to advise the minister on any other matters relevant to owner-driver or forestry haulage and harvesting contracts respectively and in relation to commercial practices in their respective industries. These councils were established in the middle of last decade, and the feedback from all sides, as far as I am aware, is that they have generally worked quite well as forums in which ideas can be exchanged and the functions of those councils performed.

Over time there have been changes in some of the organisations that, under the 2005 act, had the right to nominate members of the Forestry Industry Council, and the bill changes and updates relevant names. On the list that was kindly provided to me by the minister's office there are currently on the Forestry Industry Council, alongside the chair, representatives of the Australian Forest Contractors Association, the Australian Forest Products Association, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the Victorian Association of Forest Industries and VicForests, and then vacant positions from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and one vacancy each in respect of VicForests and the Australian Forest Contractors Association. It seems from that list that the government might perhaps have anticipated the changes that have been made by this bill in relation to nominating bodies.

The Transport Industry Council, in addition to the chair, has representatives of the Transport Workers Union, the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the Victorian Transport Association and the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with vacancies from VicRoads and the Australian Industry Group.

Needless to say, the two sectors to which these councils relate are both very important for the Victorian economy. Clearly a forestry industry well operated can be a renewable, sustainable industry, generating considerable economic wealth for the state as well as job opportunities and meeting needs for an important renewable resource. The industry has endured challenging times in recent years, including the high Australian dollar, the global financial crisis, bushfires, constraints on resource availability and others, but the industry considers that it is — notwithstanding that — in reasonably good shape with \$7 billion in annual sales and service income and employing directly around 21 000 Victorians. What that industry is looking for in terms of opportunities to grow and invest in particular is certainty and security from government, so anything that threatens that certainty and security is a concern.

The transport industry again is a vital industry for this state and for this nation, and it has faced serious threats in recent times. One of the principal concerns of the opposition about this bill and about the government's approach to this sector more generally is what the government may have in mind. It was concerning that on the very day I attended 1 Spring Street to be briefed by the department on this bill, the Minister for Industrial Relations issued a media release dated 17 November and entitled 'Victoria puts safety first with owner driver review'. In that media release the minister announced a review with the aim of updating the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act:

... to improve the conditions of drivers and forestry contractors and ensure they're not being exploited.

Later on, it says:

The review will look at the inquiry's recommendations —

referring to the Victorian inquiry into the labour hire industry and insecure work —

including a code of practice for the tip truck industry and the threshold requirements on hirers to provide applicable rates and costs to owner drivers.

It is that last reference in particular that is very concerning, because it comes in the context of the decision by the Turnbull government — the successfully implemented decision — to scrap the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal. The minister's media

release explicitly refers to this review that the minister is announcing in the context of what she referred to as ‘the Turnbull government’s decision to dump the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal’.

The concern with the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal is that this was an attempt inspired by the Transport Workers Union to drive self-employed owner-driver contractors out of business through the mechanism of setting rates of remuneration that were completely uneconomic or unsustainable and would make them uncompetitive to win contracts and therefore force more and more business towards large trucking companies which employed unionised workforces, at the expense of independent operators.

This is something on which the Turnbull government took a strong stand on behalf of owner-drivers, and it scrapped that tribunal. A review of the deleterious effect of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal was tabled in the commonwealth Parliament in September last year. That confirms that the payments order that had been made by the remuneration tribunal was causing crippling financial hardship for and distress to thousands of owner-drivers. It was bad for small business, bad for truck drivers, bad for their families and bad for the Australian economy. As the federal Minister for Employment, Michaelia Cash, pointed out at the time, it was having a terrible human impact on truck drivers and their families, including on their mental health, their relationships and their finances, and many people were losing their livelihoods as a result of the payments order that was made by the remuneration tribunal.

It was also clear that the ostensible aim of that tribunal, of improving road safety, was not being achieved and indeed there were many other important measures that could and should be taken — indeed are being taken — by the commonwealth government to improve road safety for heavy vehicles. The funds that were previously being provided to the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal have been diverted by the commonwealth government to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to invest in road safety improvements.

The federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Darren Chester, pointed out at the time that the evidence was showing that while there were heavy vehicle crashes occurring at a rate which was far too high for the liking of the government or the community, in the vast majority of cases of heavy vehicles involved in a crash, it was the light vehicle driver who was found to be at fault. So this notion and this pretext that having a Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal and setting very

high rates of remuneration — uncompetitive minimum rates of remuneration — for owner-drivers was going to improve road safety was completely misguided.

Now we have the state government and the minister, who has close familial awareness of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, announcing an inquiry, including into threshold requirements on hirers to provide applicable rates and costs to owner-drivers in the context of the scrapping of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal. In the second-reading speech for this bill the minister again refers to the issue of what she describes as ‘low earnings’ and ‘longer hours’ and the role of the councils in formulating rates and cost schedules which provide, as the laws currently stand, ‘indicative rates to factor into negotiations between contractors and hirers’, but at the moment these are indicative rates rather than binding rates.

What the opposition is looking for the government to do, in providing a context for the assessment of this bill, is indicate to the house and to the community exactly what the government has in mind with this review that it has announced. This bill is before the house but with no explanation of what the nexus is between this current bill and what its future plans are and why it has come to the house with this relatively modest bill before us while at the same time proceeding with this review that has major implications for the transport industry.

I will conclude by referring to the amendments that I have asked to be circulated. The government appears to be allowing only a very limited time for debate on this bill, so I will limit my remarks in order to provide opportunities for other speakers. The amendments that I am putting forward on behalf of the opposition seek to ensure that where the minister, under the bill, nominates a replacement body for a body named in the act that has ceased to exist, once that body has been nominated that nomination takes the place of the body that it has been nominated instead of, and cannot then be removed at will by the minister and replaced with another alternative body.

Unfortunately we have seen in other contexts that this government is quite willing to sack or dump or disband individuals or bodies or organisations with which it disagrees. The last thing we want is that, once a named organisation has gone out of existence and been replaced with one nominated by the minister, if that body or its representative offends the minister of the day — be it the current minister or a future minister — they can simply be axed and someone else nominated in their place to put forward a representative on the council.

That may not be the government's and the minister's intention — I certainly hope it would not be in this instance — and if that is the case, then I would certainly welcome the government accepting the opposition's amendments or putting forward its own amendments in similar terms, to put absolutely beyond doubt that once the minister has nominated a replacement body, an alternative body, that body as it were is deemed to be a nominating body referred to in the act so it cannot in the future be dumped by the minister of the day, if that minister ever wanted to do so.

I will conclude at this point, but we do seek from the government some explanation of the context of this bill in relation to the owner-driver review. We certainly believe the bill would be improved by the amendments that we have put forward, but the opposition parties do not oppose the bill.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to join the debate on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. I am quite surprised that the manager of opposition business managed to stretch out for nearly 15 minutes on a piece of the bill in confected anxiety. I honestly did not think that the manager of opposition business could speak for that long on what is a straightforward piece of legislation.

The member for Box Hill, the manager of opposition business, has indicated that he is proposing to amend this legislation. Those amendments the government may wish to consider, or may consider, in the other place, but that is not for us in this place. The manager of opposition business also referred to the limited time for members to speak on this bill. Well, that is in part due to the fact that the government is seeking to accommodate the wishes of the opposition for some of its members to speak on the budget papers, which take-note motion is due to be dispatched this week. We are trying to be as flexible and accommodating as we can be of some of the whims and wishes and desires of the opposition, but we do have limits.

Anyhow, it is a very straightforward piece of legislation. The bill is looking at ensuring that where you have got a representative of a body that is participating in relation to the ministerial advisory council and that body ceases to exist for a variety of reasons, there is the ability for the minister to appoint another person to represent the interests of the industry. It is a very, very straightforward piece of legislation. It is very clear; it is very straightforward.

The second-reading speech talks about some of the challenges that owner-drivers confront in our community. In preparing for this bill, I was interested to

recall a conversation I had with Mark Ward, otherwise known as 'Wardie', who is the chief executive officer of Officeworks. I remember talking to Wardie a couple years ago and he asked me, 'What do you think the average age of a person is who starts up a small business?'. There I was thinking it was probably some propeller head, 25 or 30 years of age, a gen Y or millennial and someone who has got far more street credibility than I have as the member of Essendon, but the answer was actually 53. The average age of a person starting a small business is 53. Invariably these are people who have lost a job or have had to leave their industry of choice and they have had to buy a business and start a new job.

My father-in-law was a bricklayer and a member of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. He injured himself in a workplace accident and could never work again. In his case, he purchased a courier truck as an owner-driver. He was a little bit older than 53 when he did that, but not much older. These people are vulnerable. You have to think to yourself that you are in your early or mid-50s, you cannot work for a variety of reasons in the job you have done for 20, 30, or 40 years, you have to start all over again in a new role at an entry-level position and it is in a role where you are at the whims and vagaries and mercy of your employer. So ensuring that we as a government can have a ministerial advisory council in place to provide a voice for those drivers, for the anxieties that they may confront, is important.

The member for Box Hill was talking about road safety. I would have thought that if you have got owner-drivers who are driving medium or large vehicles, or if you are talking about forestry workers who are driving very large vehicles and working very long hours — they are driving heavy machinery and they are fatigued — then that does raise questions around road safety. It is entirely appropriate that we make sure that there is a body in place where a minister can be very clear about what is going on out in the field in a real-time sense, because, as we know, companies change their structures. They have new owners, they have new boards of directors, they might have a new CEO and the direction of the business can change quite significantly and quite rapidly. If you are sitting on the Treasury benches and you are the Minister for Industrial Relations with responsibility for this, you are probably not necessarily going to be across all that information when that happens. You are not necessarily going to know just by picking up the *Australian Financial Review* what is going on with a particular company.

This bill establishes a ministerial advisory council. Let us be very clear about this: this piece of legislation had its genesis back in the days of the Bracks government; and the great strength of the Bracks government was its ability to bring together government, business and unions to build a better community for community benefit and community interests. We need to be in a position where we can look at having those structures in place, where you have got the ability to understand in a real-time sense what is happening and to be able to respond. There is not much point after the event saying, 'Okay, there has been a major decrease in the value of wages of owner-drivers and many people have experienced financial distress, have lost their houses or businesses or have gone broke. Let's look into that and do something about it'. It is a bit late then. The reality is that what you want to have happen when you have a ministerial advisory council like this in place is to ensure that you have got the ability to get that real-time information so that as legislators we are able to respond quickly and as expeditiously as possible.

The reality is that we are living in uncertain times. We are living in a changing world, and it is fair and reasonable that organisations can default or be dissolved or cease to be relevant or speak for their industry. We need to make sure that when that does occur there is an ability for the minister to be able to make sure we have got the right people as members of that ministerial advisory committee. It is a really straightforward proposition. I do not think it is a good use of the Parliament's time that whenever we are looking at trying to appoint someone new to a ministerial advisory council we have to come back here as legislators to debate a bill and pass it through both houses of Parliament. What should really happen is a simple case of basically saying, 'This industry association or this organisation no longer represents the people that it purports to represent. We need to make sure that we have got the right people participating in this ministerial advisory council. We will therefore basically remove said person A and insert said person B from organisation C because they better reflect the values of and what is going on in the industry'. It is a really simple proposition.

I am genuinely surprised by the fact that the member for Box Hill managed to talk for nearly 16 minutes in a state of anxiety, saying, 'Well, what about this? What about that? What about a review? What are you doing?'.

Mr Walsh — Nobody trusts you.

Mr PEARSON — The Leader of The Nationals says, 'Nobody trusts you'. I am assuming he is referring

to the government; he might be referring to me — you never quite know with the Leader of The Nationals. The reality is that we are a government that do what we say and say what we do, and we are getting on with it. That is just the reality of life under this government. Is that not a refreshing change compared to the dismal failures of those opposite when they last occupied the Treasury benches? You have to be in a special category of failure to be the first one-term government in 60 years. It is just extraordinary. You want to put that on your résumé, don't you? You want to put on your résumé, 'I was a member of the most dysfunctional, divided, failed administration the state has seen in 60 years', and take that to Centrelink.

It is a very straightforward piece of legislation. It will ensure that the legislation stays with the times and is responsive to the times we live in. I note that the member for Box Hill has circulated some proposed amendments. Again, that is something that the government may wish to consider when the bill is in the other place; it is not for us to consider here. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I rise to make a contribution on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. I am afraid I just cannot let the opportunity go past without responding to the member for Essendon and the fact that supposedly we have a government that do what they say. If my memory serves me correctly, the Premier made a hand-on-heart promise before the last election to govern for all of Victoria, not just for Melbourne. I am afraid, member for Essendon, your Premier has failed dismally when it comes to that particular promise.

The Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill, as has been talked about, is amending the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act 2005. That act set up two ministerial councils: the Transport Industry Council and the Forestry Industry Council, which represent a balance of hirers and contractors and bring a high level of expertise to those particular committees. It is about sharing information and helping small businesses be part of the debate and have equal information when it comes to negotiation around pay rates for logging and those sorts of things.

In talking about this particular bill, I support the amendments circulated by the member for Box Hill because I think they actually improve the legislation. One of the things we have probably noticed in recent times is that most of the legislation introduced in this house by the Andrews government actually does need amending because it is very poorly drafted and does not

actually set out to achieve the best result for Victoria on whatever the relevant piece of legislation is.

The key thing that owner-drivers and forestry contractors need in their businesses, as do the timber processors, is actually certainty of work, and that means certainty of timber supply. If you do not have certainty of timber supply, those particular contractors are then unsure if they will be able to meet their payments on the leases of the machinery they have. They are unsure about meeting the costs of hiring people, and those people they hire then have uncertainty around meeting their personal bills and meeting their home loan payments and those sorts of things. They also have uncertainty about meeting the general costs they have in running their businesses. So the key thing that owner-drivers and forestry contractors need most of all, like any other small business in Victoria, is certainty around their business so that they know they have long-term work into the future.

If you think about that in the context of what the Andrews government has done to the forestry sector over the last two years, all it has done is create uncertainty and reinforce that uncertainty for those businesses, both on the contractor side and on the timber processor side. I suppose the classic example of that would be the statement that is actually in the Auswest Timbers annual report. Brickworks, the parent company of Auswest Timbers, in their annual report said:

After many years of negotiation, the Victorian state government continues to frustrate efforts to make the required investments in our East Gippsland timber mills, by denying certainty of log supply.

These operations now have only nine months supply contracted, with no clarity being provided beyond that term. As one of the largest employers in this region, these investments would provide an important boost for the local community, as well as enabling Auswest to cost-effectively meet the strong demand for product from these mills. However, if an acceptable log contract is unable to be secured, the East Gippsland facilities will be closed.

You have a business, a significant employer — 65 jobs are in East Gippsland — that is saying in its annual report to the stock exchange that if there is no certainty of supply of timber in the next couple of months, it is going to make a decision to exit the industry down there in East Gippsland. That story is replicated across a lot of other businesses that rely on timber in this state.

What has created all this uncertainty? The government set up the Forest Industry Taskforce over 12 months ago. That was supposed to produce a report that was to give certainty to the industry and a map on the way forward. That task force still has not come to any

conclusions after more than 12 months of discussion. They put out a press release back in September which said they were actually making progress and having constructive discussion. Auswest and other businesses do not want productive discussions; they actually want certainty for their businesses. They need a long-term contract for the supply of their timber, and that is just not happening.

I can remember going to the Victorian forest industries association dinner a bit over 12 months ago. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union delegate Jane Calvert was there, as was the Wilderness Society's Amelia Young. At the time we were talking at that particular function I know Jane said, 'Give it 12 months, and if we're not getting somewhere, I've got to do something on behalf of my members to make sure they have jobs in the future'. Fast-forward 12 months, same function, same dinner, and neither of those two people actually turned up. Their name tags were on the table, but they were not there. The assumption I make is that they are both pretty disenfranchised — 'disenfranchised' is the best word — from this government because they cannot get a result on that task force. From Jane's point of view, she represents the very workers we are talking about with this particular piece of legislation. Auswest, if they do not get a contract shortly, will be exiting the industry.

The other one — the member for Morwell is in the chamber, and he knows them very well — is Australian Paper (AP). Over 1000 direct jobs are at that business. They rely on the forest industry — the contractors we are talking about in this particular piece of legislation — to supply them timber, to harvest and cut that timber for Australian Paper to protect those jobs at AP and all the other associated, indirect jobs that go with that.

Again, AP is very concerned about their supply of timber into the future. You might ask, 'What is their particular concern about supply?'. Their concern is about the talk, particularly in some parts of the Labor Party, about wanting a great forest national park. A great forest national park would actually lock up all the timber that guarantees AP those 1000 jobs, guarantees our place as a major producer of paper in this state and guarantees the jobs in Australian sustainable hardwood at Heyfield, with another 200 jobs, and all the other associated jobs that hang off that particular sector of forest here in Victoria. So again there is a real lack of certainty because of all the discussions about a need for a great forest national park. I know very clearly and those on this side of the house know very clearly that to achieve the environmental outcomes that are needed in

this state, there is no need to go ahead with the great forest national park. They are being achieved by the industry as it is now.

The last thing I would like to touch on is the Socialist Republic of the Banyule City Council and their motion to sign the ethical paper pledge, an absolutely ridiculous decision by a council whereby they are now going to buy imported paper from Austria rather than buying Australian paper that actually comes from sustainable management of our native forests and our managed plantations. The City of Banyule, I think, is being absolutely un-Australian in the decision that they have made about this particular issue — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr WALSH — As the interjector says, they are disgraceful in what they have done. They are saying that the people of Latrobe Valley that harvest this timber, haul this timber and make this paper are not deserving of someone to buy that particular paper. They are not supporting Australian jobs in the decisions they have made, and I think they should hang their heads in shame for what they have done to this state. To think that they would be importing paper from Austria rather than using Australian paper to me just defies logic.

Acting Speaker, it is a fairly small bill as you said when you made your contribution, but I think it just underlines the importance of this industry to the economy of Victoria and particularly to communities like the Latrobe Valley that actually rely on this very precious resource we have, this resource that I believe will be very well managed into the future. What the players want out of it is certainty, and particularly certainty from the Andrews government, who are just creating uncertainty rather than certainty for all of those people that work in this sector.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — It is a pleasure this afternoon to rise and speak on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. Firstly I would say that I actually come from a logging family, a truck-driving family. My relatives owned a mill out near Noojee in East Gippsland, and I think they still own the Toolshed Bar out that way as well. A lot of dirt-bike riders stop by and keep that place alive. I also have some truck-driving relatives in Bairnsdale who are still driving trucks. We do need to look after these people. It is a hard job and it is a very demanding job too.

Just before we go into that, I would like to touch on something that the members for Essendon and Murray Plains touched on, and that is trust. During question

time I heard with my own ears that 15 to 20 people had been carjacked or had been subjected to attempted carjackings in the last week on Geelong Road. I am pretty sure I also heard, with those same ears, that Victoria Police know nothing about this. Is that misleading Parliament? Is that a sign we cannot trust somebody? Maybe.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms McLeish — On a point of order, Speaker, regarding relevance. I fail to see what the member for Frankston's comments have to do with this bill that is before the house, and I ask you to bring him back to the bill.

Mr EDBROOKE — It is not worth talking on a point of order, but it has been a wideranging debate, and we are talking about trust. I am actually surprised that the member for Murray Plains is not all for the great forest national park, because there might be some black cats there. I mean, where did this come from? Did a bunch of guys go camping in the bush, pop a couple of cans — this is relevant — and think, 'Hang on, I've got a really good idea. I think it's in Victoria's interests that we put up some money and we go and find this ancient black cat from the old Ashton Circus', or whatever it was, 'in the valley'? And they are still looking for it. So how can we trust you?

Back to the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. So what does the original act actually do? The Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act 2005 assists our small businesses in the transport industry by providing them with information and support essential to running successful operations. As we have already heard from quite a few members in the chamber, a lot of the people that run these businesses are running family businesses or are sole traders. The act was established under the Bracks Labor government in 2005 to improve the position of small business owner-drivers and forestry contractors. The act established two ministerial advisory councils and provided a dispute settlement system through the Victorian small business commissioner.

The Victorian owner-drivers and forestry contractors scheme was established by the Labor government in 2005, and I think it has improved the position of small business owners. The act is based upon a 'light touch' approach to regulation, and it applies to businesses that operate a maximum of three vehicles where the owner also drives one of the vehicles. It does not apply to employee drivers. The Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act assists small businesses in the industry

by providing them with information and support essential to running successful operations.

The original act was developed in the face of evidence that owner-drivers and forestry contractors earn low incomes and experience a high level of business failure. They work long hours and face high ongoing costs to keep their businesses running. I can say from personal family experience that there are unique challenges for people in this business: long hours and high maintenance costs. To run some of the machinery they do, it does take a fair amount in the bank to keep them going. They are also the people that operate these heavy vehicles and the heavy machinery on our roads, and we should give thought to the fact that these people are running on a very small margin at times. We do need to help them wherever we can.

Under the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act, the Victorian small business commissioner (VSBC) provides a timely and cost-effective dispute resolution service for owner-drivers. From 2006 to March 2016, of the 242 disputes mediated by the VSBC, 202 — or 83.5 per cent — were successfully resolved.

The bill before us today proposes two amendments to the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act. Even though we had the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Hawthorn, talk for 16 minutes, I see that there are no amendments proposed to this bill, and it will hopefully go through as a bipartisan piece of legislation. The first amendment updates the names of certain bodies nominating members of the Forestry Industry Council, or FIC. The FIC is one of two ministerial advisory councils established under the act, the other of course being the Transport Industry Council (TIC). The amendment is deemed necessary as there have been changes to the representative bodies identified in the act since it came into operation. Two organisations have ceased to exist in their original form and as a result of machinery-of-government changes, it is necessary for the act to refer to the new Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

The second proposed amendment will allow the minister to select an alternative representative body that can nominate a member to the councils. At present there is no provision made for when a body identified in the act ceases to exist. This is what has happened with the FIC. So it is a pretty straightforward bill.

The functions of the FIC and TIC are also fairly straightforward. The Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Act establish the Forestry Industry Council and the Transport Industry Council. The councils

provide advice to the Minister for Industrial Relations and develop guidance information to assist owner-drivers and forestry contractors. There has been widespread acceptance of this. Many people have been consulted on it, and we are not expecting any opposition. All the members of the FIC have been consulted. They know that the changes will not alter the balance between unions and industry organisations, which is of course very important.

As I was saying earlier, it is very important to stand up for these employers and employees. They are running on very small margins. They are often family businesses and they can hit the wall quite easily. That would be a disaster for many people in those country areas. I know in the area around Noojee, Rawson and Erica there are many old sawmills that have fallen by the wayside. It is often worth a bit of a walk or a dirt bike ride up there to see a bit of history. Often you can see the old steam boilers and whatnot from the mills, but it does go to show at what sort of margin these businesses operate and how fickle those businesses can be, even aside from driving the trucks.

As far as safety goes, we know that owner-driving is a profession that requires a lot of concentration and a lot of training. Before I became a state member of Parliament I was actually a VicRoads-accredited driving instructor. I spent two months learning how to teach people how to drive trucks. When you get down to the nitty-gritty of what some of these people have to know it is not just about putting your foot to the floor and steering the truck; there is quite a bit to it when you talk about the massive loads, the centre of gravity and how they actually have to manage these vehicles on some really bad surfaces in some of those High Country areas. It is definitely worth just a bit of thought and consideration of the fact that when these people get it wrong and accidents happen, it is a life-changing incident and it means that families are changed dramatically forever.

In bills like this one we are trying to legislate to make things easier for these businesses and to put more legislation forward to secure these businesses and make sure there is longevity and that these businesses can keep on supplying Australian Paper and other businesses in those areas as well. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. Can I say at the outset that I am quite pleased to see that the member for Frankston has such great empathy for the industry and what it has to deal with on a day-to-day basis. It is great

to hear from that side of the house that there is some understanding. Of course the ultimate aim for this industry is to get bipartisan support to make sure that it can survive into the future and provide what Victorians need in terms of timber products.

Getting back to the bill, its purpose is to provide for future changes in the bodies that are entitled to nominate members of the Transport Industry Council (TIC) and the Forestry Industry Council (FIC) and to update the nominating bodies for the FIC that are named in the act. That really relates to non-nominating bodies to the Forestry Industry Council, so the old Department of Primary Industries will be replaced by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council Ltd will be replaced with the Australian Forest Product Association Ltd, and the Victorian Harvesting and Cartage Council will be replaced with the Australian Forest Contractors Association Ltd.

Just on the Victorian Harvesting and Cartage Council, I had a 30-year involvement in the timber industry as a harvest and haulage contractor, and at the end of that time in 2003 I became the CEO of the Victorian Harvesting and Cartage Council, so I was the representative on the Forestry Industry Council. At that time the council was really set up to establish an agreed set of rates to be used as a guide for contractors, in particular new entrants to the industry, and also put in place a dispute resolution process, as the member for Frankston alluded to. It was really about making sure that the financial viability of harvesting and cartage contractors was maintained. It was more about information. One of the member associations of the Forest Industry Council was the forestry division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). I think Jane Calvert was the representative at that time.

In my 30 years in the industry as a harvesting and haulage contractor generally the industry had a very good relationship with what was originally the Timber Workers Union and which then became the forestry division of the CFMEU. Most contractors, in fact all contractors, paid well above the award rate and that made it easier to have a good relationship with the union, but one of the most challenging aspects of our industry was safety. The union, the contractors' associations and the contractors themselves were as one when it came to that particular issue, so there were a lot of common issues between the union and the industry throughout the 30 years that I was involved in the industry.

The other thing that harvesting and haulage contractors were challenged by around that time when the Forestry Industry Council was set up was the ever-increasing capital cost of plant and equipment that they were expected to meet. There was new equipment coming on-stream; it was very expensive, but it did improve safety and it did improve productivity, so therefore it was a no-brainer that the industry had to head down that path and commit to those improvements. But it did come at a significant cost and sometimes it was very difficult to get those who we were supplying — those users of timber products, those processors that contractors supply their products to — to understand just what sort of financial commitment was being made and the difficulties that came from that, in particular as our banks were getting nervous, and they were getting nervous at that time because of the green pressure that was being imposed on the native forest industry.

The Forestry Industry Council served a really good purpose during those times, and it will continue to do so. Just as an example, when my sons and I left the industry in 2003, to replace all of our equipment at that time would have meant a cost of about \$6 million, so we are not talking small bickies when it comes to the financial pressure and commitment that contractors are expected to make.

The other part of it, as the Leader of The Nationals said, is about giving industry — the harvest and haul sector in particular — some certainty and security for the future to encourage them to invest and be able to keep up with changing technology. But what we have seen in recent times again is the uncertainty that comes about and which has impacted the industry over many, many years.

I want to go back to about 1987 when the late Joan Kirner was the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands and put in place the first timber industry strategy. The aim of that strategy was really about giving industry certainty and encouraging it to invest so that it could value-add its product. Back at that time East Gippsland had an annual harvest of around 340 000 cubic metres, a significant amount of timber. The timber industry strategy actually reduced that volume by about half — back to about 176 000 cubic metres. That had an enormous impact on towns like Orbost, Bendoc, Cann River and Buchan. Actually those communities have never recovered from that. I am not blaming Joan Kirner for this because there was an angle to the reasons for which she really changed things in East Gippsland. But just to give the example of the ongoing pressure the industry has faced from the Greens since 1987: I note the East Gippsland area now has an annual harvest of only

50 000 cubic metres, so it has really, really taken a lot of cutback, some of it on the back of the extension of the national park that was declared by the previous Labor government. It is just an illustration of the constant pressure from the Greens, and naturally I will say some of it is unwarranted but, whichever way it goes, the industry has had to deal with that.

When Joan Kirner introduced the timber industry strategy it was really about shifting the focus from East Gippsland to the Central Highlands. The amount being harvested in the Central Highlands was supposed to increase to offset the cutbacks in East Gippsland. It is interesting to note today that the push by the Greens for a great forest national park is directed straight at the ash resource in the Central Highlands.

Of course we have our gumnut fairies — or the Greens, as I call them — and their mates in this house, who use misinformation to support their ambit claim. I guess that is the issue that the industry has had to deal with over many, many years. It is not so much the information that has been put out; it is the misinformation. The way the industry has been painted over the years has been from a base of one-sided information that is not correct. This is another example — with the ambit claim of the great forest national park. They tug on the emotional heart strings of many good people, many of them in Melbourne, by claiming that the Leadbeater's possum is facing extinction, whereas in actual fact there have been 280 sightings in this year alone of colonies outside the reserve system.

You must bear in mind that the native forest industry has access to only 6 per cent of our public native forest resource, and as little as 0.3 per cent of that is harvested each year. Still the Greens are not satisfied. They will not give up until all native forest is locked up in parks and the native forest industry is dead and buried. The absolute hypocrisy of this approach is shown by the fact that our timber needs will have to be sourced from overseas, including from Third World countries that have no forest management practices at all. Victorians will be supporting the continuing devastation of rainforest, particularly in Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, as they seek to satisfy the growing demand for good quality hardwood timber. Currently in Victoria no areas of old-growth forest are logged, and rainforest is also set aside and protected.

What I am saying is that the industry is sustainable, both environmentally and economically, if it is allowed to have reasonable access to a reasonable amount of native forest. It continues to adjust the rates of harvest

to ensure sustainability in the face of bushfire and threatened species management.

In closing I note that the coalition will not be opposing this bill but will seek to move an amendment to ensure the minister does not have the power to change the membership of the Forestry Industry Council for any other reason than to fill a vacancy that has genuinely arisen. We do not want, and industry does not want, the minister to be able to use their power to remove a member organisation from the council for purely political motives.

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) — It gives me pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. I support the amendments proposed by the member for Box Hill and totally support the comments made by the member for Narracan and indeed the Leader of The Nationals in their contributions.

The bill provides for future changes in the bodies entitled to nominate members of the Transport Industry Council and the Forestry Industry Council and to update the nominating bodies for the Forestry Industry Council that are named in the act. As I said I support the amendments put forward by the member for Box Hill. From a Gippsland perspective and from a Latrobe city prospective, the timber and forestry industry is absolutely critical for the economy and jobs in our community.

In terms of looking at some of the fast facts relating to the industry in Gippsland, it is worth noting its contribution on many fronts. Sixty-seven per cent of land in the Gippsland region is actually made up of state-owned forests, national parks and reserves, and native freehold forest. That is 67 per cent of the land, so that is a massive indication by anybody's level. Also, 29 per cent of Victoria's agriculture, forestry and fishing exports are contributed by the Gippsland region — that is substantial — and 37 per cent of Gippsland businesses are involved in agriculture and fishing, and 15 per cent of Gippsland businesses are involved in agriculture and fishing processing operations. So as you can see it is an industry that is absolutely critical to our region, and I am sure other members such as the member for Gippsland East will elaborate further on that.

One of the items the Leader of The Nationals mentioned in his contribution was the critical element of the supply of timber to a number of mills right across the Gippsland region and to businesses that sit underneath them. From a Morwell electorate perspective, Australian Paper is a massive employer for

Gippslanders directly but also indirectly; there are a number of businesses that sit underneath it. Supply of timber is absolutely critical.

In my electorate we have Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP), which has plantations right across Gippsland and a number of plantations within the Latrobe City Council area. They are constrained at the moment by a number of leases that they have with the state government that have not been resolved and need to be resolved quickly and promptly. Unfortunately what that adds to the scenario as played out by the Leader of The Nationals is similar to what is happening with Auswest Timbers, which I am sure the member for Gippsland East will speak about as well. Whether it is HVP, Australian Paper, Auswest, Carter Holt Harvey or Fisher's Timber Preservation in Morwell, there is just this air of uncertainty at the moment that really comes back to the supply of timber.

Granted, not all of this sits within the state government's domain; there are issues that have contributed to supply problems such as bushfires, something that in many respects we do not have a great deal of control over — and unfortunately over recent years many parts of Gippsland have had their timber supplies impacted by bushfires. In some respects that is a little bit out of control. But when you have plantations that fall under the lease of the state government, decisions or non-decisions around the great forest national park or the timber task force that cannot come to conclusions, what you have in this industry is massive uncertainty. I am not really sure if the government or even the broader Victorian community understand the urgency that is required in resolving some of these issues. But the fact is it needs to happen, and happen very quickly.

In my electorate we have obviously got the situation happening right here and now with Hazelwood power station closing down, with literally thousands of jobs most likely to be lost. The real fear is about the next step — what happens to Australian Paper? I do not want to put the fear of God into anybody, but they have some enormous challenges. They have enormous challenges with respect to gas prices. They are one of the largest users, or the largest user, of gas in this state. They have also got issues with supply of timber, as I mentioned before.

But one of the things that really gets up my nose — and I raised this in Parliament in the last sitting week — is Banyule City Council's recent decision to ban Reflex paper. It is just extraordinary that a council would deem it much better to import paper from Austria than to use Australian-made paper. When we are talking about

imported paper, it comes from jurisdictions that often do not have the same forestry standards, environmental standards or compliance that we have to contend with here in Australia. It makes absolutely no sense to me in a time of need when we really need all Victorians and all Australians to get right behind Australian Paper. I cannot for the life of me understand that decision, and I am sure many members on all sides of Parliament here would nod their heads and support my position on that.

I will go back a step. Late last year the employees and staff of Australian Paper, unions and local members of Parliament all got together to talk about some of those challenges for Australian Paper. In a crowded hall at the Morwell football ground we talked about some of those challenges for the company at the time. Not the least of these problems was the imports that they have to contend with. We still need the federal government to make sure that the paper that is coming in does so in a reasonable manner and is not going to impact upon the paper that Australian Paper manufactures right here in Victoria. We also need to make sure where possible that government departments and agencies at all levels do the right thing to try to support locally manufactured products such as those made at Australian Paper.

On the positive side of things, during the last parliamentary term we were able to support Australian Paper in its endeavours to construct a multimillion-dollar de-inking plant that is doing some great work churning out 100 per cent recycled paper. It is a fantastic product, and I again implore all members of Parliament, government departments and agencies to support Australian Paper through that product.

A number of different businesses depend on the viability and sustainability of this industry, not least those businesses that operate within the Gippsland region and particularly within the Latrobe City Council area. Despite some positive elements of the bill, I support the amendments that have been proposed by the member for Box Hill. I can see that the member for Gippsland East is ready to go, so I will conclude my comments there.

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — It is my pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016. In my short contribution I would like to focus on the East Gippsland forest contractors, many of them from families that have been involved in the industry for many, many generations. We certainly have a well-managed and sustainable native timber industry in Victoria. I am bemused by the regular calls from the Greens to completely remove our native timber industry. There are clearly some problems with this.

First of all, there is not enough plantation timber in the ground to meet the state's growing demand, particularly in sawlog supply, or even to supply a company like Australian Paper in the Latrobe Valley, as we just heard from the member for Morwell. It is just another city-based organisation dictating what jobs we can and cannot have in the country and what pastimes we can and cannot have in the country.

In my electorate of East Gippsland we have close to 90 per cent of the forest areas under reserve. The remaining percentage can support a sustainable timber industry, and it is very important to our local economy. Both the member for Murray Plains and the member for Morwell touched on the scenario facing Auswest Timbers in East Gippsland. It has facilities in Orbost and Bairnsdale, and it has threatened to close its doors because of uncertainty in relation to its operations in East Gippsland. It basically says in its annual report — and I will paraphrase the comment because it has already been put on the record by the member for Murray Plains — that it has simply been frustrated by not being able to get security of timber supply from this current government. If it cannot secure this, its East Gippsland facilities will be closed. Now, this is 40 jobs in Orbost and 25 jobs in Bairnsdale. For a community the size of Orbost to lose 40 jobs it has an enormous impact on the local economy. It impacts the small businesses in the town and impacts the enrolment of primary schools, and it is simply because the minister will not sign off on timber security supply.

I have raised this matter many, many times in this place, but as yet no steps have been taken to end the uncertainty. The minister simply says she is waiting on the forest industry task force to make recommendations. This is the task force that was meant to report back in July this year! It got an extension of time, and a couple of months later it put out a statement to say it cannot reach any agreement on the important issues that would provide timber security supply.

As we sit here now in December, we have still got the Forest Industry Taskforce not having reported back to the minister and the minister still saying, 'I am not going to make a decision until I get the report'. Now it is time for the government to take some responsibility and guarantee those 65 direct jobs and give to the families that are involved — people with kids at school, people with mortgages — the job security that they need. It will have a massive impact on our local economy.

I know that the member for Ovens Valley wants to make a quick contribution, so I will conclude my short contribution by again, for the umpteenth time, urging

the minister to bite the bullet and save these important timber industry jobs in East Gippsland by giving security of supply to Auswest Timbers.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — I rise to make a brief contribution on the Owner Drivers and Forestry Contractors Amendment Bill 2016, and as you have heard, we are not opposing it. The Ovens Valley electorate, particularly in Myrtleford, is heavily reliant on the timber industry, and Hancock Victorian Plantations and Carter Holt Harvey are incredibly important businesses and major economic drivers in our region.

The reason why we are very careful and supportive of the owner-drivers and the forestry contractors is that we saw a bill introduced federally that established the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, a shambolic facade put up by the Gillard government to try to hurt our local contractors. That is why we always have to be very, very careful when our truck drivers and our local small businesses are being challenged. Thankfully the coalition government abolished this tribunal in April of this year, which allowed 40 000 small businesses and family-owned truck businesses to continue to do business. I know Glen and Pauline Kearney in the Cobram-Barooga region were absolutely astounding and outstanding in their work to educate federal MPs to help them throw this tribunal onto the scrap heap. As we know, Labor is beholden to the union movement, particularly the what was the timber workers union, and they try to disguise this union greed as a safety issue.

We have seen today that regional Victoria is the slowest growing regional area of all of the states in Australia — 81 per cent of the economic activity of our state is in metropolitan Melbourne. We need to support our rural and regional businesses. We need to support our sustainable plantations, our owner-drivers, the transport product to which we value-add, and other real economic drivers in our community. I support the amendments that were put by the Leader of the Opposition.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AMENDMENT
(RELIGIOUS EXCEPTIONS) BILL 2016**

Council's rejection

Message from Council read rejecting bill.

BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17

Debate resumed from 22 June; motion of Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing):

That the house takes note of the budget papers 2016–17.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — It is a pleasure this afternoon to rise to speak on the budget papers and to resume the debate. I think it must be nearly six months since I started this speech, but the real pleasure of resuming the debate in December is the fact that what we said we would do we are actually getting on with doing, so it is a real pleasure to be able to report that major commitments by this government to my electorate of Narre Warren South are being delivered. There are a number of them that I would like to highlight: the Monash hospital at Casey is now not only going to be delivered by the government, it is going to be bigger and better, and that is thanks to an additional \$28.61 million boost from the Andrews Labor government.

I recently had the pleasure of joining the Premier and the Minister for Health to announce this, because it will now mean that Casey Hospital will have 160 new beds, four additional operating theatres, an intensive care unit and a day surgery unit, and we will also partner with Monash University to build a new education and training facility for medical, nursing and allied health students at Casey Hospital. So it is not only a win for the patients who will get to use this new Casey Hospital, it will also mean that local students will be able to take advantage of the learning experiences that are provided in a hospital setting.

In that area I would also like to speak to the fact that I had the Minister for Training and Skills visit only last Friday. In keeping with the fact that we are trying to build a health and education precinct on both the Chisholm TAFE and Monash University sites — soon to become the Federation University site — we have now committed that we are going to have a centre of excellence for health and education learning at Chisholm TAFE. This will be in partnership with La Trobe University, which is going to deliver nursing places and allied health education for the local area as well. In the six-month break I have had from speaking on the budget papers, lots has been happening in that health and education precinct. But there is more to report.

This government is very committed to making sure that the road network in the south-east catches up and then keeps pace with the requirements of people to get to work, get home earlier and be able to enjoy more time

with their family and less time stuck in traffic. That is why we have committed to the duplication of Thompsons Road. That will also mean the removal of the level crossing at Thompsons Road on the Cranbourne line, which will make an enormous difference.

I remember during the election campaign that we made this commitment, a substantial commitment of well over \$100 million, and it was very popular with the local community. It took those opposite weeks to come into this space and to agree that this was a priority. It is a good thing that we won the election because we have already committed the funding for this project. The good news is that contracts have been awarded, and I think we are very, very close to that first sod being turned. The people in Narre Warren South, Cranbourne and Carrum will have a lot to celebrate when that Thompsons Road project gets underway. If you drive down the Monash Freeway, you will see that that project has started as well, and there has been a lot of activity around the Narre Warren-Cranbourne Road too, with some intersection improvements in the Greaves Road area. This is all good news for local residents.

I would also like to report to the house that in the interim, since the further allocation of funding for Hampton Park Primary School, the architect has done the drawings and it is looking like a fantastic project. It is certainly something that has never been seen in Hampton Park before. There are going to be some excellent classrooms there that are going to provide specifically learning in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics subject area. This is going to be a great advantage to those students who have been studying and learning in poorly constituted buildings and who now will be able to work and learn in a 21st century environment.

It is a pleasure to speak further on the budget. I would like to conclude by just putting on the record that one of the highlights of this budget is the fact that there has been a real focus on the outer suburbs. Yes, the outer suburbs have lots of needs in terms of community infrastructure and facilities, and the Growing Suburbs Fund has provided them with an excellent way of getting the additional funding they need to deliver on community sporting and recreation facilities earlier than would normally have happened. Only last week I was with the mayor of the City of Casey announcing some joint funding — I think it was \$1.4 million — for the Strathaird Children's Centre. There is a baby boom on in Casey, but the fact of the matter is that that baby boom is going to get even bigger. They expect the number of babies born in Casey Hospital to double in

the next 10 years, and that is going to mean more mothers and more children in need of maternal and child health services, so it is excellent that this government in partnership with the City of Casey have provided some significant funding to build an extension to the Strathaird Children's Centre.

But it does not stop there. There are other facilities that have also benefited from the extra funding from the Growing Suburbs Fund, such as the Bridgewater Kindergarten. I think it is in the coming weeks that we are going to be down there to open that facility. I can tell members that the parents in the Berwick Chase estate are very, very pleased to know that that facility will provide kindergarten spaces for their children — three and four-year-olds — because we know that if you can get those foundation years in education correct, every child has a better opportunity in life.

I started my speech by quoting from the Bible. I would like to finish with what is probably a new-age version of what I was talking about. The Andrews Labor government understands that the prize of winning government is the chance to work hard, work wisely, and work with others and for others. I think the new-age version would probably go something like, 'Don't talk; just act. Don't say; just show. Don't promise; just prove'. This is certainly a government that has encapsulated that in this budget. This is a government that acts, shows, proves and delivers on its election commitments. Those bulldozers in the south-east are working overtime. This Andrews Labor government is about putting people first and getting things done.

It has been a pleasure to resume debate on the budget papers, and I wish the budget papers a speedy passage. I know that the member for Brighton has been waiting to speak on the budget, so I really look forward to hearing what she has to say. I commend the budget papers to the house.

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Well, what a rotten budget this has been for Victoria. What has it done for this state, apart from reaffirming the fact that this Labor government has created the greatest law and order crisis in our state's history? What has it done other than to reaffirm that our energy supplies and our energy security are in as dangerous a state now as they have ever been and that we cannot rely on baseload power like we have been able to for the last 60 or 70 years? What a disgraceful budget this is for those residents who were promised underground level crossings by Labor but were betrayed and instead have sky rail cranes and drills 3 metres from their back fences all along the rail corridor to Dandenong and as

will be the case along the southern suburbs to Frankston.

What a disgrace this budget is to those 60 000 Victorians who put their heart and soul into defending our state every summer, every autumn, every spring and even in winter through the volunteer work they do with the Country Fire Authority. What a disgrace this budget is for those motorists stuck in traffic, particularly at the end of the Eastern Freeway, with nothing to address congestion in any meaningful way and nothing to deal with the fact that Melbourne is growing by 100 000 people every year. This government is more interested in focusing on publicity stunts and news items at 6.00 p.m. every day than it is in fixing issues like congestion.

What a disgrace this budget is for education and for those who invest their children's future in the public education system — like I do with mine — when this government cannot be bothered focusing on issues that matter to the public education system like literacy, truancy and the quality of education that those students are receiving.

What a disgrace it is that this budget and its surplus are based on the fact that we have seen taxes rise by double digits in just one budget period like we have never seen before. What a disgrace it is that this government has not one population or decentralisation plan to manage our state's growth into the future — nothing whatsoever.

Where do I start? Of course I start with the greatest challenge our state is facing today, and that is our safety and security. If you cannot keep your citizens safe, if you cannot put forward policies that keep your citizens safe, then your government has failed at its first test. For two years this government has ignored the fact that our state is enduring a law and order crisis like we have never seen before. They have ignored the fact that where police stations have closed or had their hours reduced, there has been a massive corresponding increase in crime. In Ashburton, where this government has closed the police station, as the member for Burwood will tell you, Acting Speaker, crime has risen in one year by 52 per cent; in Carrum Downs, where the station has had its hours reduced, crime has risen by 47 per cent; and in the beautiful town of Tatura, where the government has cut the resources of Victoria Police, crime is up by 35 per cent.

In Waurin Ponds, the fastest growing regional centre in a non-capital city of under 100 000 people in Australia, crime is up by over 20 per cent. The member for South Barwon will tell us it is a disgrace that despite all the

promises made, all the commitments made by this government to manage the Waurn Ponds police station, nothing has been provided. In fact the hours that that station is open are less today than they were two years ago, and as a result crime is up more than 20 per cent. That is also the case in Craigieburn, one of the fastest growing growth corridors in Australia, where crime is up 21.4 per cent.

Crime is up by more than 20 per cent in Mount Waverley and in Mooroolbark, and it is up 20 per cent in Pakenham. There is a trend here — it is a trend of a government that has run down our police. It has degraded those good men and women of Victoria Police who put their life on the line. This government could not care for them. They have only cottoned on to this as an issue because it has become a political issue, not because it has become an issue of community safety and actuality. Shame on this government and this weak Premier, who does not stand up for Victorians and who frankly cares more about those who are his mates in his caucus. He could not care less about those who are enduring double-digit crime rises.

At the same time we have just seen New South Wales crime statistics today show that crime is down across that state, in certain categories by nearly 20 per cent. With a population more than one and a half million more than Victoria, crime is down 20 per cent in certain categories. In Victoria the best we have is a government and a Premier two years in — half his term of office is gone — who comes in and says, ‘Well, now I am going to be Mr Fix It when it comes to crime’.

Get this right: the Premier is the man who caused this crisis; he is not the man who will fix this crisis. The people who will fix this law and order crisis — a crisis acknowledged by the member for Melton — are those in the Liberal and Nationals parties, because we will get to the bottom of cutting back these weak bail laws of this government. We will reform our sentencing regime, and we will put victims first, not perpetrators first.

Those people who are Australian citizens who commit these crimes will have the book thrown at them, as they should. Those people who are not Australian citizens who repeat-offend do not deserve to stay in this country. My family, when they came to Australia, respected the fact that this country gave us an opportunity. When my mother’s family came as refugees we respected that this country gave us a chance, a second chance, at a new life. We respected this country, we loved this country and we thank God every day that we had a chance in this country. We did not commit those crimes to end up in a lounge

room at two in the morning. Those Australian citizens who are committing this crime should have the book thrown at them. Those who are committing crimes who are not Australian citizens do not deserve to stay, simple as that.

Our state deserves to have jobs — not just jobs in Melbourne, but jobs right across our state in places like the Latrobe Valley. When my family came to Australia they were a part of the Latrobe Valley electricity regeneration scheme, a proud scheme of the Bolte Liberal government. When they were down there some worked at Yallourn — Yallourn A as it was then. In the 1980s some went to Loy Yang. Many of my family worked at Hazelwood, a power station that has been allowed to shut because of a Labor government that campaigned for its closure. Shame on the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change — I mean, is she the energy minister or the environment minister? Is she campaigning for those jobs or against those jobs? Utterly conflicted in cabinet, she is a minister who has presided over the closure of Hazelwood and the destruction of a thousand jobs in the Latrobe Valley.

That is as good as the Andrews government gets. Now of course who runs up to Morwell, to Churchill, to Newborough, to Trafalgar, to Yinnar, to Mirboo to say to all those towns, ‘I am going to be your saviour’? Well, the man who is their saviour is the man who was proud to go back to Brunswick or to Richmond to say, ‘Well, look at me, I closed Hazelwood’. That man is Daniel Andrews. The Premier should be ashamed of himself for costing a thousand jobs in one of the most socially disadvantaged areas of Victoria. Morwell, Traralgon, Churchill, Newborough, Moe — those people will not forget that the Premier is the man who campaigned for those jobs to go. They will not forget. The valley is a proud place. The member for Morwell knows this firsthand. The member for Narracan knows this firsthand. It is a proud place with proud communities. They do not forget those people who have doublecrossed them. The Premier doublecrossed the Latrobe Valley and we know it.

He has also doublecrossed many people along the railway line towards Dandenong. He promised faithfully that those level crossings would be put underground if he won the election, boasting that he would remove those level crossings. No-one has a problem with removing level crossings; it is a good policy and the right thing to do. Indeed the member for Malvern should be congratulated for being the Treasurer who removed more level crossings in the last 20 years than any Treasurer before him. In the last 20 years — in fact 30 years — the member for Malvern removed more level crossings. The member for Melton

may laugh, but these are the facts: he removed more level crossings than the member for Melton has ever driven over, simple as that.

Those residents who have been doublecrossed by the Premier will not forget as they look out at their backyards. A family I was with, a couple with three beautiful children, were looking out over their backyard — 3 metres, and there is a 14-metre drill bit dropping dust, dropping rocks, dropping stones into the backyard — —

Mr Nardella — Oh no, construction!

Mr GUY — Member for Melton, I love it when you come in here. You may laugh at this, you may treat this with contempt, but none of those families did. None of those people did when their children were in the backyard just minutes before a 70-kilogram drill counterweight fell into their backyard. That is the legacy of this government to those people. That is going to be the legacy of this government when those people look out over their backyards and find a 20-metre structure where this government had promised to put the structures underground, simple as that.

It was not just with sky rail that this government doublecrossed — 60 000 volunteers across country, regional and outer metropolitan Melbourne have been doublecrossed by a government that puts the union first and puts our volunteers last. None of those volunteers will forget. None of those people will forget that this government could not care less about our fire heroes who put their lives on the line. Those people — those men and women who volunteer their time, who know their communities and who understand that the Country Fire Authority (CFA) is the lifeblood of many of those outer urban, country and regional communities — all have been thrown away and treated with contempt by a Premier who respects no-one but his union mates. He respects no-one. He never has. He is an arrogant, pig-headed Premier who could not care less about those people who volunteer for our CFA.

On this side of the house we respect our volunteers. We will always respect our volunteers, and when we return to government we will change that law to make sure that their rights will be forever enshrined in legislation and respected, unlike a government that doublecrosses 60 000 volunteers for the union movement.

In our education system, this is a government that cares more about social engineering than it does for the students who are meant to be a part of that public education system. As a proud product of the state

education system, I am proudly sending my children through the state education system. It is something that I believe we should be proud of. We should indeed encourage and provide the greatest level of support to the public education system, but our Premier could not care less about literacy, about declining numeracy standards in Victoria or about the fact that Kazakhstan has a better state education system than we do here in Victoria. No, we should be more concerned about radical gender studies led by a Marxist than about focusing on literacy and numeracy. We on this side of the house will put education standards first, and we will always entrust parents, not the state education system, to teach their children respect. We trust parents. Would you trust the Premier to teach your kids respect? Not a chance.

On this side of the house we believe that this budget has utterly failed country and regional Victoria. There is not a single mention of decentralisation, of regionalisation or about providing a better way of life for those in country Victoria. This is a government that has cut jobs out of Hazelwood, a government that does not want to move VicRoads to Ballarat and a government that could not care less about centres like Wodonga, Warrnambool, Sale, Bairnsdale, Horsham or Mildura. This is a government that does not have a single vision for our state unless it involves tram tracks or the United Firefighters Union.

Well, on this side of the house we will have a comprehensive plan for decentralisation and regionalisation — —

Mr Pearson interjected.

Mr GUY — As the light-suited, half-witted member for Essendon might not understand, people in regional Victoria matter. People in regional Victoria are the lifeblood of our state's economy, and we will always stand up for them ahead of this government, whose members want to put its union mates first, who want to ideologically trash our education system and who have run a budget surplus by taxing business more than at any time in our history. It is a woeful, rotten budget, but I guarantee you a better one from this side of the house in two years time.

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — It is quite interesting to get up and follow the end-of-year rant from the Leader of the Opposition, and that is what it was — an end-of-year rant. He finally got in his budget speech at the end of the year. He did not even try and get it in when the budget was released; at the time he did not even speak about the budget. Now he has spoken about so many issues that are not relevant to the

budget — anything he could think of, all of it negative. It reminded us of why those people on that side are still on that side, why they only lasted one term in government and why the Andrews Labor government was elected two years ago.

I am certainly pleased to be able to speak to the positives of this year's Andrews Labor government budget as it relates to my electorate, because it was a positive budget. The Leader of the Opposition, the negativist that he is, could not even talk about the budget because he would have had to recognise the good news in it. But no, he wanted to talk about a range of other issues that are not relevant.

Let me tell you about what this budget delivers for the people of the electorate of Buninyong. It is a fantastic budget because, first of all, it shows that Labor is so different to the people on that side — it supports public transport, it looks to the future and recognises that our public transport system needs building up rather than being run into disrepair, as has always been done under those on that side.

The announcement that was so exciting for the people of Ballarat was that there was a \$515 million — yes, \$515 million — investment in the infrastructure of the Ballarat rail line that will see growth in demand for rail in Ballarat. It was the Bracks and Brumby governments that developed and rebuilt our rail service between Ballarat and Melbourne. Patronage has significantly increased, and the line will be further upgraded so that it will meet the needs of the future.

As part of that \$515 million we will see the duplication of a 17-kilometre section of track between Deer Park and Melton, the duplication of 3 kilometres more of the track on the Melbourne side of the Warrenheip junction and a passing loop between the Bungaree East and Bungaree West junctions. The provision of this loop will make it possible to close the existing line along the Bungaree loop and close five level crossings on the Old Melbourne Road associated with that, so there is great news there.

There is funding for a passing loop at Ballan, including a second platform with a pedestrian link between the new and existing platforms. That is something that the other side actually did promise before they came to government in 2010 but never delivered in their four years of government. They talked about these things before they came in and threw in some ideas in regard to public transport, but they never even delivered on them in the four years they were in government. We will be putting in that second platform at Ballan and the passing loop. We will also be doing that at Bacchus

Marsh to ensure that train flow can happen better through Bacchus Marsh.

We know that there is further platform work to go at Rockbank and the moving of the stabling from Bacchus Marsh out to Rowsley. Of course under this government we have already done the first part of that work, the Rowsley loop, and we are getting underway with the Caroline Springs passing loop in association with the works associated with the new Caroline Springs station. As we continue on with the design works, more exciting work will be rolling out next year in regard to that.

As well as rail infrastructure, we recognise that with the increase in demand that has come with Labor's rebuilding of our railway system, we need more carriages, so not only have we boosted the rolling stock with a planned investment in rolling stock that will see Bombardier in Dandenong and Alstom in Ballarat gaining ongoing work — jobs for Victoria — but we will also get 27 new VLOCITY carriages that will be built here in Victoria and 5 new X'trapolis trains that will be built in Ballarat and provide jobs in Ballarat, which of course is very gratifying and very exciting for the people of my electorate. This news has been really well received in Ballarat. Of course we do not get many comments from the other side of the house about that, because those opposite do not have a commitment to public transport.

On top of that of course is our investment in bus services. Later this week I will be pleased to be with the member for Wendouree to make a substantial announcement about increased bus services in Ballarat. We will ensure bus services work in with the rail system so that we are going to have a much better public transport system within Ballarat that links in with the rail services to take people to Melbourne or to the other places that they may need to go.

This is about looking to the future and providing integrated public transport as a balance to roads. But we are not forgetting roads. Within the electorate there is a commitment of \$2.56 million for new access ramps in Bacchus Marsh at Halletts Way, which the people in Bacchus Marsh have been looking forward to for some time. I was pleased to be in Bacchus Marsh with the member for Melton not so long ago to announce those works. They will see much better traffic flow in Bacchus Marsh so that people can move directly onto the Western Highway off Halletts Way.

As well as that, I have been excited about, as have the people in my area between Ballarat and Geelong, the \$10 million allocated to the Midland Highway between

Meredith and Geelong so that there will be four more passing loops. As I speak, those works are being further designed after we had consultation over the last month about where those passing loops should actually go. I look forward to seeing works getting underway next year and to seeing those passing loops in operation. So again, there are great works for roads in our area, and that is particularly exciting.

We know that within the budget there was \$427 million to be spent on roads, improving road safety, much of which is to be spent in regional Victoria of course, because we know of the higher level of accidents there. You, Acting Speaker Crisp, will be aware that sadly in regional Victoria there is a higher road toll on our country roads, so we need to recognise and support road safety works on our country roads. There is a \$52 million package of works for smaller local roads to support local councils and ensure that roads further away from the metropolitan area are also upgraded.

In terms of emergency services, there is a substantial commitment for our emergency services, including the Country Fire Authority. In particular in my electorate — following the closure of Fiskville as a result of the environmental studies that found that it was unsound to continue at Fiskville — we have committed \$80 million to remediate the area at Fiskville so that it can be used in the future. But at the same time we committed substantial dollars to building a new hot fire training ground in the Ballan area, and very early next year we will be making more announcements about that. We are looking at what should happen following the closure of Fiskville. We need to ensure that that site is addressed and that new training opportunities are provided in the area.

In terms of education, of course we know that Labor is always very committed to our children's future, committing substantial funding to education. That is why I was pleased that \$2.1 million was committed for upgrades to Mount Clear College and \$3 million for major works at Bacchus Marsh College. There was the \$92 million announcement for 10 new tech schools, of which one will be located in Ballarat. I have been pleased to work with educators and industry in Ballarat to plan for the new tech school, which will start construction next year on the Federation University TAFE site, which is on the former School of Mines Ballarat site. That tech school will be open later next year. It will provide exciting opportunities to stimulate young secondary students across our region and will provide valuable technology training in a range of relevant areas. It will provide new opportunities in the science and technology areas to stimulate and excite

our young people, and it will ensure that we can build those opportunities into our school curriculum.

The funding that was announced this year of course is on top of funding that was announced last year to support Ballarat Secondary College's move from the Barkly campus back onto the new Woodmans Hill and the former Wendouree site — that is very exciting — as well as works to continue the next stage of Phoenix P-12 Community College. Those works will be undertaken next year. As well as the funding for recurrent projects, there are substantial secondary school upgrades across my electorate, and they underpin the value we place on education.

In regard to jobs and employment, of course we have committed substantial funding into rebuilding TAFE, recognising that this was an area that was appallingly neglected and run down in the four years of the coalition government. I am also pleased to see that we have committed \$4.2 million to an innovation lab and digital space in Ballarat, and there will be substantial announcements about that early next year. People will see that there are great opportunities for developing learning opportunities and jobs in Ballarat.

The program that I was particularly excited about was funding of \$1.2 million from the Reconnect program for Ballarat Group Training and Federation University. I was pleased a couple of weeks ago to go along to Ballarat Group Training to talk with eight young people who had fallen out of education but saw opportunities to try to build their lives again. Through the Reconnect program, as offered through Ballarat Group Training, those people were getting excited about their opportunities for the future again. They were seeing that they were worthwhile young people and that they could take control of their lives and plan for their futures with confidence.

To talk to those young people about how this program has turned them around was something that made me excited about what Labor is doing. We are seeing that nobody is left to go to rack and ruin, as could have been the case, and that they are being supported to see positive futures for themselves and being directed or encouraged to find for themselves an opportunity for future training or future employment. Clearly that is a hallmark of what Labor is about — seeing that nobody is left behind. Everyone should know that there are opportunities within the education system and the further education system to lead them to gain the skills that they need to get into future employment.

In the agriculture area of course there was so much announced. There was \$5 million to enable Bacchus

Marsh irrigators to upgrade and modernise 43 kilometres of ageing irrigation infrastructure that will see agriculture confidently continue into the future in our region and to support 430 jobs in agriculture and related industries as we move forward.

In small business there was further funding allocated, and it was great to be able to join the Minister for Industry and Employment at C. E. Bartlett. We were able to support them with an investment of \$80 000 to buy new, modern equipment. It will enable them to produce their state-of-the-art textiles with a modern, high-frequency welder of the plastics that they use in their business in a range of ways, to provide things like bouncing pillows and a whole range of fabrics. These modern ideas will be able to be produced and exported.

It is great to see us supporting our manufacturers in our area, our small businesses, with support for investment and training in new ideas. It is a great budget, great for the people of Buninyong, and I know that they welcome it too.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I am delighted to have an opportunity to speak on this budget, albeit in December. Nevertheless, I am pleased to make a few comments in relation to this 2016–17 budget. I want to make a couple of comments in relation to the budget's approach to business, I want to indicate some areas of concern I have over the areas of allocation, and I want to raise, as you would expect me to raise, a couple of local matters.

The first matter I wish to raise is in relation to business. I want to refer to an article by Mark Stone, the head of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), which appeared in the *Herald Sun* on 21 April this year. I think it is very, very important to understand that a state government has a limited capacity to impact on business; the federal government obviously has far more. Stone put it in the following terms, and I quote:

While the Victorian government may have little control over external factors affecting the state's economic performance, it can certainly influence the competitive position of business.

I would like to look at what the government actually did in terms of trying to influence the competitive position of business.

Let us look at what VCCI asked for and what the government actually did. VCCI asked for an increase in the payroll tax threshold from \$550 000 to \$850 000 and for the average WorkCover premium rate to be reduced to 1.2 per cent of payroll. These were the two asks in terms of business costs. The government's response was to increase the payroll tax threshold from

\$550 000 to \$650 000 by 2019–20. There was no alteration to WorkCover premiums. Stone, in the aforementioned article in the *Herald Sun*, made the comment that in New South Wales the threshold for payroll tax is \$750 000 and in Western Australia it is \$800 000. So the government certainly has a way to go there.

The chamber of commerce also made reference to the government's international engagement strategy. Stone said, and I quote:

Importantly during the 'Asian century', we must increase our international engagement by providing greater support for business to sell in overseas markets.

Again, as I look at the budget I see that the government did do a number of things to increase Victorian businesses' competitiveness overseas. It added money to a dedicated attraction fund, it pumped some additional dollars into the Victorian government business office network, it added some more money to the trade mission program, it added more money for tourism marketing and events, and it supplied some additional funding to implement Victoria's international education sector strategy. Of course international education is our no. 1 export and tourism is our no. 2 export, so you would expect the government to allocate moneys there.

I just want to make an observation in passing, and that is whilst the Labor government, when initially elected, made a number of criticisms of the previous government's international engagement strategy, it appears to me that in this budget it has picked up much of what the previous government had been doing. So yes, we have lost two years, but I hope the government is able to move in that particular area because that is one area where a state government can have an impact in terms of assisting particularly the smaller sector to develop export opportunities.

If we look now at the Australian Industry Group (AIG) and what they requested of the government, we see the AIG requested, amongst other things, that the government reduce the regulatory burden, including not repeating the two additional public holidays gazetted in 2015 for Easter Sunday and Grand Final Friday. Of course the government did not take up that challenge at all. So whilst the government likes to say that the budget is business friendly, I think there is a very, very long way for the government to go on that particular front.

What are the areas of concern from my perspective? The first one is the level of taxation. If one looks at budget paper 5, page 145, one can see the significant

increase in tax collection. In 2015–16 tax collected was \$20 billion; and in 2016–17 the projected tax collection is \$21.6 billion. Tax has been raised by 20 per cent in two years — up to \$3.7 billion; and land tax alone has increased by 28 per cent in 2016–17.

Terry McCrann made a very good observation in an article in the *Herald Sun* on 28 April 2016 on tax, and I quote:

But for the property boom and surging land values, both residential and commercial, which play out in that land tax bounty, we would be having a very different and difficult budget.

The multibillion-dollar question is: will it continue?

Even just an easing in the property frenzy would rip holes in the budget. If the property boom collapsed, the claimed future surpluses would evaporate.

I think that is salutary for the government, and I think the government should take note of that.

I also want to look at the issue of the increase in land transfer duty surcharges for foreign purchasers of residential property. The government has chosen to do that, and that is the government's right to do it, but we have seen already with this government that messages are tailored to different audiences. For example, what the Premier says in the Latrobe Valley is very different to what the Premier says in inner Melbourne. So we see this tax on foreign purchasers. But I want to refer to the government's China strategy document titled *Victoria's New China Strategy — Partnerships for Prosperity*. I refer to that document in terms of outcomes the government has asked for, and I quote:

Victoria's total share of Chinese investment to Australia to increase from 8 per cent to 20 per cent by 2026.

Victorian government to attract and facilitate \$2 billion of Chinese investment into the state, creating 3000 new jobs within the next 10 years.

So we see on the one hand the government sending the message out that it wishes to tax foreign investment on residential property but on the other hand, in specialised documents that would only be read by potential investors or people interested in trade, the government sending the completely opposite message.

I quote further from the document, on page 26:

The Victorian government will make it a priority to attract more of this investment to Victoria, assiduously promoting Victoria's investment opportunities and making our interface with foreign investors as easy to navigate as possible.

But that of course is not what the budget does. I am not particularly giving a comment on it; I am simply

drawing attention to the fact that what the government says in one forum is completely different to what the government does in another, and I find it a little offensive that the government thinks some of us on the other side do not cross-check.

I want to also make mention of the public sector wages bill, which is another area of concern for me — up 15 per cent, or \$2.8 billion, since the election, and again I rely on Terry McCrann, who put it very succinctly in his article headed 'Your beautiful numbers are as safe as houses, Mr Treasurer'. McCrann makes the following point, and I quote:

The other big question mark over the budget numbers is the assumption that a tight lid will be kept on spending — that's to say, a tight lid after next year, when spending is forecast to rise at a pretty healthy 5.3 per cent.

He goes on to say:

If spending keeps growing at the 2016–17 rate, the budget surplus would all but disappear.

That is another area of real concern to this side of the house. Again, I would draw the attention of the house to what we are getting for the spending. I do not have time to go through the budget papers in detail but if one looks at the key performance indicators in areas such as investment attraction, one sees that for Victorian government business offices, tourism and even the creative industries the targets that the government has set for this increased expenditure are not particularly large.

I now turn to a couple of local matters in my electorate of Brighton. I note that under schools funding the government has as an existing project on page 39 of budget paper 4, *State Capital Program*, a line item for Brighton Secondary College, with funding of \$8 million. Lest there be any hesitation over this, that funding was of course provided by the previous government. Again, if one looks at page 22 of the 2014–15 *State Capital Program* document, it is very clear that the funding was provided to Brighton Secondary College by the previous government. But I am pleased that the government has honoured that and has continued that expenditure for that school, which does need the money. I note also at page 40 of this year's *State Capital Program* there is an allocation for Elwood College of \$10 million. The expenditure there has slowed but the finishing date is the same. Again, I am pleased that that funding has been allocated. My side of politics made that an election commitment, and Labor also had that as an election commitment, and I am pleased to see it there.

In terms of traffic congestion, I turn to page 27 of *State Capital Program* and I wonder if in fact Labor is playing a bit of a joke on us. Labor has claimed in its budget papers that congestion on Punt Road has been eliminated, but as someone who has to use Punt Road to travel from Brighton whenever I come into town, I can assure the government that it has not been eliminated at all. The claim in the budget papers is that it has fixed congestion on Punt Road through South Yarra. That is a nonsense.

I also note on page 22 of that document that the government has allocated some money to a Nepean Highway improvement plan. Again, I hope that some of that is allocated to the Nepean Highway in between the city and my electorate of Brighton because there needs to be improvement in that gridlocked area.

Finally, I want to have a look at budget paper 3, *Service Delivery*, where the government has allocated some funding for railway station car parks. This has caused a significant amount of interest in my electorate. On page 52 of budget paper 3, headed 'Railway station car parking fund', it says:

A railway station car parking fund will be established to create more than 1500 new parking spaces across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Again, I would urge the government to consider providing increased car parking along the Sandringham line in my electorate, in particular at Gardenvale, at North Brighton, at Middle Brighton, at Brighton Beach and at Hampton, where we desperately need more parking. If you go to any of those stations, the car parks are full very early in the day. I am pleased to see an allocation for increased railway station car parking, and I would urge the government to make sure that the distribution of that funding is equitable and that some of that funding actually moves into electorates that vote Liberal, because those people also catch trains and those people also deserve funding.

In conclusion, I have set out some of my concerns in relation to the way the government has not delivered on what business needs to support it. I have set out my concerns on the vastly increased tax take under this government. I have set out my concerns regarding saying one thing to one audience and another thing to another audience. And I have certainly set out my concerns regarding the public sector wages bill. If you look at new funding — funding to Brighton Secondary College was promised previously and funding to Elwood College had been flagged previously — there is nothing specific for the electorate of Brighton at all. I do hope that some even-handedness could be brought into this by the government. As I have suggested, the

railway station car parking fund would be an area where the government could usefully spend money to encourage people to use public transport. If you arrive at any of those stations very, very early in the morning, there is no car parking. Residents understandably have 4-hour car parking restrictions around those stations. So I would urge the government to follow up that funding, and I express my concern over the general direction of the 2016–17 budget.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — To say it gives me pleasure to speak on the budget papers would be an understatement. It is the kind of budget that I really feel like doing cartwheels over and screaming about from the rooftops — not because of any sense of pride necessarily but because of a sense of deep commitment to the people that we made commitments to prior to the last election and to the people we have made commitments to since the last election. This budget delivers so much of that agenda and those commitments.

It also gives me enormous pleasure because many of those commitments relate to my community and to social policy initiatives. We have heard about a number of commitments relating to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, multicultural affairs, the LGBTI community and refugees and asylum seekers. The budget also goes to the core values that members of my community support, which are health, education and public transport. Those key areas of government service delivery, particularly state government service delivery, are very well represented in this budget.

Of course we have the huge infrastructure program and the jobs that it underpins, and the economic fundamentals of the stewardship of the Premier and the Treasurer have led us to be the fastest growing economy in Australia, having a debt which is lower than the one we inherited and having an employment rate which is higher than the one we inherited.

Deputy Speaker, it gives me pleasure to talk about some of these commitments, and if you would indulge me, I have a list. The list is 101 key achievements for our community, particularly the community that I have the absolute pleasure of representing: the electorate of Oakleigh. We are removing the level crossings at Grange Road, Carnegie; Koornang Road, Carnegie; Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena; and Poath Road, Hughesdale. We are removing those crossings right now. The work is going on right now, and it is very, very visible, so there is no illusion about this. There are no smoke and mirrors; this is happening as we speak. Every time I walk, drive or catch a train in my community I see that work in progress.

We are also removing the level crossings at Clayton Road, Clayton, and at Centre Road, Clayton. My good friend the member for Clarinda is very pleased about those because he has advocated for a long time for those. We are rebuilding Carnegie train station with escalators and lifts, an enhancement on the previous Carnegie station. We are rebuilding Murrumbena train station, again with escalators and lifts. We are rebuilding Hughesdale train station with escalators and lifts, and we are rebuilding Clayton train station, again with escalators and lifts.

We are enhancing the power and signalling along the Cranbourne-Pakenham line as part of this significant project to remove nine level crossings along the line. We are creating 225 000 square metres of brand-new open space for use by the community, and right now we are giving the community an opportunity to have a say in how that space should be used and how it should be activated.

We have removed the level crossing at North Road, Ormond. I saw the member for Bentleigh a moment ago, who is a champion for that cause. We have built a brand-new train station at Ormond, which looks fantastic. I drove past it on the weekend. We have removed the level crossing at McKinnon Road, McKinnon. We have built a brand-new train station at McKinnon. We removed the level crossing — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The time has come for me to interrupt the proceedings of the house. The honourable member will have the call when this matter is next before the Parliament.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Mount Martha intersections

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — (12 107) Tonight I raise a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is that the minister direct VicRoads to abandon consideration of any plans to extend Bay Road at Mount Martha from its current intersection with Uralla Road along the existing undeveloped road reserve to an intersection with Nepean Highway.

I have raised this issue of two dangerous intersections on Nepean Highway in Mount Martha — Uralla Road

and Hopetoun Avenue — on a number of occasions in this Parliament. In February last year I made it clear that the former Minister for Roads, Mr Mulder, had taken a close interest in this matter and that some preliminary planning had been done. Having received no response, I again raised the issue in June of this year by way of the adjournment debate, and the minister responded and indicated that VicRoads and the shire acknowledged the challenges encountered by the Mount Martha community with those intersections and also flagged that consultative forums would be held in August or September 2016. Those forums have now occurred, and in fact I think they were probably a little bit late, but they have occurred.

Unfortunately it appears that some VicRoads staff may have been a little mischievous — and that is the kindest interpretation I can place on their reported remarks — because they suggested that perhaps the best way to deal with the issue was to extend Bay Road past Balcombe Preschool along the existing but undeveloped road reserve and past Balcombe Grammar School to an intersection with Nepean Highway. Yes, the road easement does exist on the maps, although it is unclear precisely what the ownership is. It is certainly not reserved for public purposes or zoned for use as a road; indeed it is all zoned residential, partly general residential zone 1 and partly low-density residential zone.

To my knowledge — and it is now almost 30 years since I was first elected to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council — there have never been any serious plans to develop this roadway. Certainly when the former Balcombe army camp was developed and the adjoining streets of Silkhorn Crescent and Barnett Way were constructed — and indeed Greenfield Way on the other side of the easement — there was absolutely no expectation that a road would be constructed. I understand that the council does not have any plans to extend, or indeed any intention of extending, Bay Road. This proposal came entirely out of the blue, and it has come directly from VicRoads.

It seems to me that this is simply a red herring to distract from the government's inaction on these two extremely dangerous intersections that are both well and truly overdue for some attention. So I urge the government, and in particular the minister, to immediately direct VicRoads to rule out this entirely inappropriate alternative and to get to work on getting those dangerous intersections fixed once and for all.

Castlemaine State Festival

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — (12 108) My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and the action I seek is to call on the minister to fund the Castlemaine State Festival through the Regional Events Fund for the 2017 festival, which runs from 17 to 26 March. The Castlemaine State Festival is a biennial 10-day multi-arts celebration that draws on the distinctive culture of the central Victorian goldfields region. The festival showcases work from the region's finest artists and performing arts companies alongside those of national and international significance.

The state festival is a 10-day explosion of the arts, with a program packed full of extraordinary events. It attracts audiences from across Australia and also international performers and companies, who mix and mingle with regional communities and audiences. It is a truly celebratory festival, set amongst the unique central Victorian landscape, and is in fact Victoria's key regional arts festival and the premier arts event for Mount Alexander shire.

The festival began in 1976 through the vision of Berek Segan, AM, OBE, and it has grown to become Australia's flagship regional arts festival. Festival director Martin Paten has done an extraordinary job over many years to bring the festival together, and all credit to him and his team. Also the festival is run on the support of hundreds of volunteers and would not happen without their ongoing commitment and support. I call on the minister to give consideration to funding this organisation.

Mildura riverfront redevelopment

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — (12 109) The matter I raise is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. The action I seek is for the sale of the VicTrack riverfront land in Mildura to proceed separately from the recently announced \$100 000 co-contribution to the Mildura riverfront business case review. The Mildura riverfront redevelopment is an initiative that was a priority for me when I was elected 10 years ago. Under the coalition that priority became reality, and the first stage of the riverfront redevelopment in Mildura is nearing completion.

The river is Mildura's greatest asset, and linking the CBD to the riverfront and developing the parkland, access and recreational areas like the water play park have made Mildura even more livable. Large numbers of people exercise, go sightseeing as tourists and walk their dogs, and many families now utilise this area. The

recently opened Langtree Avenue connection has allowed the CBD to be comfortably accessed from the riverfront.

The VicTrack land on the other side of the railway tracks from the railway station, sitting above the old powerhouse, was set aside for private development of townhouses in the first stage of the riverfront plan. By adding a residential component to the riverfront development you further activate the area and provide for security for the users of the riverfront. The rapid access to private development on this land was one of the key economic issues raised at the recent Mallee regional partnerships assembly in Mildura.

Currently confidence in Mildura is growing. As we all know, timing is everything, and the time is now right for this land to be released for investment by private developers. The land is owned by VicTrack, and the process of VicTrack bringing that land to market should not be impeded by the process being subject to a business case review. The business case review should focus on the next stage of the riverfront development beyond the private sector. There are other parcels of land and other projects that can further enhance our riverfront, and these should be evaluated via the business case process. The land that the private sector is expressing considerable interest in, and that I am sure VicTrack will capitalise on too, should be processed as quickly as possible. I again call on the minister to ensure that the VicTrack land for townhouse development be exempt from the business case review process.

Sankat Mochan Samiti Temple

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — (12 110) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. The action that I seek is for the minister to visit the Sankat Mochan Samiti Temple in Huntingdale to meet with the leadership team and discuss the activities they are engaged in to prevent violence against women in my community. By way of background, in their words Sankat Mochan Samiti is a non-political and not-for-profit organisation with the aim of providing physical, spiritual and moral assistance to people and communities in critical need, thus enhancing peace and harmony. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Sankat Mochan temple a number of times since its opening some two and a half years ago.

Last Thursday I was proud to help serve meals to hundreds of people in my community. This happens every Tuesday night, free of charge. Last Thursday the Premier was warmly welcomed to the temple. He got to

see firsthand the passion of this organisation and its commitment to our community. I thank the Premier for taking the time to visit, and I know that he was very impressed with the commitment to community and the participants' obvious generosity to those in need.

On top of all of the things that this organisation does, like serving tens of thousands of free meals, helping families to resettle and providing support to refugees, they are deeply committed to the prevention and reduction of family violence, specifically within Melbourne's Indian community. I pay tribute to the whole team at the temple, people like Dr Sunila, Arvind and so many others, who are genuinely passionate about the community. To them life is always about giving, not receiving.

The Andrews government takes violence against women very seriously. We are implementing all of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and we have backed up our plan with the largest monetary investment in the history of Australia. We do not just say the right things; we do the right things. Much of the work done today is due to the dedication and commitment of the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and the Premier. The Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence has an incredible passion in the space, and I know that her efforts will lead to a lasting legacy for Victoria. I look forward to her visiting Sankat Mochan temple with me.

Thorpdale water allocation

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) — (12 111) I wish to raise a matter for the Premier, and the action I seek is for the Premier to allocate some of the water currently allocated to the Hazelwood power station back to the Thorpdale potato growers. I raise this matter with the Premier and not the Minister for Water because the response to the closure of Hazelwood desperately needs a whole-of-government approach, in particular when looking for opportunities to replace the jobs that will be lost.

The Thorpdale area is a premium potato-growing district because of its soil type, climate and access to good-quality supplies of water. The water available for irrigation has been capped in recent years, even though the water available in current storages and the ability to capture more into storage far exceeds the current licensed volume of around 10 000 megalitres.

At current production levels around 400 families rely on the industry in Thorpdale for a living. If the water allocation to Thorpdale growers were to increase by 20 per cent, this would provide an opportunity for a

further 80 jobs. It would increase the potato yield by 20 per cent and feed into a growing market, as well as cover the shortfall in supply as New South Wales production seems set to dramatically reduce in coming years.

Opportunities to create jobs are few and far between, and on the back of the impending Hazelwood closure anything that can be done to expand industries that have genuine demand for their product cannot be ignored. Thorpdale is world renowned as a high-producing area for seed and commercial potatoes. It has had its share of problems in recent years with the potato cyst nematode. The resilience of the growers and their professionalism has ensured their survival against the odds, and now they are facing the prospect of a good season.

I urge the Premier to look into the option of allocating some of the spare water that may become available once Hazelwood closes to the Thorpdale district. This would provide a major boost to the economy of the Latrobe Valley through genuine job creation and significantly enhance and reward the stalwarts of the Thorpdale potato industry, who have done it very tough in recent years.

Cranbourne electorate independent schools

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — (12 112) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education and concerns the Andrews Labor government's independent schools capital fund. The action I seek is that the minister ensure funding is allocated towards the construction of seven general learning areas at St Thomas the Apostle Catholic Primary School in Cranbourne East.

I know that the Andrews Labor government has invested billions of dollars in building and rebuilding government schools across both Melbourne and regional Victoria. I know they have invested in the biggest ever increase to school funding in Victorian history. They have funded new government schools and new school sites, they have invested almost \$2 billion in school infrastructure in their first two budgets and they have invested more in special needs education to meet growth in the program for students with disabilities. This government has truly made Victoria the education state.

In contrast, the Liberals cut education during their period in government. They failed to plan for the future of Victoria's education system. In fact school infrastructure funding fell under the Baillieu-Napthine governments to a mere \$200 million a year. It is because of them that not one new school will open in

2016 — because of their failure to invest in new schools.

I am glad, however, that not only has the Andrews government invested in record levels of funding in government schools to repair the damage the Liberals did when in power, it has also not forgotten non-government schools. We have our \$121 million independent schools capital fund. This vital funding for non-government schools will provide required infrastructure to give Victorian kids a great environment for learning. I request that the minister ensure that a contribution is made towards this vital project at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School to ensure that Cranbourne kids get the learning areas they deserve.

East Burwood Reserve

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) — (12 113) I raise a matter of importance for the attention of the Minister for Sport. The action I seek is for the minister to join me on a visit to the East Burwood Football Club pavilion to inspect the current facilities there and hear from the various committees regarding future plans for the facility. This would be with a view to providing future state government support to the East Burwood Football Club to enable it to expand and refurbish its existing pavilion at East Burwood Reserve.

The East Burwood Football Club, the East Burwood Cricket Club and the East Burwood Sporting Club, all of which are in my electorate of Forest Hill, use the pavilion throughout the year. The current pavilion is now inadequate due to the growth in both the football club and the cricket club in recent years. The football club plays in the Eastern Football League (EFL) and has both senior and junior sides and hardworking senior and junior committees. With many hundreds of people involved in both the football and cricket clubs there are continually increasing demands on the facilities. The club is also seeking to expand its football teams to include a women's team but has no female player changing facilities. The current pavilion also does not have any suitable facilities for female football umpires, which is a real issue for the club, given the increasing number of female umpires officiating at EFL games. The establishment of five female netball teams in recent years playing in the local netball competition has also increased the demand on the social club facilities within the pavilion.

The clubs are all keen to work with the local and state governments to assist with this project. The volunteers associated with these clubs are working tirelessly to provide opportunities for players to be involved in all

the sports on offer at the facility. They are providing opportunities for young and not-so-young people to be involved in football, cricket and netball locally. This is vital for our local area. I look forward to hearing from the Minister for Sport and receiving favourable consideration of this request to visit the pavilion at East Burwood Reserve with me to discuss future plans and funding opportunities for the facility.

Narre Warren Village

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — (12 114) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police, who is here this evening, and concerns the Narre Warren Village. The action I seek is that the minister considers providing further support to the City of Casey to improve safety in this vibrant and diverse shopping village, which is just around the corner from my office and home to a wide range of local businesses, community facilities and Narre Warren train station. Unfortunately the area is in need of significant improvements to improve safety, amenity and access for local residents.

The City of Casey has finally woken up to the fact that there is poor design, poor lighting and the placement of a public toilet block that allows and enables criminal and antisocial activities, particularly vandalism and graffiti, to occur. Many local businesses are now concerned that local residents are deterred from visiting the area due to their concerns about their safety. In fact I have been contacted by countless residents over the past 10 years — and I have written countless letters about this to the council — who want to see the village upgraded and improved.

I am really glad to see that the council has recently adopted the Fountain Gate-Narre Warren CBD structure plan, which includes plans to invest in and improve the village. It is long overdue and much needed, but better late than never. So I ask the minister to work with the City of Casey to ensure local residents have access to a safer and more enjoyable Narre Warren Village. No-one should miss out on the great baklava from Webb Street.

School swimming program

Ms STALEY (Ripon) — (12 115) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is full funding for schools in my electorate to deliver the swimming program announced by the government last week. I have received an email from a teacher at a Catholic primary school in Charlton. She notes, and I quote:

We do not have any AUSTSWIM-qualified teachers in our school. We don't have specialised PE teachers like the local P-12 school has and we don't have a swimming pool that we can bus our kids to, leave them with the pool employees to learn, then bus them back to school ... Are we going to have to bus our kids 105 kilometres to Bendigo to participate in swimming classes? What is this going to cost the school?

She also asks:

Is the government going to pay the after-hours wages for this to occur and for the course itself? To get AUSTSWIM qualified, as part of the course, the person has to do 20 hours ... practice with a qualified swimming instructor. We do not have any of these in Charlton, so is the government going to pay the CRT costs to schools to enable this person to travel an hour to Bendigo to complete this training and an hour back?

I further state in relation to this that the government has not been clear in determining whether it is only at government schools that children will learn to swim or whether in fact all children will have the opportunity to learn to swim, and whether Catholic schools and independent schools will be required to run this as well. But the key question is: where is the funding? We do not have swimming teachers in Charlton and across a large part of my electorate, and we do not have pools in a lot of places. Children will have to be bussed. Who funds the buses?

The constituent who wrote to me, Cate Olive, concludes by saying:

Once again, it is a case of the government having absolutely no idea what happens outside of Melbourne!!! This is the reality for us and probably many more country schools.

I ask the Minister for Education to fund this new program in my schools as they cannot afford it.

Macedon electorate vocational education and training

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — (12 116) The adjournment matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Training and Skills in the other place. The action I seek is for the minister to join me in my electorate to speak with employers regarding training for apprentices and the skills required by my local businesses.

In my role as the member for Macedon I regularly talk to local employers through business networking and other events. I also enjoy getting out to the retail strips and industrial estates to talk directly with business owners to understand their concerns in their workplaces. I was fortunate to be able to spend last Friday doing exactly this. During meetings with various small business owners, including Jenny and Rudy

Cordina from Romsey Mechanical Services, Lyn Allford from Romsey British Automotive and, at the other end of the scale, Arie Baelde from Rijk Zwaan, one of the largest seed producers in the world, a common thread was the ability to access high-quality training for apprentices and other employees, and training to address skills gaps in regional Victoria.

I know just how committed the minister is to continue the incredible work achieved over the last two years, including the implementation of the Skills First strategy initiatives and delivering on the massive \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund. This government is rebuilding trust and confidence in our TAFE colleges and our training system. A visit to my electorate will enable the minister to hear directly from regional Victorian employers about the training challenges they face.

Responses

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — Can I thank the member for Narre Warren South for her adjournment matter tonight. I really acknowledge the role she has played in pushing this important project at the Narre Warren Village. There is no doubt that these public safety infrastructure grants can play a really big role in transforming the design of an area that can have really positive crime prevention outcomes. I know, having had the member advocate very strongly on this particular project, as well as from the work she has done to get the City of Casey to really shift their views on this, that it is a project that certainly, as I have a look at the various applications, will receive very serious consideration, and announcements will be made around those projects soon.

A number of other members have raised matters for a range of ministers, and I will pass those matters on to those ministers.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.23 p.m.