

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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

Thursday, 10 August 2017

(Extract from book 9)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	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 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 Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections.....	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
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. C. W. BROOKS (from 7 March 2017)

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER (to 25 February 2017)

Deputy Speaker

Ms J. MAREE EDWARDS (from 7 March 2017)

Mr D. A. NARDELLA (to 27 February 2017)

Acting Speakers

Ms Blandthorn, Mr Carbines, Ms Couzens, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Graley,
Ms Kilkenny, Ms Knight, Mr McGuire, Mr Pearson, Ms Spence, Ms Thomson and Ms Ward.

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 — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Bat tin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio ⁴	Melton	Ind
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 ⁵	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard ⁶	Polwarth	LP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁷	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Fumeaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Elected 31 October 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴ ALP until 7 March 2017

⁵ Elected 14 March 2015

⁶ Elected 31 October 2015

⁷ 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 Carroll, Mr Clark, Ms Edwards, Mr Hibbins, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Ms Ryan and Ms Sheed.

Legislative Assembly select committees

Penalty Rates and Fair Pay Select Committee — Ms Blandthorn, Mr J. Bull, Mr Clark, Mr Hibbins, Ms Ryall, Ms Suleyman and Ms Williams.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson. (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, 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, Ms Garrett 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*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan. (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young.

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

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

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Thursday, 10 August 2017

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

Ms McLeish — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek your clarification. Yesterday during the matter of public importance (MPI) debate we had the most bizarre incident. The government actually called a quorum during the MPI debate and the bells rang for what seemed quite an extraordinarily long period of time. We saw the Leader of the House in a frenzy and fury as she raced around to try and —

Honourable members interjecting.

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

Ms McLeish — The Leader of the House raced around to try and grab recalcitrant members of the government benches to bring them in to form a quorum. I seek clarification as to how long the bells need to ring before you or the Acting Speaker would close down Parliament.

Mr Clark — On the point of order, Speaker, as the honourable member indicated, it was a chaotic situation yesterday. I further understand — although I was not present in the house myself — that a number of members who were present in the chamber on the government side of the house left the chamber during the course of the bells ringing. It is my understanding that that is in breach of the requirements of this house: that members should not be leaving the chamber when the bells are ringing if they had been present at the time that a quorum was called.

If that has occurred it would also be very appropriate for you to give guidance to members of the house in relation to that, because the spectacle of the Minister for Emergency Services, together with the Attorney-General and other leading government figures being in the chamber when this chaos was going on is not edifying for the house. I think your guidance for members of the government on their obligations when a quorum is called and what will happen if they fail to be able to form a quorum would be very helpful for the future.

The SPEAKER — I thank both the member for Eildon and the manager of opposition business for raising that point of order. I came into the chamber after the bells had commenced ringing yesterday and sought advice from the clerks on that very question. I draw the attention of members to standing order 29(1)(c):

If, after the bells have been rung, the Speaker is of the opinion that a quorum will not be formed, he or she must adjourn the house until the next sitting day without putting the question.

At the time I was given that advice I was also advised that the quorum had been achieved, so the house continued to sit.

I will take up the issue that the manager of opposition business has raised in relation to members leaving the chamber. As I said, I was not here for the whole ringing of the bells. I will seek advice from the clerks and report back to the house.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, on a further point of clarification, are you saying that the amount of time the bells can ring before a quorum is formed is an arbitrary one?

The SPEAKER — I am not going to enter into a question-and-answer session with members in the house. I have provided a ruling —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House and the member for Warrandyte will come to order. I have provided a ruling to the house and a commitment to come back to the house with further information.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Mordialloc and the member for Warrandyte will leave the chamber if they are not careful.

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek clarification on your ruling. My understanding was that you actually ruled on the point of order from the member for Eildon but you were going to give clarification with regard to the point raised by the manager of opposition business. The question that was specifically asked by the member for Eildon was: how long do the bells have to ring? I do not know whether you clarified that or whether you are going to chase that up. I know that rulings from the Chair previously have given a time period, and we got very, very close yesterday to that time period, so I am wondering whether you can clarify that.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. I have provided the standing order that relates to the question raised by the member. I have given an undertaking to the manager of opposition business and the house to come back to the issue that he raised further to that point of order in relation to members leaving the chamber.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker, given that it is a new financial year and there is a new allocation of money, can I respectfully suggest that the government, rather than spending their training allowance on drama training, spend it on procedural training?

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

PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

Plastic bag ban

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of Fitzroy North Primary School draws to the attention of the house: marine animals are consuming plastic at an alarming rate. We strive for improvement in the oceans, especially in the area of animal welfare. Turtles are being abused by our actions, the plastic bags that end up in the ocean are choking and killing the endangered species. It is estimated that 5.2 trillion pieces of plastic debris are in our ocean now and 269 000 tonnes float to the surface. I have high hopes to ban the plastic bag in Victoria.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria ban the plastic bag in all supermarkets and shops in Victoria.

By Mr WYNNE (Richmond) (245 signatures).

Tabled.

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Community visitors report 2015–16

Mr FOLEY (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing), by leave, presented government response.

Tabled.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — Speaker —

Mr Battin interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Gembrook is warned!

Ms ALLAN — You have had a shocker of a week, haven't you?

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — Look over here, look over here! We did not really have dinner with the mob! No!

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the House will come back to the motion.

Ms ALLAN — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 22 August 2017.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Werribee electorate ambulance services

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I rise to inform the house of and to acknowledge the improvements in ambulance response times in my electorate of Werribee. The Andrews Labor government has invested a record \$500 million to improve ambulance response times, and the community are seeing the benefits of this investment.

Recent data in the last quarter to June has seen a major improvement across the state. In my electorate 84.4 per cent of ambulances are now arriving within 15 minutes for code 1 emergencies, an increase from 72.5 per cent at the same time last year. My electorate has an additional team of paramedics based at Wyndham Vale-Manor Lakes providing an extra 14 full-time paramedics. The emergency department at Werribee Mercy Hospital has also received additional funding enabling fast-track listing for patients, thus freeing up paramedics, which allows ambulances to be out on the road again promptly.

It is heartwarming to hear firsthand the benefits to families due to the record funding provided by the Andrews government. A constituent in my electorate recently contacted my office to praise the prompt and effective response of our new paramedics based at Wyndham Vale-Manor Lakes in treating their son for a sporting injury. Between the positive stories coming out of the electorate and the hard data, it is clear that the Andrews government is getting it done by providing record funding for health care and for ambulance services.

Towong Shire Council

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) — This government needs a better mechanism for the financial challenges crippling our rural councils. During the winter break four councils, including Towong Shire Council in my electorate, were given approval to increase their rates

by more than the statewide cap of 2 per cent. The Essential Services Commission (ESC) said Towong needed to increase rates by 5.5 per cent. That is just to pay for essential services. There is no fat in that figure; that is just to maintain the status quo.

This council also had approval to exceed the cap last year. Instead it chose to cut its costs. That meant very short seasons for its public pools, limited library services and pulling out of a group that influences policy on two of the largest bodies of water in the Murray Darling Basin, both of which sit within the shire's boundary — Lake Hume and Dartmouth. There was considerable community backlash, as you would expect, and yet here we are again with Towong having to choose whether to up its rates or again cut its services.

The government's Know Your Council website shows Towong is performing well above its weight, continuing to deliver services to a small population spread across a vast road network. But the process of going cap in hand to the ESC makes it look like they are failing, but they are not. Towong is a delightful council to deal with.

There is a million dollars in the state budget to look at this and a parliamentary committee report due next month on the same thing. As a councillor put it to me recently, if the state truly values rural communities, then it needs to support them and to fund them to meet their unique challenges.

Altona North shared trail

Mr NOONAN (Minister for Industry and Employment) — Sunday, 30 July 2017, marked National Tree Day and the opening of the new shared trail between Barnes Road and Blackshaws Road in Altona North along Lower Kororoit Creek. This section of trail was made possible by a substantial donation by Toyota Australia, who wanted to leave a legacy to the community and their workers who were involved in the manufacturing plant in Altona. Toyota Australia and the state government, through its sport and recreation budget, along with Hobsons Bay City Council have contributed more than \$3.8 million towards the development of this section of the trail and artwork.

At the opening celebration 2300 trees and shrubs, representing the number of Toyota employees who are to lose their jobs due to the plant closure, were planted on site, followed by the cutting of the ribbon to open the trail for community use. The artwork trail, created by local artist Geoffrey Ricardo, was also opened for the public, and the Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek launched a wonderful book marking their tireless

efforts to convert an industrial dumping ground into a magnificent nature lovers sanctuary.

I would like to give special thanks to friends group president and founder Geoff Mitchelmore. Geoff is a giant in my local community who has been recognised for his tireless work to totally transform this special nature corridor. I am proud to call him a friend. Geoff, along with countless volunteers, Toyota workers, Hobsons Bay councillors and the state government can all take pride in this wonderful outcome.

Gillian Simons

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — I wish to extend my best wishes to Gillian Simons, a constituent in my electorate of Croydon, after her recent departure from the Croydon Stroke Support Group. After suffering a stroke herself, in 1990 Gillian formed the Croydon Stroke Support Group to provide vital recovery information, encouragement and support to fellow stroke survivors and their carers and loved ones. The group produces a regular newsletter which is very informative as well as organises bus trips, barbecue lunches, guest speakers and educational demonstrations. Members also benefit from the book and video library, indoor games and various creative art projects. I commend Gillian on her many years of continuous service to the community, her tireless promotion of better health and her commitment to all who have suffered a stroke in our community.

Beryl Medhurst

Mr HODGETT — I would also like to congratulate one of my constituents, Beryl Medhurst, who turns 100 years young this Saturday, 12 August. Beryl is a long-term and well-known resident of the Croydon area, having made Croydon her home for the last 30 years. I am aware that Beryl is well known in particular for her excellent sponge cakes and vanilla slice after working for many years in kitchens and bakeries across the state. Certainly one former Premier, the great Jeffrey Kennett, would have been very keen to try Beryl's vanilla slice. I was quite impressed to read that at 99 years of age Beryl still finds time to contribute to historical writing, helping to write a chapter on her grandfather's relationship with the Kelly gang for a 2016 book by Eugenie Navarre, *Ned: Knight in Aussie Armour*. I wish Beryl a wonderful 100th birthday with her family and friends this Saturday.

Mill Park Heights Primary School

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — It has been a very busy time in the Mill Park electorate during

Parliament's winter break. I visited Mill Park Heights Primary School, where principal Deborah Patterson showed me the construction of their massive project to replace relocatable classrooms with permanent buildings. This is a significant school and a significant project in my electorate. For many years Mill Park Heights Primary School has had more than 10 relocatable classrooms housing so many students. They deserve better facilities, and I am so pleased that our government has been able to provide the school \$6 million for this modernisation and upgrade project. It is an excellent local school that keeps going from strength to strength, and these upgrades will only enhance the experience for many children in the local area. I congratulate Deborah Patterson and the school community for such a wonderful effort in nurturing and educating our children.

Maccabiah Games

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I would also like to mention how great it was to hear that our own Australian team won a gold medal in netball at the Maccabiah Games. Congratulations to all the team members — Michayla Bancroft, Romy Cashmore, Daniella Drutman, Sienna Fitt, Taryn Levin, Gabriella Mendelow, Hayley Mrocki, Vanessa Mrocki, Paige Roseman and Eliza Sharbanee — and also to coach Clare Kenyon and team manager Justine Sharbanee. What a fantastic result! They have all done us really proud, and I am sure that all parents, including the parents of Michayla Bancroft, Russell and Jenny, would certainly agree.

Wangaratta law and order community forum

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — More than 60 people attended a Wangaratta law and order community forum last week that brought together local residents to discuss the problems with our justice system and what needs to be done to bring about change. I thank the member for Hawthorn and Edward O'Donohue from the Council, who were guest speakers at the forum; they provided a great deal of knowledge and insight on the issue and addressed questions from the audience. It is a shame that the Minister for Police did not even respond to my invitation. Also my thanks go to Tania Maxwell and Carol Roadknight, co-founders of the Enough is Enough anti-violence campaign, who continue to work so hard for parole and bail reform and harsher penalties for violent criminals. As a result of the forum a local law and order steering committee has now been formed and will continue to pursue a safer local community.

Kokoda trek

Mr McCURDY — Over the winter recess, as shadow Minister for Veterans I accompanied the members for East Gippsland and Narracan and walked the Kokoda Track. We completed the 120 kilometres of walking trail in honour of Australian veterans, with this year marking the 75th anniversary of the Kokoda conflict. We went the same way as the Aussie diggers, walking from Owers Comer to Kokoda. I wore my poppy every day, and it was a reminder every step of the way of the sacrifices made by the Australian troops. Brigade Hill and the Isurava memorial are two places that I will never forget. My oldest daughter, Danielle, completed the walk with me and was my shining light for the difficult trek.

Tungamah & District Lions Club

Mr McCURDY — Congratulations to the Tungamah & District Lions Club, which recently celebrated 40 years of service. Thanks to Dennis Gray, who was awarded a Melvin Jones Fellowship, the Lions' highest individual award, and also to Robyn Harrison, who received the prestigious Chris August Award. Over the past 40 years the club has made a great contribution to the Tungamah and district community and will continue to do so well into the future.

Wangaratta Turf Club

Mr McCURDY — I wish to congratulate the Wangaratta Turf Club on receiving \$2.4 million from the federal coalition government's Building Better Regions Fund.

Country Fire Authority Ocean Grove brigade

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — It was with great pleasure on Saturday, 15 July, that I once again attended the Ocean Grove Country Fire Authority brigade's annual dinner — I was asked to propose a toast to the brigade — and to celebrate with them the great work of the volunteers and career staff at the brigade. The Ocean Grove CFA is a brigade where volunteers and career firefighters serve proudly and cooperatively together in protecting their community and the wider Bellarine Peninsula, and like all brigades right across the Bellarine, Ocean Grove is very much an integral and respected organisation in the community. I congratulate them and thank them for their ongoing contribution. The night itself was a great success enjoyed by not only firefighters but also the many partners who also contribute to the service either directly or indirectly through the support they give to

their family member or members, as is the case with many families.

On the night a number of awards were presented to very worthy recipients. These were: the National Medal to Tony Hodder; a Brigade Life Member award for 55 years as a volunteer with the CFA to Sylvia Pearce; a Firefighter of the Year Award to Jayden Harrison-Roberts; an Encouragement Award to both Simon Simpson and Adam Webb-Taylor; a Brigade Member Award to Craig Cann; and an RSL Award to Neil Hickman. I congratulate those members who received awards on the night. But just as importantly, I thank and commend all members of the Ocean Grove CFA — in fact all brigade members across the Bellarine — for the important and selfless service they provide in keeping our local communities safe.

Wantirna Park caravan park

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — Firstly, I say on behalf of the Wantirna Park caravan park residents who are facing eviction by the end of this year that they are seeking a meeting with this government to talk about a range of concerns they have. I have already raised this matter in the house, and the government has as yet been unwilling to meet with the residents. So I again humbly request that the government meet with these residents so they have the opportunity to express their concerns directly with the government.

The Knox School

Mr WAKELING — Congratulations to The Knox School in Wantirna South on their 35th anniversary. I had the great pleasure of attending their special assembly this week, and I would like to congratulate all the staff, the founders and the students of this great school, which has become an institution in the Knox community.

Country Fire Authority Boronia and Ferntree Gully brigades

Mr WAKELING — Congratulations to the Boronia and Ferntree Gully CFA brigades, which both celebrated their 75th anniversaries this year. I had the great pleasure of attending their annual dinners. I would like to place on record my thanks to both organisations and to the hardworking men and women who have given up their time for 75 years in servicing and representing our community. It is a great organisation, and long may it thrive.

Wantirna College

Mr WAKELING — Congratulations to the students at Wantirna College for their recent presentation ball. I would like to congratulate Sue Bell, the principal, and all the staff and students for putting on yet another wonderful event. Congratulations to the school.

Mountain Gate Primary School

Mr WAKELING — Finally, congratulations to Mountain Gate Primary School for their crazy clothes day to raise money for Faith, their Kenyan student.

North-east link

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe) — Thank you, Speaker, and I was pleased to be with you, the Premier and of course the members for Eltham and Yan Yean on Monday for the announcement of the four corridors that the North East Link Authority is pursuing to reduce traffic congestion in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs. It is a project that will create some 5000 jobs and a project that will carry over 100 000 vehicles and remove trucks from Rosanna Road, which is currently carrying some 45 000 vehicles a day, moving people between the northern suburbs and the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. What we need to do of course is make sure that this project has the opportunity to stop our existing roads in my electorate being used as a de facto north-east link.

The Andrews Labor government has shown time and time again, with the duplication of the Chandler Highway bridge and the duplication of the Hurstbridge rail line between Heidelberg and Rosanna, that we are taking on the challenges that people have talked about for years and governments have never delivered. It is an Andrews Labor government that is being entrusted by Victorians, and certainly by those people in my electorate in the north-east, to deliver on the projects that governments talk up but do not deliver. We support a north-east link in Melbourne, and we call on the local councils to get on board and to provide solutions to the traffic problems that are undermining our livability in the north-eastern suburbs. We will see this project through. That is what the community wants, and that is what we will deliver for our communities.

Young Street, Frankston

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — On 3 August I again met with Frankston residents and traders from Young Street, Frankston, to discuss the Andrews government's botched redevelopment of Young Street and the devastating effects it is having on their city. Many

Frankston people have contacted me for help because they say their local Labor MP, the member for Frankston, has deserted them. Many complain about not getting their calls returned or about being avoided when they visit his office. In a further cowardly approach the Frankston MP also uses his close Labor associate Brad Hill and various Facebook pseudonyms in a hate campaign to attack and defame anyone who might criticise or not agree with him.

Local councillors of all flavours — Liberal, Labor and Independent — have described trying to work with the member for Frankston as impossible. Local Labor councillor Steve Thoms is at his wit's end trying to do the Frankston MP's job of looking after people badly affected by the state government's bungled project. Independent councillor and protective services officer Kris Bolam has also expressed his frustration about the MP's refusal to work with council and to help the Frankston community. Council has worked hard to come up with a helpful but costly package for the dozens of businesses that have been so badly damaged by the Andrews government's bungled project. It is already too late for many Frankston traders driven out of business by the state government's failures — Fomosa Flowers, Don's Custom Leathersgoods and the iconic Young Street Newsagency that had been in business for over 50 years. The room full of angry residents and traders agreed that the letter must be written to try and get their MP to finally turn up.

Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — Recently the shadow minister for environment, the member for Gembrook, spoke about the Frankston Nature Conservation Reserve committee of management (COM). The shadow minister as always is very short on facts. This committee of management was nominated and put in place without funding and obviously without proper due diligence by the previous government. I fought for the funding of \$1.6 million to give the COM resources to finally open the reserve to the public as a community asset. It is an area of significant flora that our whole community want to preserve and enjoy. Unfortunately I have had hundreds of complaints which the minister has had to act on. The truth of this matter needs to be known.

The member for Gembrook and shadow minister knows that this committee has nine members, four of whom are family members, some with homes that border onto the reserve, a conflict of interest that those opposite obviously condone. The shadow minister would know that the COM comprised at least two sisters, one being the chair, their mother and one of

their husbands. Let me stress I have met with members of this committee many times amicably without incident, but it is on the former government to answer how anyone in their right mind could give one family voting control over a public asset.

What makes this situation more dysfunctional is that one of two paid rangers of the COM is allegedly in a relationship with a committee member and that the committee refused to meet over a 12-month period with a ministerially appointed member of the committee. The reasons given included an apprehended violence order that did not even apply to the individual. I met with other non-family committee members who were not happy that meetings could be called with two days notice and they did not have a say because family members basically called meetings, formed a quorum and made decisions. It has become apparent that certain individuals are focused on their petty squabbles and on pushing their own agendas. Comments have focused on me personally; however, I in no way let that sway my judgement on these issues. My moto continues to be 'Getting it done for Frankston'.

Mildura rail line

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — Last Sunday I farewelled the last broad-gauge train to leave Mildura, heralding the next step in standardisation of the Mildura rail line. Standardisation will allow Mildura to join the national rail network and deliver benefits of competition —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Frankston and the member for Gembrook will cease shouting across the chamber. The member for Gembrook is warned. The member for Frankston is warned.

Mr CRISP — by moving many of our valuable exports to the port as quickly and economically as possible. Those benefits to our farmers will quickly be shared with the whole community. As always there will be more to do, and the next step is to be able to fully utilise the benefits of standardisation by upgrading level crossings on the line.

Mallee Machinery Field Days

Mr CRISP — Congratulations to the Speed field days committee for their largest ever event. The rain on the second day was amazing timing for the Mallee. The site was wet, muddy and cold, and everybody was happy. Next year will be the 40th anniversary and will be something to celebrate — 40 years of supporting innovation and communication, the keys to the Mallee's success.

Chaffey Aged Care hospice

Mr CRISP — I was pleased to attend a stakeholders meeting regarding the hospice at Chaffey Aged Care in July to discuss the next step, which will be, for want of a better phrase, a needs study to quantify the demand and allow a service model to be considered. I thank my federal colleague, Chaffey Aged Care, Mildura Base Hospital, Sunraysia Community Health Services and Dennis and Cas Driscoll for attending. They are all presently engaged in seeking funding for the study.

Buloke Shire Council

Mr CRISP — It was great to catch up with the Buloke Shire Council mayor and the new CEO, Lucy Roffey. It is a council with challenges — and challenges that I know the councillors and the CEO are meeting.

Avondale Heights Grandparents Playgroup

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — I rise to congratulate the Avondale Heights Grandparents Playgroup, which was recently awarded playgroup of the month by Playgroup Victoria in recognition of the valuable role the group plays in bridging the intergenerational gap between grandparents and grandchildren. As a new dad it was my honour to join this wonderful community organisation over morning tea on 2 August to celebrate its local success and the health benefits this intergenerational group brings to both grandchildren and grandparents.

Traditional parental duties are continuing to evolve and be modified for the modern world, and it is very common now for new mums and dads to return to work earlier to service their mortgages and stay on top of day-to-day expenses, including child care. Grandparents, more than ever before, are being relied upon to help out. This is why the Avondale Heights Grandparents Playgroup is such an important local community organisation.

For grandparents it is more than just helping out family. As Sinead Halliday, public relations officer at Playgroup Victoria, said in her important article ‘Generational gifts’:

For many grandparents, caring for their grandchildren is a joy that continues to give them meaning. Young children are good at reminding us of innocence and, in many ways, simplicity. Children have the knack of erasing the complexities that swarm the grown-up world. They bring us back to the present, connecting.

This is so true of the Avondale Heights Grandparents Playgroup, where the grandparent is given a new role

and purpose in their grandchild’s life. Their grandchildren have an uplifting and energising role, and the joy that they bring is immeasurable. The benefits extend both ways, and the nurture and experience that the grandparent bestows upon the grandchild is incredibly powerful.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate Elizabeth Vescio for her leadership of the playgroup and the playgroup’s adviser, Rosie Dymus, who is moving on to a new role.

Workers Hut, Torquay

Mr KATOS (South Barwon) — I was very pleased to attend and officially help launch the Workers Hut in Torquay on 28 July. This terrific creative space in Torquay allows workers to rent a desk, space or boardroom to allow for free thinking and creativity in a non-traditional environment. I congratulate Rebecca and David Scott on establishing this great space, and judging by the launch, which was very well attended by many locals and so many and varying potential users, this space will no doubt be a well-used community business facility. This certainly adds to the work done by the former Rural and Regional Committee, which conducted an inquiry into such spaces when I was a member of that committee, and it is great to see one open in Torquay.

Grenville Oval, Torquay

Mr KATOS — I also take the opportunity to congratulate mayor Brian McKiterick and the Surf Coast Shire Council on the official opening of Grenville Oval and its car park and community facility at Torquay. This new sporting and recreation facility is a part of the Banyul-Warri Fields master plan and supports the junior football and hockey teams that continue to grow in numbers in Torquay. The senior-size oval features a 111-bay car park and lighting that is suitable to stage semiprofessional night games. The oval completes the Australian Rules facilities in the community and civic precinct, an area that can be used for various activities by people of all ages. Around 500 juniors from the Torquay Tigers and Surf Coast Suns will use the oval as well as the Torquay hockey club. The total project cost of the facility was \$3.2 million, with \$2.8 million from the shire and \$400 000 from the previous coalition government.

Kyneton Community Park

Ms THOMAS (Macedon) — In late June I attended the opening of the Kyneton Community Park. Situated in the botanic gardens, the park is now a place to catch

up with friends and family and explore the interactive playground. As well as being a great meeting and play space for the local community, I am confident that the park will attract more visitors to Kyneton. I would like to congratulate the women from the Kyneton community who have made this project possible through an exceptional combination of expertise, perseverance and sustained community action over more than 10 years, including Nat Hanna, Jessica Goodman, Sarah Turner, Sam Bouchier, Kathryn Portelli, Katrina Dernelly, Rebecca Stockfeld, Marg Sangalli and of course the group's last president, who brought this project over the line, Amy Cockroft.

Gisborne Secondary College

Ms THOMAS — I recently attended the Gisborne Secondary College's senior debate: 'That students should have access to female-only spaces at school'. What a great debate between Cherry House team members Lauren Barry, Zachariah Osagiede and Xander Reichard for the affirmative and Bishop House team members Dean Karopoulos and Isabelle Sandkuhl. The school's debating captains, Teagan Bunn and Brendan Crozier, do a brilliant job organising the senior and junior inter-house debating program that runs over two terms at the school. Debating is such a great skill, and the students at Gisborne Secondary College could readily hold their own on the floor of this chamber. Debating encourages logical and critical thinking, public speaking and engagement with the public policy questions of our time. Congratulations to the debating coordinator, Simone Moore, and everyone else who was involved.

Emily Taylor

Ms THOMAS — Congratulations also to Kyneton on-baller Emily Taylor, who won the inaugural Northern Country Women's League best and fairest award.

***Our Gardens, Our Refuge* exhibition**

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I wish to pay tribute to the Bayside City Council and the *Our Gardens, Our Refuge* exhibition committee, comprising John Barrett, Jo Bisset and Pauline Reynolds, on the recent exhibition. I also congratulate the year 12 environmental captains at Sandringham College, Rory Hall and Katherine Ellison, for opening the exhibition.

The committee notes on the program that private gardens are disappearing to make way for large houses and unit and apartment developments that occupy as much of the blocks as they are legally able to and include many hard surfaces. It goes on to say that

increased building, along with the modern trend for garden monocultures, is causing our region to lose its botanical richness and limits the opportunity for play and development on the part of young children.

The committee notes that the photographs, stories and children's illustrations featured in the exhibition show how beautiful gardens can be and how much enjoyment their owners derive from not only creating them but also living in them. They are fundamentally important to our wellbeing as places to share with our families, friends, neighbours and animals, as well as providing important habitat.

Ken Rendell

Mr THOMPSON — I wish to honour the contribution of Ken Rendell to the natural environment of Bayside. He has made an outstanding contribution through many local conservation organisations. In 2012 he received the Bayside City Council's Australia Day Environment Award. He has made a valuable contribution to the heathlands of Long Hollow, Table Rock and Gramatan, and has been helping at the spring open days in Bay Road.

Federal member for Melbourne

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I rise today to condemn the reckless and irresponsible actions of the federal member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt. For seven years Mr Bandt has represented the federal seat of Melbourne, and it is beyond comprehension that he does not know the challenges many public housing tenants and the homeless face on a daily basis.

The real question, though, is: what has he done to address the need for more and better-quality public housing? The answer is nothing. In the last seven years, for three of which he held the balance of power in the House of Representatives, Mr Bandt has not delivered a single public housing dwelling in his electorate — not one.

Now Mr Bandt would know that traditionally the federal government provides capital funding to the state government to build public housing which the state then owns, maintains and operates. I would have thought he would use the Parliament to pressure the federal government to do just that. He did not make his support for the Gillard government conditional on more funding for public housing in Melbourne; moreover this quisling of the Left has not once called on the Abbott and Turnbull governments to do this. This pathetic excuse of a member has only seen public housing as an

opportunity to attack either the former federal Labor government or, now, the Andrews Labor government.

In my community Mr Bandt is often referred to by the Somali community as Uncle Adam, and indeed I have heard that he has, for example, attended Somali weddings where he has been the guest of honour. So this freeloading, mooching member for Melbourne is quite happy to put his snout in the trough at events hosted by some of the most marginalised and impoverished members of our community, but when it comes down to working for these communities to make their life better he shows no interest.

What sort of person does that? What sort of person publicly professes his support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities but when it comes down to it will not stand up for their interests in Canberra? He is a fraud, he is a con and the people of Melbourne deserve much better.

Dot McGee

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — In a year when there has been so much controversy in the Country Fire Authority (CFA) it was indeed a sad month in July when Irrewarra rural fire brigade CFA stalwart Dot McGee passed away suddenly. Dot was described at her large funeral in Colac in July as ‘second to none’. She exemplified the massive contribution volunteers make in country communities towards keeping our towns, farms, livestock and assets safe. No government or paid agency can provide that extra care or will put in the hours and create the love and passion for a community that a volunteer like Dot can.

Thirty-four years of CFA involvement at Irrewarra saw Dot fill the roles of treasurer, secretary and training officer. Dot started the brigade’s ladies auxiliary, but she will be best remembered across the district for her involvement in junior development and running inter-brigade competitions. Dot leaves her husband, John, their children and grandchildren and a community that will all very much miss her.

Apollo Bay WinterWild festival

Mr RIORDAN — A big thank you also goes out to the Apollo Bay WinterWild festival team, led by artistic director Roderick Poole. Over four big weekends through winter the Apollo Bay community has celebrated the earth’s elements of water, earth, air and fire. This coming weekend will be the finale when fire is celebrated on the foreshore as a symbol to the world that, despite recent hardships along the Great Ocean Road, including fire that no-one controlled and earth

slides along the road that have kept people at bay, Apollo Bay is still alive and well. The festival has provided an array of arts. If the enthusiasm created this year can be maintained, Victoria can certainly look forward to the festival in the future.

M80 ring-road noise barriers

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — I rise to celebrate the successful delivery of yet another Andrews Labor government election commitment — \$10 million worth of noise walls along the M80 ring-road at Glenroy and Gowanbrae. On Monday I joined the very hardworking member for Sunbury to see firsthand the completed project. It is clear that BMD Constructions, in partnership with VicRoads, have delivered a first-class project which will bring substantial long-term benefits for the local residents in Glenroy and Gowanbrae.

The wall is designed to reduce noise and enhance the quality of life for local residents. It will certainly protect the residents of Glenroy from the more than 160 000 vehicles that use the road every day, including approximately 28 000 trucks. Those vehicles obviously generate a large amount of noise that these noise walls will now protect the residents from. The noise walls have been designed to provide maximum benefit and include features such as clear panels to prevent shadowing on houses and ensure light reaches natural recreational areas.

This project is an example of the great outcomes that can be achieved when governments listen to the community, and that is what this Labor government is all about. This project is just one of the many important infrastructure projects this government is delivering. Infrastructure projects such as this not only provide benefits for the immediate community, and certainly for our communities in Glenroy and Gowanbrae, they also provide economic benefits by creating jobs for local workers and stimulating economic growth in the process. I congratulate all who have been involved in the project, particularly VicRoads and BMD Constructions.

Huntingdale bus interchange

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) — Before the 2010 election the Labor government made a commitment to build the much-needed bus interchange at Huntingdale in my community. Of course during the term of the last Liberal government nothing happened with this project, but that is no real surprise, so we promised it again in 2014. I recall that at that time the proposal was called reckless by the Liberals. I still cannot work out why. I

am pleased to inform the house that works have now started on one of the car parks that we are fixing at Huntingdale in preparation for the works on the bus interchange. In fact we are fixing all the car parks and we are updating the train station too. All up it is \$11.6 million for Huntingdale; that is called getting it done. In the coming months work will be ramped up to provide real and overdue improvement for this terrific community.

Oakleigh electorate sports grants

Mr DIMOPOULOS— I would like to make mention of some fantastic local sporting clubs that have benefited from the government's grants program just in the last few months. Monash City Football Club, Oakleigh District Senior Football Club and Emmanuel South Oakleigh Cricket Club have each received \$1000 for uniforms, and Monash University Netball Club has received \$2000 for coaching accreditation. As part of the active club grant program, Glen Eira Amateur Football Club, Glen Eira Junior Soccer Club and Monash City Football Club have each received \$3000 to provide for greater female participation.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (QUALITY AND SAFETY) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 21 June 2017; motion of Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health).

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — It gives me pleasure to rise to lead the debate on behalf of the opposition on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. From the outset I wish to state that the opposition will not be opposing the bill before the house. This bill seeks elevate the roles of quality and safety in the objectives of the Health Services Act 1988 and other health acts. It will strengthen the ability of the minister and secretary to oversee the quality and safety of public health services, and it will improve governance arrangements in order to create better hospitals and introduce nine-year term limits for their board members. The legislation will also seek to establish the Better Care Victoria board.

The bill is intended to improve the safety and quality of health services around Victoria, and this will include collecting better information, improving clinical governance structures and increasing the powers of the minister and the department to respond to risks. Specifically it is a response to a cluster of deaths that occurred at the Bacchus Marsh health service and the

findings and recommendations of subsequent reviews and investigations.

By way of background, in March 2015 the department was notified by the Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity, the CCOPMM, of a cluster of perinatal deaths that had occurred at the Bacchus Marsh health service during 2013 and 2014. Members will recall that that was the subject of much media investigation. As a consequence of that a review was undertaken into perinatal outcomes at the service. It was an expert review that was led by Professor Euan Wallace. The professor identified that seven of the deaths were avoidable or potentially avoidable, and the review identified a failure of clinical governance.

Professor Wallace is someone who has had an outstanding service both here and overseas within his chosen profession. I am known briefly to Mr Wallace; in fact he delivered my son 13 years ago. He was called in because his colleague who was meant to be there may have been on holidays or some other important reason. But he was certainly a very learned member of that profession and is held in very high esteem.

As a consequence of that, there was a review also undertaken by the department regarding the management of critical issues at the health service in November 2015. The secretary requested that the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care conduct an independent review into the department's actions. The commission found that the department had acted appropriately but did not have adequate capacity for oversight to identify risks. So as a consequence of that the Minister for Health in October 2016 commissioned Dr Stephen Duckett to undertake a review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria.

Dr Duckett had undertaken that review and through his work had identified a significant number of recommendations — over 170 — on how quality and safety in the Victorian health services could be strengthened to avoid a similar tragedy. In part this legislation responds to some of those recommendations from the report, the *Targeting Zero* report undertaken by Dr Duckett. Not all of the recommendations have been picked up. It is anticipated that a second bill will be introduced into the house next year, which will be a formal response to the remaining recommendations in Dr Duckett's report.

As a consequence of the work that was undertaken by Dr Duckett the government sought to establish Better Care Victoria in March 2016, which has provided advice to the Minister for Health on sector innovation and award grants for a range of health projects. Earlier

this year there was the establishment of Safer Care Victoria, which will oversee and support health services to provide safe, high-quality care and to also investigate the risks and failures and expand on best practices across the state. That will be headed by Professor Wallace. There is also the establishment of the Victorian Agency for Health Information, which will collect, analyse and share health data for public reporting, oversight and clinical improvements.

As I mentioned before, there were certainly significant concerns raised in the Victorian community regarding the events at Bacchus Marsh. Any loss of a child shortly after birth is tragic, but when there appeared to be a number of deaths that potentially were linked to the practices of a hospital, that was of grave concern to the Bacchus Marsh community. Importantly, work was undertaken to investigate the situation to ensure that the community had confidence in the operation of maternity services at their local hospital. But also this strikes at the heart of a broader issue: to ensure that maternity services across the state in a metropolitan, regional and rural sense are meeting the needs of the Victorian community. So it was important that the work was undertaken, and we are now seeing legislation before the house that builds on the work that came out of that investigation.

Under the bill, safety and quality have been added as objectives throughout various acts. There will also be maximum terms for health service board members, which will be nine years. That will mean that they will be able to undertake three three-year terms. For them to stay on there must be exceptional circumstances, such as a skills shortage, and all board terms will expire simultaneously. All health service board members will be paid. Currently only major health board members are provided payment.

The bill will also provide for the minister to issue requirements for board composition and will provide for the minister to issue guidelines to health boards regarding safety and quality. It will amend registration requirements for portable service models. This includes mobile X-ray services. It will expand the definition of services captured by the act to include multipurpose services, such as small community health services with aged care and private clinics that do not perform clinical procedures as the majority of their work. It will also provide for the minister to suspend admissions within the specific hospital departments within this expanded cohort if safety or quality concerns arise.

The bill will also seek to expand requirements for private clinics to report data, as some data currently collected is provided on a voluntary basis. It will

require concerns about serious risks to be reported to the secretary of the department, and the new consultative council is to be more focused on identifying risks rather than classifying deaths.

An aspect of this bill deals specifically with issues around maternity services. It will seek to improve services throughout the state but also provide a level of confidence for the Victorian community about the types of services that will be delivered in our public health facilities, and that is important.

The issue in regard to the nine-year board terms has caused some level of angst for our rural and regional communities — I am told a furore. The member for Lowan will certainly elaborate on that from a regional and rural perspective, but can I say that we have situations where there are many people of long standing who have provided significant service to their local communities, who have extensive knowledge of their local health service and are strongly supported by those local communities. I am looking at the Swan Hill *Guardian*. Don Logan has served on the health board for 44 years. He quipped that under the new rules no-one will beat his record of 44 years service on a health board.

I think the tragedy of this is that we have a representative in the Victorian community who has given significant service to his local health board; he is someone who is supported by his community and someone the community trusts; the community knows he understands the specific needs of their local service and is someone who will fight for the local health service because it is health service in his community. Under these changes we will see that people like Don Logan will no longer be able to give back to their community by serving on their health board. The changes in this bill do not take into account those issues of importance to rural and regional communities.

Everybody understands from an issue of governance that we need to ensure that we have the best people placed on government boards, who have a range of skills — be they health, administrative, legal, human resources or financial — but what we do not take into account here is that there are people who have the necessary skills, who want to give to their community and who want to continue giving to their community, and by a stroke of the pen they will be instantly removed from the board.

What happens is that board members living in a community speak to representatives of their community. They attend local events, they go shopping in their local community and people ask them questions about the

operation of their local health service. That is what it means to serve on a board in a rural and regional community. If you remove locals of long standing who serve on boards and replace them with people who, for example, do not live in that community, then the capacity of local residents to engage with members of the board who are from their local community is diminished. We need to ensure that any change that is put in place is actually about delivering a better outcome.

I do not know of anyone here who could say that if someone has had nine years service on a board — and they may have specific expertise, live in the community and understand the needs of the community — simply because they have hit a nine-year period that of itself should mean that this person should be removed from the board. Potentially they could be replaced by someone from another part of the state, be it Melbourne or another part of rural or regional Victoria, who does not have a specific understanding of the needs of that local community. This is an issue that needs to be placed on the record. The government needs to be fully aware of the fact that these changes will potentially impact upon the capacity of local communities to have faith in their local health services because they will no longer have the opportunity to speak to people who serve on the board who are representing that local community.

Another issue could be where somebody is put on the board of a health service — in the member for Lowan's electorate, for example — who lives in Melbourne. They may be loath to travel the distance on a regular basis to attend not only board meetings but also to attend community events, whereas previous members of the board who lived in the community and who understood the needs of the community would be attending those events as a local resident and people could make contact with them. What we do not want to see is a perverse outcome where people say it is all well and good that they got appointed to this board by the Minister for Health, but they have to drive 3 hours one way to get to a board meeting. They have done this for 18 months and have reached a stage where they have had enough. They resign from the board and say that someone else can now do it. All we are going to end up with is a revolving door of board members. We will not have anyone who has been a longstanding member of the board and who understands the history of the operations of that health service. It is imperative that this government looks at this issue and analyses its potential impact.

Stakeholders believe that the quality and safety framework this legislation provides will be sound, but the challenge will be the department's implementation

of the legislation. They need to ensure that the new requirements are not unnecessarily burdensome for health services and that patients benefit from the practical improvements.

In terms of reporting, it is essential that the bill and the three new agencies deliver meaningful and practical improvements, as the workload of health services will increase to meet new reporting requirements. That is always a challenge. Yes, it is imperative that we put in place better health services, and yes, it is important that we put in place better oversight and not diminish the work that Professor Wallace and others have done. However, we need to ensure that the level of regulation that is going to be imposed on our hospitals, from a reporting perspective, does not become burdensome.

Of all the additional data and powers that the bill allows for in terms of transparency, only the guidelines issued by the Minister for Health are required to publicly report. There is an issue of the transparency associated with that, and I look forward to the government's response to this. It is imperative for transparency that the data and powers allowed for under this bill are made public so that people understand that the data that is actually received is made public to the Victorian community.

The bill also provides a framework for the minister and the secretary to issue additional data requests, board composition requirements and guidelines that must be complied with, but this will all be contained in the regulations. As we know, the devil is always in the detail of regulations, and they will not be coming before the Parliament as part of this piece of legislation.

In good faith, we understand the importance of the work of this bill through the work of Professor Duckett, Professor Wallace and others, but we need to ensure that this bill does not place a burdensome requirement, from an administrative sense, on hospitals and that this information is made public to the community. We need to ensure that any changes put in place will not only benefit Victorians in terms of their patient experience but that they result in a positive outcome for the operators of our health services — for the boards and for those who work in our hospitals.

I place on the record my thanks and congratulations to all health services across the state, both public and private. They do tremendous work in meeting the needs of the Victorian community. In my own local community, I place on the record my congratulations to Eastern Health, the staff and the board, who do a great job in servicing the needs of my local community.

Parents expect safe maternity services. The situation at Bacchus Marsh was a source of immense grief. It was important that that situation was investigated and that work was undertaken as a consequence of that to provide certainty to Victorians that we have learned not only from that tragedy at Bacchus Marsh but from situations across the state. Let us ensure that these changes do not lead to unnecessary burdens, particularly in relation to the issue of the board terms, the transparency, the reporting burden and also the unknown requirements of the legislation. With those comments, I would like to again indicate that the Liberal-Nationals opposition will not be opposing the bill before the house.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong)— It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. In October last year the Minister for Health released the final report of the independent review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria, a review led by the esteemed Dr Stephen Duckett. This followed the discovery of a number of tragic and avoidable perinatal deaths at Djerriwarrh Health Services. Those were events that shocked all of us in this place and certainly led to a call in our broader communities for reform, and that is what we have embarked upon.

The Duckett review identified a number of things, including inadequate oversight by the Djerriwarrh board as a contributing factor to the tragedies that took place. The report highlighted several shortcomings of the Department of Health and Human Services, particularly shortcomings in the fulfilment of its role as system leader and system manager. The government has supported in principle all of the 179 recommendations in the report and has set a target of zero avoidable harm through the strengthening of hospital governance, through the sharing of expertise and excellence across the system and through improving the provision of information across the system as well.

Of those 179 recommendations 34 have been implemented on time, with a further 63 recommendations expected to be implemented on time by the end of this financial year. Some of the recommendations outlined in the report require legislative change. The bill before us today addresses the most urgent of these recommendations. This marks the first stage of statutory reform, with the objective of improving safety in our health services and achieving better care for patients. But there will be more to come.

In terms of the details in the bill itself, in short the bill amends a number of health acts to prioritise the

importance of quality and safety, and it does this for public health and ambulance services, but it also does this for private services. It enables the collection of data from private health services for quality and safety purposes, and it creates clear quality and safety obligations for these private health services. The bill extends quality and safety obligations that already apply to the boards of large public hospitals so that these obligations also apply to the boards of small and medium-sized public hospitals. For example, there will be new board composition requirements to ensure that boards are comprised of the right mix of skills. The bill also provides that all board members be paid. It is important to say that this is not to denigrate in any way the role that volunteers play in our health system. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers I know well the contribution our health volunteers make and how integral many volunteer-driven services are to a positive patient experience. These services, of course, remain hugely important, as does the role of volunteers in all parts of our health system.

The bill also limits public hospital board tenures to nine years. The rationale behind this is independence — that is, for boards to effectively oversee hospital standards they must be independent of hospital staff. Boards also need to be dynamic and open to change and new ideas. For this reason the Duckett review saw tenure limits as an important reform. I noticed that the lead speaker for the opposition had some concerns around this particular provision and talked about the loss of institutional knowledge and other like issues.

I have got to say that when I came across this particular change in the bill I thought it was a very positive change. I am a big believer in regeneration, the reason being that in many different roles throughout my life I have encountered a tendency of organisations, whenever there has been stagnation, to respond with, ‘Well, it’s the way we’ve always done things’, but that is not necessarily the reason why you should continue doing things a certain way. I think regeneration and a turnover of people is good, and nine years is not too short. I think nine years is a good time. You still can foster an adequate level of institutional knowledge over that time, but I think it also provides an opportunity to bring in new expertise, new perspectives, new ideas, bigger visions and all of the things that we know lead to a more modern and effective health service. These tenure rules will be phased in over three years, and the changes will not result in the termination of any current board member prior to the expiration of their term. I think it is important to highlight that.

Importantly the bill also allows the government to crack down on dangerous and unregulated private providers,

and this includes cosmetic surgery facilities. As it stands currently, if surgery is less than 50 per cent of a provider's activities, a cosmetic facility is not regulated. This might surprise and alarm many in our community, so the bill before the house today closes that loophole in ensuring that private providers meet quality and safety standards even if a high-risk or dangerous activity is only a small part of their practice. This will give many patients greater confidence in these services.

The bill also provides for action in response to unsafe practices in the private healthcare sector. This is done through an ongoing obligation on private services to be safe, appropriate and subject to continuous improvement. The ongoing nature of this obligation means that the department's oversight is also ongoing and that its powers of inspection and intervention will be available at any time, not just at the time of registration or registration renewal. The bill builds on work already undertaken by this government to strengthen quality and safety in our healthcare system.

Since January this year Safer Care Victoria has been overseeing quality and safety across our healthcare system and ensuring that best practice initiatives are shared among providers. This has been an enormously important additional safeguard. The Victorian Agency for Health Information was also established earlier this year and is playing an important role in ensuring that the government has the information it needs to identify quality and safety concerns and of course to respond quickly to them. There is still more work to be done, and further legislative reform will take place in due course. I should also add that we are supporting these reforms with significant investment. In the last budget we committed \$215 million to the implementation of quality and safety reforms. This is in addition to the almost \$17 million we invested in the 2016–17 financial year to drive down avoidable harm in our hospitals.

In concluding my contribution I want to reflect on the Andrews government's record on health policy and its investment in our healthcare system, which is in stark contrast to the record of those opposite during their time in government. In our first budget we invested an additional \$1.38 billion in our health system. In our second budget we invested a further record \$1.63 billion, and this included Australia's largest ever one-off elective surgery boost. In our third budget we invested another \$1.67 billion, including new funding to help hospitals respond to family violence. This kind of investment — this prioritisation of health investment — is why Labor is synonymous with health care. It is why the community trusts us to be better than the alternative on health matters.

I said that our investment is in stark contrast to the former Liberal government, and I have outlined the billions in additional funding we have provided to our healthcare system so that Victorians can access the best health care at the most difficult times in their lives. Let me highlight that contrast. The Liberals cut \$1 billion from our healthcare system — \$1 billion — and they wasted no time in doing it. Let me be clear: they wasted no time in doing it. David Davis, from the Council, was the Minister for Health for only 21 days before he took an axe to the system. We know that during his first three weeks in the job he spent his time working out how he could gut the system he was in charge of. Absolutely disgraceful.

Now I should add that investment has paid off with tangible outcomes. Our elective surgery waiting lists have been slashed. Under the Liberals, these waiting lists blew out to their worst levels ever. We have ended the ambulance crisis, we have implemented reform and we have improved response times. In fact we have delivered the best ambulance response times in seven years. Those opposite are envious. That is why you hear them tittering at the moment. This is in stark contrast to the Liberals, who delivered the worst ambulance response times in mainland Australia. This is before I get to our record investment in ambulance services — our provision of 450 new paramedics and six new super response centres and our upgrades or rebuilds of ambulance branches around the state, including one in my electorate.

We have also been bold and forward thinking. We have made history by being the first Australian state to legislate to provide access to medicinal cannabis for people in exceptional circumstances. We have opened the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. We have legislated nurse-to-patient ratios to protect patient safety. We legislated a no jab, no play policy at kindergartens and childcare centres to protect Victorian children. We have launched the first 12 supercare pharmacies, open 24/7. We have continued construction of the new Monash Children's Hospital and have reintroduced the rooftop helipad and mental health unit that the former government removed from the project.

We have a very strong record on investment in health care. We are very proud of that record, and so we should be. This bill continues that record of investment in health care.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I rise today to add my contribution to the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. As has been outlined by previous speakers, this bill is largely in response to the

horrific news that we had of a cluster of perinatal deaths that occurred at Djerriwarrah Health Services in 2013 and 2014. At the outset I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the families who were involved in those deaths. It is obviously deeply harrowing not only to lose a child but then to find out that there may have been some negligence in terms of the type of care that was delivered at the time. More specifically, some of the issues related to quality, safety and governance within the health service are of deep concern, and I do offer my sympathies to the families involved in the perinatal deaths.

When we look at this bill there are elements that will improve quality and safety in our health sector. However, I have deep concerns around some elements of the legislation, in particular around the mandatory terms for board members. These are issues that I have raised directly with the health minister. It has been extremely disappointing for the hospitals, the small rural health services and their board members and CEOs that they have been unable to get a direct response to these concerns raised with the minister. They have fallen on deaf ears. It appears that there is this idea that we are going to have improved quality and safety, but there is complete neglect of the concerns that are currently being raised that elements of this bill may actually directly damage and deteriorate governance, particularly in small health services in rural Victoria.

When we look at some of the issues around attracting board members to a health service or to other public sector entities in rural Victoria, it is extremely difficult to do so. We know that this bill does bring in some compensation for board members, which I believe is well overdue and will be welcomed. Up until this point it has been a voluntary position. There is a limited pool in rural communities. As will be known in this chamber, I was the previous CEO of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital. We had a fantastic board — all volunteers — who put in an enormous amount of time, energy and commitment to improve health services in that region. It was about the copious amount of paperwork that they would have to read and their health literacy, as well as being able to identify people in the community who had the relevant skills to be good governors of a health service — whether they had a business background, a financial background, legal background or links to clinical elements. These people knew what they were talking about. They could provide good insight, and they certainly provided the strategic direction and vision that we required in a community like Edenhope.

Edenhope is a lot different to the health services that are delivered in Bacchus Marsh. It is a lot different to the

health services that you see delivered in metropolitan Melbourne. It is a lot different to Ballarat, it is a lot different to bush nursing centres and it is a lot different to what you see even in Horsham at Wimmera Health Care Group. We cannot have one-size-fits-all policy when it comes to governance because we are simply going to end up with a poorer quality of board member. Currently there is a trend that when board members are first appointed to a hospital board they are given a one-year term. This is basically a 'try before you buy' time frame. If we look at having a mandatory maximum three-year term, we could potentially have a group of people who are serving a maximum of seven years on a board of management.

Hospitals are extremely complex beasts. Their funding comes from many, many different buckets. You need to look at the types of risks you are managing in terms of handling the delivery of different types of patient care — aged care as well as acute care, surgery and maybe some antenatal services. When you are looking at developing GP services, disability services and allied health services, it is extraordinarily complex, and it takes more than five years to get your head around it.

To think that we are going to have board members, including board chairs, who have had a maximum of six years service is frankly astonishing. I cannot understand why the health minister has not identified that we are creating an enormous risk for small rural health services if we are going to have this mandatory three-year term for board members. I can only suspect that this is a move by Labor to force amalgamations of small rural health services by stealth.

There is no doubt we have got a limited pool of people that we can draw upon to appoint as board members for a small rural health service. This is for a number of reasons. Not everyone wants to serve as a board member. People in rural areas are overcommitted already through their voluntary contributions in the community, whether it is in the local footy and netball club, the school council, Rotary, Apex or Lions clubs, or as a valued volunteer with the CFA, an organisation which this government seems to neglect as well. These people are overcommitted. There are very, very few people in the community we can pull from. We will find that not enough people will apply for these boards. There is no doubt that Labor have set down the path towards forcing amalgamations and taking that local community input away from our rural communities, and that is just plain wrong.

I would like to share some of the feedback that I have received from local board members and CEOs regarding their concerns about these forced

amalgamations by stealth that Labor are putting in place. Owen Stephens, CEO at Casterton Memorial Hospital, in an email to me said that his key concerns are that small communities do not have transient populations and therefore have longer term board members. This is natural; we just do not have this constant churn of people to move through. He said that developing a drive-in, drive-out mentality for a board of management will not contribute to the structure of small communities with reduced physical, financial and social input, which leads to reduced overall community health outcomes. He also identified that there has been no board or local community consultation by the Department of Health and Human Services and the government on this directive. It is of deep concern that this government has not asked small rural health services, which will be impacted the most, about what might happen in the future if board tenures are reduced to three terms. Owen also noted:

The limited tenure to nine years in a small community will make it nearly impossible over time for that healthcare facility to attract persons that are required by the department and so over time the DHHS will force amalgamations or takeovers.

It is clear that people in rural Victoria in health services can see the writing on the wall.

I also note that Kathryn Hausler, a board member for Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, wrote:

It takes several years to get a good understanding of this role and we are concerned that the proposed time limit a member can serve means that all that experience, training and knowledge can be very quickly lost. Should this legislation be passed this will leave our board with seven members of which four are serving in their first term.

Labor are already impacting on the governance of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital.

Annie Osborn, who used to work at the hospital and was a fantastic team leader in the hostel, wrote:

The first proposal being a restriction on the term that a board member can serve with their health service. As a board member serving my first term, I am gradually gaining confidence, knowledge and an understanding of my role by mentoring from my senior board members. In a small rural community it is difficult to attract board members with suitable skills to work in an honorary position with such a huge responsibility. Several current long-serving board members would be affected; therefore our service would be losing their wealth of knowledge and experience. I firmly believe that the time for board members to serve should be extended.

I have also heard similar points from Christine McCann and David Kennedy of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, and I thank them for their input.

It is clear that the Premier has no respect for our voluntary board members. He recently had a trip to Edenhope planned. He agreed that he would hand out service certificates to employees, but refused to hand out certificates to board members, which is appalling. He pulled out of that, unfortunately. He said he was fogged in; there was no fog in the air in Edenhope at the time. Apparently he did not like the idea that the CFA might greet him in Edenhope. It is just more neglect by Labor of our rural health services. This is nothing more than a push by Labor to force amalgamations of our small rural health services, forcing a decline in the services that are delivered. I note that the Premier, when he was Minister for Health, refused to offer any governance training for our board members outside of Melbourne. There is no increased training for governance in our rural and regional areas. If this government were serious about improving health services and improving governance in rural Victoria, they would not go ahead with this mandatory three-term limit. They would increase training for governance in rural areas.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — I am delighted to speak on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. I listened with interest to the member for Lowan's contribution. I have not lived in a rural or remote area, so I will make that concession and acknowledge that point. But an observation I would like to share with the member for Lowan — I have served on not-for-profit boards in the past — is that you have always got to be careful on two points. One is that there is an inherent risk that if people are not refreshed and regularly changed over, a board could become quite stale. The second point I would make is in relation to the notion of cognitive capture, which is when you populate a board just with people with experience in that particular field, that it does not necessarily lead to the best decision-making processes. Sometimes you need to have people who have got a different perspective, who will make different observations and who will look at an issue with a pair of fresh eyes. I sometimes think that can lead to better decision-making processes.

Certainly when I was president of Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) probably two-thirds of the board did not have a background in early childhood development, and we were a really good board. We had some really strong people who had not worked in the field but brought their own perspective, skills, drive and focus to the job at hand. They supported those members of the board who had that experience in the sector and they supported management as well.

I do concede the point that the field of candidates in a metropolitan setting would be greater than in a remote

or rural setting, but I would caution the member for Lowan about some of these other issues. I think you can also find a situation —

Ms Kealy interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) — The member for Lowan is not in her place.

Mr PEARSON — I would also say that some of the not-for-profits I saw that sometimes struggled with the challenges of modern, contemporary society were heavily populated with people who had been on those boards for decades. I do not necessarily think that having a board whose members stay there ad infinitum is doing the individuals themselves or the organisation any good. Certainly one of the changes I shepherded through when we changed the constitution of ELAA was mandatory board retirement, because I felt it was important that you refresh things. I appreciate the fact that the member for Lowan knows her electorate far better than I ever will, and I concede that point, but I think it is worth highlighting and addressing some of the issues that the member chose to raise in her contribution from the point of view of being mindful and cognisant of the fact that these things change.

As the member for Dandenong indicated in her contribution, this bill enacts the reforms of the Duckett review in terms of the tragedy that occurred at Djerriwarrh Health Services. The tragic impact that a family experiences through losing a child is profound. I had an older brother who died from a birth defect when he was two days old. He was my parents' firstborn child. He would have been two years older than me. The profound impact that had on my family growing up and the impact it has today on my parents has reverberated down the decades. My parents would concede that they would have much rather lost my older brother when he was two days old than lose him subsequently. It was a birth defect where it became apparent that he would not survive, and my mother became aware of this set of circumstances late in her pregnancy.

I cannot imagine for a moment the tragedy and the trauma that a family experience when they fully expect that they are going to give birth to a healthy child and that does not eventuate. I cannot imagine the trauma and the agony that those families, those parents, experience.

I think to my personal experiences as a father. With my firstborn we were very fortunate. We were at the Royal Women's Hospital, and there were some complications later in the birth. It was really interesting, because I was very focused and in the moment. It was not until the latter stages when I saw that the room was full of

healthcare professionals that I thought something might not be quite right. There is that momentary fear that passes through you. But in my case I was immediately comforted and reassured by the fact that we were in the Royal Women's Hospital, and I knew that we were going to get the very best of care. I knew that any challenges that we — my wife and I as soon-to-be parents — would confront would be well addressed by the quality of care that we received. Thankfully everything worked out well, and my eldest girl will turn 13 years old next year. She is a wonderful girl, so I am very lucky.

But you do think about these things, and you think about what could have happened. For many of these parents the trauma they have experienced warrants intervention. It warrants government action. I commend Stephen Duckett for the work that he has done. I understand that 57 of the recommendations that he made have now been implemented. I think it is about making sure that we provide a better quality of care for people. It is a basic right — that if you are expecting to give birth to a child, you get the best quality of care that you can, any matters are addressed appropriately and you get the support you need. What we saw at Djerriwarrh clearly showed that this was not the case. So when you are confronted with these sets of circumstances you must act. You cannot just pretend they did not happen. You cannot try and sweep them under the carpet. You must respond to and deal with these matters, and the bill before the house does that.

By providing a greater level of transparency and exposure on the quality of care, you look to improve the way in which those services can be discharged. I know that in India there is a hospital that is well renowned for hip replacements. The reason why it is so well renowned is because they do so many; they have become very efficient, and so they perform hip replacements really well. I think that looking at having a greater level of transparency and exposure about best practice and good behaviour and providing the best quality of care is vitally important.

For everyone who goes to the Royal Women's Hospital and has a good experience, that experience should be replicated across the state as best we can, and when there are lessons to be learned and learnings to be had, it is important that we bring those to account.

The bill addresses a number of issues in terms of stronger leadership, the quality and safety of health services and engaging clinicians in system improvement and oversight. Again I think that ensuring you have a greater level of improvement and oversight is really important. It is also about making sure that

there is appropriate governance in place to ensure that the board has a clear line of sight in terms of what is happening inside an organisation. So the bill before the house is significant —

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Mr Merlino — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek your urgent advice on a matter of grave privilege. I have received two letters from lawyers acting on behalf of Mr Antonio Madafferi demanding that I immediately retract statements regarding the dealings between the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Madafferi, to apologise and to pay their lawyers money. Speaker, I ask that you urgently investigate this matter, because Melbourne is not 1920s Chicago and it is imperative that those who stand for justice call out organised crime and those that seek to profit from their activities. I can assure all Victorians that I will not be silenced. I will not be intimidated by the Leader of the Opposition or his organised crime mates. I seek leave to table these letters.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. The procedure for raising matters of privilege is set out in *Rulings from the Chair*, and I will seek to meet with the Deputy Premier following question time to discuss that matter with him. There is no ability for members to table documents, but the member can make them available to the house if he wishes.

Mr Merlino — I am happy to make these letters available to the house.

The SPEAKER — Thank you.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Before calling questions I wish to welcome a delegation of MPs from Myanmar to the Parliament.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and
MINISTERS STATEMENTS**

Parole conditions

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. When Karen Chetcuti's murderer, Michael Cardamone, was granted parole in July 2015 it was a condition of the parole order that he wear a GPS-monitored ankle bracelet. However, when he murdered Karen Chetcuti his parole order had been varied so he was no longer required to wear such a bracelet. Premier, with Karen's mother and two friends here in the gallery today, can you tell them when and why this parole order was varied?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Firstly, let me say this is a terrible tragedy, and not only are our sympathies with the family and those involved in this horrific set of circumstances, but our action is there as well to support that family and also to make the necessary change to make it less likely that such a terrible event could occur in the future. As to the specifics of the case, the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, subject to the laws at that time, would have made a decision to vary those conditions. I do not have the details of that decision in front of me, and I cannot provide any further information on those specifics. I simply do not have that information to hand.

What I will say is that we are making significant reform in this area and we are determined to deliver on the commitments that we have made. Notwithstanding our strong support for victims of crime, notwithstanding the fact that we are recruiting more police, notwithstanding the seriousness of this issue, I might just reflect that I wonder whether when the Leader of the Opposition is speaking to victims of crime he lets them know who he dines with, who he takes money from —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. I will not have members on either side of the house shouting across the chamber.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I have not interjected on the Premier and I have not commented on the Premier's answer. For the Premier to refer to political matters when —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Government members will come to order. The members for Bentleigh and Yuroke are warned.

Mr Guy — When Karen Chetcuti's mother and friends are in the gallery and I have asked the Premier a straightforward question — I respect that he has said that he will get information; I understand that — and the Premier then makes a political matter out of what is seeking basic information on someone's circumstance, I ask you to bring him back simply to responding to a very straightforward question.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier has been directly relevant to the question that the Leader of the Opposition has asked. These are not political matters. Every victim of crime deserves to know who the Leader of the Opposition dines with and

who he takes money from. Organised crime are the instigators of victims of crime.

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

Mr Hodgett — On the point of order, Speaker, I ask you to uphold the Leader of the Opposition's point of order. Karen's mother and family are here today. The Premier was answering the question, but I ask him to continue to answer the question rather than use this as an opportunity to attack the Leader of the Opposition. I think it is absolutely disgraceful in the circumstances of this question. We are happy to have the rough and tumble of Parliament, but to actually use the opportunity of this question and the serious nature of this question I find absolutely appalling, and it is a disgrace.

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

Mr ANDREWS — As I was saying, the government has made significant commitments around reform in this area, and I am sure all honourable members would be encouraged to learn that there are half as many people on parole today as in previous years. What is more, we have seen a massive reduction in the number of serious offences being committed by those on parole. That does not for a moment though ease the pain and the grief of those who have been victims of crime committed by parolees. That is why we will continue to deliver the reform that we have committed to, that is why we will continue to support victims of crime, and that is why we will continue to support Victoria Police in recruiting additional numbers with the best of technology, with the best of equipment and with the strongest powers to fight crime and keep our community safe.

That is our story. We are very straight about it. We will continue, and we will not be diverted from that important work. If there is anything I can add, I will be pleased to do so. If there is additional support that can be provided to this family or any other family, the government stands ready to provide that support, consistent with its record, in an open and transparent way.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The members for Ringwood and Yan Yean are warned.

Supplementary question

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — A key consideration in determining whether to grant parole is the availability of suitable accommodation that enables

authorities to closely monitor the behaviour of the offender. Yet Cardamone, a convicted rapist, when released on parole in July 2015, was allowed to live in a town with no police station, 33 kilometres from his parole supervisor in Wangaratta. Premier, given we know that Cardamone had already breached parole twice for drug and child pornography offences, how often was he required to report to his parole supervisor, and how many other times did he fail to comply with his parole conditions?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — The first point I will make is that there have been substantial changes to the law since that time. That is an important point and a matter of fact. As to the detail that the Leader of the Opposition seeks, I am not sure whether the Leader of the Opposition or the Attorney-General in the previous government or any minister could be expected to have the file in front of them. I am happy to seek further information. Those matters are rightly the property and the decision of the adult parole board against the laws written at that time — laws that I am proud to say have been changed. The matters that the Leader of the Opposition raises — the grief and the anguish of this family — are all too real and serious, and I will follow up and write to him if there is anything further I can do. If the family is in need of further support, we stand ready to provide that support, consistent with the work that we have done as a government to date.

Ministers statements: Land 400 project

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — It is with pleasure that I rise to update the house —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — I thought the member for Warrandyte had something to say, but —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS — Really? You have forfeited the right to lecture anyone. The Leader of the Opposition has forfeited the right to lecture anybody on crime or community safety. That is what you have forfeited: the right to lecture anyone on crime. You pretend to care about victims when you take money from the people who make them victims. But I have not risen to point out the galloping hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition and the fraudulent way in which he pretends to support victims —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Premier will resume his seat. Before calling the member for Box Hill on a

point of order, I warn the member for Warrandyte not to direct the Chair.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask all members to show the courtesy that the member on his feet deserves.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier may have lost control of his temper, but that is no excuse for his behaviour. I ask you to bring him back to compliance with sessional orders.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the Premier has every right to be angry on behalf of those victims that come as a result of the behaviour of the organised crime identities this man associates with.

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

Mr Walsh — Further on the point of order, Speaker, the victims of John Setka's crime, when he has been convicted, equally deserve respect from the Premier.

The SPEAKER — Order! That is not a point of order. I ask the Premier to come back to making a ministers statement.

Mr ANDREWS — I rose to update the house on the very exciting news that the Australian Army's biggest military vehicle contract will, if successful, deliver thousands of additional jobs to the Victorian manufacturing sector. Last week I joined with the Minister for Industry and Employment and state and federal colleagues from all sides of the political divide at the former Holden site down at Fishermans Bend to announce that the government had strongly supported BAE Systems' bid for this Land 400 project, one that in the next stage is estimated to be worth around \$5 billion. Subsequent stages could be worth as much as \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

The key message today is that we would call upon the federal government — hopefully in a bipartisan sense — to back the home of auto manufacturing in our nation, to back the skills and innovation of the Victorian workforce, strongly supported by the Victorian government, and to get this job done here in Melbourne and across Victoria, adding thousands of jobs directly through the supply chain. We are absolutely capable and ready to deliver this in a first-class way.

Energy prices

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Victorian energy prices have never been so high in the 19-year history of the national electricity market, according to Global-Roam analyst Paul McArdle. The Australian Energy Council has stated that the increase in Victoria's power prices has been due to the impact of the Hazelwood power station's closure in addition to state government policies like increased renewable energy targets, increased brown coal royalties and an expanded Victorian energy efficiency scheme. Minister, can you guarantee that on 1 January 2018, when new energy rates are published, power prices for Victorian families will not be going up further?

Mr Foley interjected.

The SPEAKER — The Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing is warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for Caulfield for his question. It has only taken 984 days for this question. I am very delighted to have this question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Essendon is warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — But, gee, how quickly they move off the topic of crime when it becomes a little bit hot for them in the kitchen. When it gets really hot for them in the kitchen when it comes to crime they cannot focus. I am absolutely delighted to have this question from the member for Caulfield.

But let us be absolutely clear about this. They are Johnny-come-latelies when it comes to energy prices and energy costs. Really, for four years they have done nothing. But let me be absolutely clear about what the solutions are. The solutions are in front of us, and our government is getting on with delivering on those solutions. The fact is that in a market where we have reduced supply, energy prices go up. So what is the answer for this? More supply.

The SPEAKER — The member for Gembrook and the member for Bass! The member for Burwood is warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — That is why the Business Council of Australia, that is why the National Farmers Federation and that is why all of the welfare groups are

saying to Malcolm Turnbull, 'Let's get on with a clean energy target'. A clean energy target as identified by Alan Finkel —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The minister will resume her seat. In case the members for Bass and Gembrook did not hear over the shouting, I have warned those two members as well.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. The question was specifically: will prices be going up any further after January 2018 — yes or no and how much? We do not want a history lesson; we want to know: will prices be going up any further after January 2018? I think Victorian taxpayers have the right to know that answer.

The SPEAKER — I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — It is absolutely very clear. I would rather have the evidence from a real professor, Alan Finkel, rather than a so-called adjunct professor. The fact is this: the Australian Energy Market Commission has made it absolutely clear: after the increase in prices as a result of the closure of Hazelwood, power prices will start to come down. Guess what for? As we now have renewable energy coming onto supply, energy prices will start to come down as more supply comes into the market.

I am absolutely proud that our government is committed to not just growing more energy supply for our market, which will actually see decreasing energy prices for business and households but will also create more than 10 000 jobs for Victorians right across our state. Our Victorian renewable energy target will ensure that we will have more supply coming into our market and of course will be growing more jobs for every single Victorian who will be involved in the supply chain — 11 000 jobs that those opposite have already declared that they will oppose by opposing a Victorian renewable energy target. Those people have no idea. They have got no commitment. Their only policies will lead to an increase in prices for every single consumer —

The SPEAKER — Order! A point of order; the minister will resume her seat.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — and will actually negate 11 000 jobs for regional Victorians. Regional Victorians —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not need the assistance of members screaming across the chamber.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, first of all the minister has been treating you and the Chair with contempt after you have called her to order. My original point of order was that the minister was debating the question. I believe she should be held to account on both aspects.

The SPEAKER — The minister did come back to answering the question and has again strayed. I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I am absolutely delighted that this government knows what it will take to actually reduce prices for consumers, large and small. Our Victorian renewable energy targets will ensure that we have more supply coming into the market, reducing prices. It is only a pity that those opposite — including the member for Ripon, who does not understand the value of jobs for her regional community — oppose the Victorian renewable energy market.

Supplementary question

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — I am glad the minister clarified that prices will be coming down after January 2018. We will be waiting with bated breath to see if that is the case.

Minister, Essential Services Commission figures show that 12 700 Victorian households had their power disconnected from January to March this year. That is 2000 more homes than in 2016. How many additional Victorian families have had their power turned off since March this year and are now forced to spend their time shivering in the cold because of the failure of your government's policies to keep energy prices affordable?

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Frankston is warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — Let me be absolutely crystal clear. Not one person's disconnection from power usage is supported by this government; we do not support anyone being disconnected unfairly. Our policy is absolutely clear. When we came to government we had a very clear commitment to undertake an inquiry into —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will resume her seat. I will not have people shouted down in the chamber. The minister to continue.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — We made an absolute commitment when we came into government that we would undertake a review into the hardship practices of energy retailers. That review is underway right now. We also have a review into energy retail margins. The fact is that energy prices were growing under the previous government and they did nothing about it. Now they are coming back more than 900 days later, since they lost government, to say they are suddenly caring about energy prices. Our government is committed —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was very clear, and that was: how many people have been forced to spend winter shivering in the cold? I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. We specifically need to know how many people are going to have their power turned off under this government.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is being responsive to the question, but I ask the minister to conclude her answer.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I beg your pardon. We do not do crooked things over here. Maybe you do. Our government's commitment is to actually get the solutions. We are looking forward to the hardship review coming down. We are also looking forward to the review into the retail margins so we can actually start to address more readily those price increases.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister has concluded her answer.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer you to sessional order 9.2 —

Mr Richardson interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Mordialloc is warned.

Mr R. Smith — The question that was asked was: how many people have had their power disconnected since March? There is no reading, no interpretation, of the minister's answer that could possibly be construed as answering that question. I ask you to direct her to provide a written response to the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will consider that matter and report back to the house.

An honourable member interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have made a ruling.

Ministers statements: drug trafficking

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — I rise to update the house on the work that the government and Victoria Police are doing to reduce the harm of drug trafficking in our community. We know about the harm that drugs do in our community. We see it in the emergency wards of our hospitals. We see it in roadside trauma. We see the impact of ice and drug use on children and families in family violence and child protection rates. We see police officers who are exposed to huge harm when they take down drug-affected offenders. Our drug task force and our specialist police squads are having a huge impact on drug trafficking in this state, with recent operations leading to the seizure of 980 kilograms of crystal meth, an equivalent of 9.8 million street deals; 23 000 cannabis plants; and nearly 30 000 litres of chemicals needed to manufacture GHB, which means an equivalent of 580 000 street deals off the street.

We know that serious and organised crime networks are responsible for perpetrating this harm on Victorians — significant harm. We have seen one recently; the case of the tomato tin drug haul is an example of that. Frank Madafferi was the self-styled leader of that drug trafficking operation in Melbourne. He was taken down in a joint Australian Federal Police and Victoria Police operation and is in jail, but not before his brother Tony donated to the Liberal Party, and not before the Liberal Party intervened and overturned a deportation order on this known criminal, a decision condemned by the United Nations top authority on drug enforcement.

When it comes to drugs and organised crime you have a choice: you can choose this government, which will bring in new drug trafficking laws and provide new police and new capacity, and you can back Victoria Police, or you can choose the Leader of the Opposition, breaking bread or cracking the lobster shell and drinking expensive —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now proceeding to debate the issue. Apart from the obligations of sessional order 7, I ask you to bring her back to compliance.

The SPEAKER — I ask the minister to come back to making a ministers statement.

Ms NEVILLE — Speaker, we know organised crime is a critical factor in drug trafficking. We back Victoria Police.

Energy prices

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. On 3 November last year the Premier told Victorians power price rises resulting from Hazelwood's closure would be more in the order of 4 per cent, yet on 1 May this year Mooroopna's Gouge Linen and Garment Services, which employ 150 people, were forced to pay a 272 per cent increase in their power prices. Minister, given the Premier was wrong to the tune of 268 per cent, what do you have to say to the employees of Gouge, whose jobs are now threatened by power bills that the company is struggling to pay?

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for the question. There has been a lot of debate, no doubt, about the causes of price increases when it comes to energy for many, many months now. The facts speak for themselves. Two-thirds of our domestic gas is being exported to places overseas. Gas is a source for electricity. Those people do not understand the energy market. Energy is made up of electricity —

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the question was very clear: why is there a 268 per cent difference between what the Premier said power prices would go up and what Gouge is actually having to pay? I would ask you to bring the minister back to actually answering that question.

The SPEAKER — I rule that the minister is being relevant to the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — The fact remains that there are a number of contributing factors when it comes to what makes up a power bill: the cost of supply, the cost of generation, the cost of distribution and the cost of retailing. The problem is this — and it is absolutely clear — two-thirds of our gas is being exported to markets outside our country. Gas is a fuel to make electricity. We know and all the evidence tells us —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — I cannot hear the minister's answer over the shouting. I will remove members from the chamber without warning.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — There is two-thirds of our gas that is allowed to be exported by the friend of those opposite, Malcolm Turnbull, who is too weak to impose the necessary controls on our domestic gas market. When you have two-thirds of our gas going overseas the supply of gas becomes tighter in this —

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the leader of the National Party's question was: what the minister had to say to the employees at Gouge in Mooroopna, which employs 150 people. The energy minister is talking about a utility that runs through a pipe; the question was about one that comes down a pole. If she cannot get her utilities right, maybe she wants to try answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is being relevant to the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — The economics really do befuddle those opposite. They do not understand Economics 101 and how the energy market operates. We are responding as a government to helping businesses tackle their energy price rises. The fact is that if Malcolm Turnbull does not do it, we will. That is why we have put aside \$90 million, \$50 million of which will go towards assisting businesses that are struggling under increases in energy prices, thanks to Malcolm Turnbull's failed policy in terms of energy. We will continue to do that.

Also, I am delighted that today AGL have announced a new import terminal for gas brought into Crib Point in Victoria. This is a project that our government has been working on closely with AGL to actually bring more supply into our market and push down the cost of energy for every single consumer, every single business and every single householder in Victoria.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, again I refer you to sessional order 9(2). You heard the question, you heard the answer. The question was: what did the minister have to say to the employees of Gouge? I ask you once again: have you heard the question and heard the answer here in this house for the rest of us to make a ruling on whether the minister should be supplying a written response to the house?

The SPEAKER — I rule the member was responsive.

Supplementary question

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — Obviously the minister has got no respect for the jobs that she is putting at risk. Minister, as a laundry Gouge also uses gas, and they have been forced to pay a 168 per cent

increase in their gas prices which, together with their power price increase, equates to a \$300 000 increase in the energy costs for this family business. Minister, do businesses like Gouge actually have to be forced to shut their doors before you will do something about the energy crisis that is crippling regional Victoria?

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — Our concerns for businesses are absolutely clear for everyone to know. We went to the Council of Australian Governments energy meeting with a very clear plan — a much better plan than Malcolm Turnbull had — to actually put proper controls on energy gas exports. The fact remains —

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, I asked the minister about what her government is doing, not what Malcolm Turnbull's government is doing. This is about Victorian Andrews government policy that is crippling Victorian businesses and going to cost jobs. I ask you to bring the minister back to actually answering the question about what her government is going to do with their rotten policies.

The SPEAKER — The minister has only been answering for a short period of time, albeit she only has 1 minute to answer this supplementary. I ask the minister to answer the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — Thanks very much, Speaker, but it looks like the lobster is not appealing to those opposite. It must be repeating on them, I think, but the fact is that it is only our government that is defending the interests of business in this state. I welcome Brown Gouge to come and approach the government because we actually have a whole range of measures and a whole range of assistance packages to help them with their energy bills. But let us be clear about this: our government is working hard to bring more supply into the market — more supply in terms of electricity — that will actually put downward pressure for all consumers. This is an important point. We will continue to advocate to Malcolm Turnbull to actually do the right thing by gas consumers.

Ministers statements: racing integrity commissioner

Mr PAKULA (Minister for Racing) — I rise to update the house on attempts by this government to ensure that racing authorities have the tools they need in the fight against organised crime. Until 2015 the racing integrity commissioner, Sal Perna, was able to access critical information relating to historical

telecommunications data to assist in the conduct of major investigations, but in 2015 the Turnbull government removed that power from the racing integrity commissioner as part of the changes to the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979. That amendment has limited the ability of the commissioner to fulfil his functions.

I have raised those concerns with Senator Brandis in person and in writing in November 2015 and 2016, and in April this year Mr Perna made a compelling submission to the Attorney-General's department, clearly detailing the critical importance of that power in reducing the influence of organised crime. However, the federal Liberal government has refused to return those powers to the racing integrity commissioner. It is doubly concerning because the commissioner shares information with the Chief Commissioner of Police, and that forms the basis for protecting the integrity of racing via the chief commissioner's power to exclude individuals from racetracks. That racetrack exclusion power is rarely used. It is very important, and it is particularly used when there is evidence of organised criminal activity. To put it simply: the sort of people who are the subject of exclusion orders are not the sort of people you would be sitting down to dinner with.

I urge the federal government to return those powers, and I urge those opposite to support it, even if it costs them a few dollars.

Energy prices

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Last year the Premier and you both said that the closure of Hazelwood would see power bills rise by just 85 cents per week, yet the St Vincent de Paul Society has found that the average power bill will rise by almost seven times that amount. Minister, why did you brazenly mislead Victorians about the energy price impact of the Hazelwood power station? Here is a hint, Minister: we are talking about Hazelwood, which generates electricity, not gas.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for his question. The facts remain very clear, and anyone who understands the way that the energy market operates knows there are a number of contributing factors to price increases. Certainly, of course, with the closure of Hazelwood there was to be a price increase as a result of that, and the St Vincent de Paul Society's report — as did many other reports, including the Australian Energy Market Commission's — pointed to the fact that there are

many contributing factors that go to this. The fact remains that the clear answer to this is that the more supply that comes into the electricity market, the cheaper the bills will be.

Perhaps those opposite need to listen to the National Farmers Federation. Perhaps they need to listen to the Business Council of Australia when they make it absolutely clear that we need a clean energy target, which those opposite are failing to support and are failing to encourage Malcolm Turnbull to actually commit to. We need more energy supply to come into the market. Our government is committed to growing renewable energy in Victoria to see those prices come down.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. The question specifically is why did she mislead Victorians about the impact of energy prices? We heard that the price would only be 85 cents a week under her government and the Premier. We have heard that it is seven times that amount. Please bring the minister back to answering the question, not the mumbo jumbo that we are hearing from the minister.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister has been responsive and relevant to the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — I would have thought that the member opposite in his 984 days would have actually gone away to actually learn about the energy market and energy system. Obviously he is far away from graduating as a professor — far away. I do not know that you are any closer to graduating as a professor, but the fact remains —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, you have instructed the minister to come back to answering the question. Instead she is proceeding to debate it. I again ask you to instruct her to come back to answering the question.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I fail to see how the member's point of order can possibly be upheld. Indeed he could not have even heard a word the minister was saying, given the shouting and screaming that is going on from those opposite in their desperate attempts to deflect attention away from their compromised Leader of the Opposition. I ask you to allow the minister to continue to answer the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I had ruled previously that the minister was responsive and relevant to the question, although I now find the minister is straying from the question. I ask her to come back to answering the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — It is only our government that has a very clear plan to help bring down prices for everybody. That is the fact. The fact is we are focusing on fixing up the energy market, unlike those opposite, whose only market they care about is the fruit and veg markets. Perhaps they would like a taste of the trevally with the underbelly.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, you have previously given guidance to the minister to come back to answering the question. She is again departing from your ruling, and I ask you to bring her back again to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — The minister has concluded her answer.

Supplementary question

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — Minister, analysis from energy consultancy company Global-Roam says that under your government Victorian wholesale power prices have more than doubled, up 238 per cent. Minister, is it not a fact that this is the greatest single electricity price increase in the last two years in any state of Australia and is threatening jobs, closing businesses and hurting families?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask the member for South-West Coast to cease shouting across the chamber.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for the supplementary question. These are very challenging times, and that is absolutely the case that we do not shy away from as a government.

Mr Angus interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Forest Hill will leave the chamber for the period of half an hour.

Honourable member for Forest Hill withdrew from chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! It was no mistake, let me tell you. The minister to continue.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — It takes a mature government — one that is committed to taking action — to actually help businesses and consumers to reduce their energy costs. This is our government's

commitment. Our government's commitment is to grow the supply of energy which would put downward pressure on energy prices. It is also about assisting AGL to develop up their new import terminal facility to see the reduction of —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. The question specifically asks: are these increases in power prices threatening jobs, closing businesses and hurting families — yes or no?

The SPEAKER — The minister has been responsive to the question. She has strayed. I ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — We know that these are challenging times, as I made it absolutely clear. This is why our government is working hand in hand with businesses, our government is working hand in hand with consumers, small and large, to help them meet the energy cost challenge.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Ripon has been warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — We are absolutely committed to keep working with AGL to bring in their gas import terminal facility —

Ms Staley interjected.

The SPEAKER — The member for Ripon will leave the chamber for the period of half an hour.

Honourable member for Ripon withdrew from chamber.

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, just on relevance again. The minister referred to bringing on AGL to actually tackle the cost-of-living pressures. This new announcement is two years away from coming on stream. I am sure that those people experiencing power prices are not going to be happy about that answer.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. The minister has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: illegal firearms

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — I rise today to update the house in relation to what Victoria Police and the government are doing in relation to illegal firearm trafficking. If we have a look at the Lindt cafe siege and the Brighton siege, we can see the harm

illegal firearms can cause in our community. They are being used to enable radicalised individuals to inflict great harm and trauma in our community. Because we know how dangerous they are, the government is getting on with giving Victoria Police additional resources targeted at this — new laws, things like shooting-at-building laws, trafficking of weapons and search powers — and we have backed in Victoria Police with new resources for the armed crime squad that is targeting network and organised crime.

The armed crime squad are working closely with Taskforce Echo, the national antigang squad, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Crime Commission, seizing hundreds of illegal firearms, arresting offenders and stripping millions of dollars off organised crime through crime restraining orders.

In terms of disruption and enforcement activities, police deliberately target organised crime. That is where these firearms are coming from. Organised crime figures have no regard and no compassion for victims, who are damaged by their illegal firearm trade. When you sit down with organised crime figures who peddle illegal firearms, you are sending a very clear message. It is not a message about how we protect community safety and it is not a law and order message; it is a message that says that greed and profit is what it is all about. Backing these organised crime figures who are peddling these illegal firearms is sending a very strong message: greed and profit come first. I would again ask the Leader of the Opposition to tell us has he really done nothing wrong in giving credence —

Mr Clark — On a point of order, the minister is now departing from the requirements of making a ministers statement. She is proceeding to debate the issues and transgress standing orders. I ask you to bring her back to compliance.

The SPEAKER — The minister has concluded her statement.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — The member for Bentleigh and the member for Sunbury will leave the chamber for the period of 30 minutes.

Honourable members for Bentleigh and Sunbury withdrew from chamber.

Energy supply

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate

Change. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) stated in their latest energy supply outlook —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members will come to order. The member for Yuroke is warned.

Mr SOUTHWICK — The Australian Energy Market Operator stated in their latest energy supply outlook:

Following the closure of Hazelwood power station ... AEMO expects Victoria to become a net importer of electricity.

Yet, Minister, you recently told the estimates hearing that Victoria will remain a net exporter of electricity. Do you stand by your comments, and who advised you that the national energy market operator was wrong, or did you just make this up?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Macedon is warned. Government members will come to order. The Minister for Tourism and Major Events! The member for Yuroke has been warned. The member for Yan Yean has been warned.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — The Member for Caulfield is absolutely wrong. I recommend that he goes back to school to learn how economics works and how a market works. This is how an energy market operates and this goes directly to the anticipations and the reports of the Australian Energy Market Operator.

We have a national electricity market. In a national electricity market, a market knows no borders in terms of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, all with which Victoria is connected. The fact is this: a market works in this way. They go and source the electricity from the cheapest source at any particular point in time. It will sometimes be cheaper — and this is actually good for consumers — to access electricity from New South Wales. It may sometimes be cheaper to access electricity from Tasmania. It may sometimes be cheaper to access electricity from South Australia.

Most of the time it is actually cheaper for Victorians to source their own electricity from right here in Victoria. It will absolutely get better as more supply comes into the market thanks to our government's —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. It was very simple: are AEMO wrong or are they right? Is Victoria going to be a net exporter or a net importer?

We do not need an energy lesson; we need the economic facts. I ask the minister to specifically answer the question: a net importer or a net exporter?

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister was being responsive to the question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Burwood will leave the chamber for the period of 30 minutes.

Honourable member for Burwood withdrew from chamber.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — The Australian Energy Market Commission has made it absolutely clear that after the closure of Hazelwood, Victoria would have sufficient power to meet its own needs. The Australian Energy Market Operator's report that the member for Caulfield is referring to is about a market mechanism which is about the market going to the cheapest form of energy at any particular point in time; it is not about total supply. Victoria, according to the Australian Energy Market Operator, will continue to say, as of today, Victoria will generate more than sufficient energy and electricity to meet its own domestic needs.

Supplementary question

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) — Rod Sims, Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), said:

... four generators control 90 per cent of the market, so with the Hazelwood closure as soon as Hazelwood closes prices just shot up ...

On the same day Alan Kohler said on the ABC that while South Australia's electricity prices are now the highest in Australia, it is Victoria's prices that have increased the most in the past 12 months. Minister, how many more respected experts will it take before you admit that your harmful energy policies and massive energy price increases are damaging Victorian businesses and hurting families?

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) — I thank the member for the supplementary question. The fact is this: there are a number of issues that contribute to the price of electricity and there are a number of factors that contribute to the price of gas. The Australian Energy Market Operator, the Australian Energy Market Commission and Alan Finkel — can I say, in his panel report — all make it absolutely clear that the price and the cost of electricity is also being contributed to

because of the supply of gas problems that we have got in this country. When you have got two-thirds of your gas being allowed to leave this country by a failed federal government, you will see a shortage of gas supply to actually assist the electricity market —

Mr Southwick — On a point of order, Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. The minister keeps reverting to gas. I do not know whether she is on laughing gas, but can we ask the minister to come back to answering the question? This is specifically about electricity prices. It is about the closure of Hazelwood. Could the minister please answer: how many more Victorian families and businesses will be struggling due to the policies of the government?

The SPEAKER — The minister is to continue answering the question. Before the minister starts, I just ask the member for South-West Coast not to shout across the chamber. It makes it very hard to hear the minister's answer.

Ms D'AMBROSIO — Speaker, how do we make electricity? We make electricity by using coal, we make electricity by using gas and we make electricity by using renewable energy supplies. There are a whole range of fuels that go into making electricity. If they do not understand that on the other side, God help us, because consumers in Victoria will only get a dud.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, in relation to the minister's answer to the substantive question, I invite you to determine that her answer was not responsive. The issue of responsiveness is different to that of relevance. The minister may have been relevant in talking about energy, but she was not responsive to the question of whether Victoria was a net importer or net exporter of electricity, which is what the question was about. I ask you to examine the record and conclude that she should provide a written response.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, the minister was responsive and her answer was relevant to the question that was asked. We all know that the member for Caulfield would not be getting up today if it was not for those opposite not wanting to debate crime and not wanting to talk about law and order, because the credibility of those opposite is in complete tatters.

The SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. That is not a debate on the point of order. I will consider that matter after question time. I noted down a broad question at the end of the member for Caulfield's question, but I will not rule on that matter right now; I will take that on notice.

Ministers statements: youth crime prevention

Ms NEVILLE (Minister for Police) — Although they may have moved on from talking about community safety, we are focused completely on ensuring our community is safe. I want to update the house today on what we are doing and what Victoria Police are doing to disrupt some of our networked youth offenders and stop the harm that they are causing. We know that this networked offending has caused great harm to Victorians in their homes and in businesses, and there is absolutely no place for it in our community.

That is why we are introducing tough new laws, new powers, new resources and a record investment in new police officers in Victoria. These new laws are all about tackling and disrupting this crime. We have put more resources into the anti-gangs division in Victoria Police. We are focused on identifying and arresting gang leaders and violent young offenders. These operations have been set up to address networked offending, carjackings and home invasions, which we know are having a significant impact on victims.

Victoria Police have been successful in arresting over 730 of these networked youth offenders, but through the work of the gang squad and using intelligence it is absolutely clear that there are a number of these youth offenders who are undertaking these crimes at the behest of serious and organised crime networks. It is incumbent on public leaders to call out and disrupt this aspect of organised crime. We owe it to the victims to do everything we can on this issue. You do that by introducing into Parliament new laws, tougher measures, longer sentencing and laws against presumption against bail for these serious criminals. Fagin's Law is in the upper house, and we need it voted on by those opposite. But you cannot do this when you are sitting down, drinking with organised crime figures with your hand out for the money that they have stolen from victims. To all those over there saying that the opposition leader has done nothing wrong: really?

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Ms McLeish — On a point of order, Speaker, with regard to outstanding answers to constituency questions, both of which were directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety — and I am fairly sure I have raised this with you previously — for question 12 914, asked on 9 May, three months have lapsed since that question was asked, without a response. Also for question 12 839, asked on 21 June, it has been seven weeks since I asked that question. I would greatly appreciate it if you could follow up with the minister for roads to get a response.

The SPEAKER — I will do that.

Bayswater electorate

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — (12 940) My constituency question is to the Minister for Planning, and I ask: when — on which specific date and at what time — will you come to meet the residents concerned about the potential redevelopment of the Boronia Heights College, Mount View Road campus, site? This was closed in December 2014 after the Liberal-Nationals government had built a beautiful new P-12 school. Solid, reusable buildings fell victim to vandals, thanks to Labor government inaction, and were consequently demolished.

It is a site with valuable open space and is of significant ecological value. The 2015 Knox housing strategy identifies that the site could cater for 25 dwellings. Rumours are surfacing that there may be as many as 853 dwellings proposed. These rumours must never turn into reality. The site is now listed as part of the Victorian government's Inclusionary Housing pilot program, which will allow higher densities. The process is being fast-tracked, which means the minister could make the decision to override current overlays.

Residents want and deserve answers. I asked for a meeting in an adjournment matter on 6 June, but the minister's reply failed to provide a date. So I ask again: when will he meet with my community?

Dandenong electorate

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — (12 941) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. I ask the minister: what are the time lines for the rebuild of the Dandenong ambulance station? I recently visited the station and met with a number of paramedics there. They are both excited and eager to enjoy a new and improved facility.

Gippsland South electorate

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — (12 942) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public Transport. I ask: what is the government doing to plan to improve the Gippsland rail service's access to the Pakenham to Southern Cross corridor? As the minister would be aware, Gippsland line trains are regularly halted or slowed down dramatically once they hit Pakenham due to stopping-all-stations Metro services, causing major delays to Gippsland passengers. The regional rail project gave dedicated access to Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo but completely ignored

Gippsland, which means that the delays caused by Metro continue.

I am conscious of community efforts to return rail to Leongatha as well. While I do not believe that is viable at the moment, it cannot proceed at all unless there are more slots available on the Cranbourne-Pakenham line. With rapid growth continuing throughout the south-eastern suburbs of Cranbourne and Clyde, with more people commuting, even in my electorate from places such as Nyora, Loch and Korumburra, and with the prospect of a new commercial airport at Koo Wee Rup, we must plan for the future. The government's sky rail plans significantly hinder any proposal for a dedicated Gippsland line, so what other plans is the government making to fix this problem?

Niddrie electorate

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie) — (12 943) My constituency question is to the Minister for Police. I ask: how many additional police will be deployed in the Moonee Valley police service area as part of the Andrews Labor government's commitment to recruit an additional 3135 police? As a local MP and also as the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, I want to make sure our police have all the resources they need to protect our community, which is why I had the police minister visit the Avondale Heights police station on 29 March to meet with local command and Neighbourhood Watch representatives. As a government, we are delivering 3135 additional police over the next five years at a cost of over \$2 billion, and I want to make sure the Niddrie electorate and the Moonee Valley police service area gets its fair share.

Brighton electorate

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — (12 944) My question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The background to this question is the recently released redevelopment concept plan for public housing in New Street, Brighton. The main feature of that plan is a nine-storey development. Will the minister rule out a nine-storey development, possibly containing 385 units, in an area that is grossly unsuited to this type of outrageous redevelopment? Whilst I am sympathetic to the idea of having improved public housing, I am not sympathetic at all to such a gross overdevelopment of this particular site. The North Brighton Residents Action Group have written to the minister on multiple occasions, and I would urge him to read that correspondence. They have raised a range of questions about the government's public housing renewal program, and I hope he responds to them in full.

Essendon electorate

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — (12 945) I direct my constituency question to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask: what is the latest information about weed eradication along the lower reaches of the Maribyrnong River in the state district of Essendon? It would also be remiss of me not to use this opportunity to acknowledge the fantastic work that Judy Ingram and the Friends of the Maribyrnong Valley perform in rehabilitating and rejuvenating the valley.

Melbourne electorate

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — (12 946) My question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. Will the minister make the evaluation of the Kensington redevelopment and urban communities limited (place management) model report that the government commissioned in 2011 publicly available? The government has been touting the redevelopments in Carlton and Kensington as the reason why we should hand public land on housing estates in my electorate and other areas to private developers. In fact, research by academics at the University of Melbourne indicates that the private-public mix model in Carlton did not result in better social outcomes and in fact led to huge profits for developers. We really do not know whether the government’s plan worked on the Kensington estates or not, because the evaluation report written on this issue was not released by the government. I believe my constituents have a right to see that report.

Yan Yean electorate

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — (12 947) My question is to the Minister for Sport. What is the investment by the Andrews Labor government in football clubs, particularly for the growing number of women and girls playing at Hurstbridge? Will there be further investment to support the participation of women and girls in football and netball for the Hurstbridge Football and Netball Club to encourage these most popular of games in my electorate?

Bass electorate

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — (12 948) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. A reply I received on 26 July to a question regarding the level crossing and road congestion in Pakenham clearly illustrates the minister has either no understanding of her portfolio or a complete disregard for the Pakenham community. I will address this issue once more. What is the minister’s plan for the level crossings in Pakenham and the

Pakenham railway station? An increase in capacity on the line will result in boom gates at Cardinia, McGregor and Racecourse roads being down for long periods of times. The congestion at these crossings is already a real problem. To add to the problem, we now have the new depot being built to the east of Pakenham, which is planned to stable 30 of the new trains.

One of the significant problems for train arrivals and departures at Pakenham is integrating V/Line trains into the movement of trains at Pakenham station. Boom gates being down is presently being experienced whilst V/Line trains and metropolitan trains arrive at and depart from Pakenham. An increase in train movements at Pakenham will be a disaster unless the minister has a plan for the level crossings in Pakenham and a rail and platform design to cope with the change. So I ask again: what is the minister’s plan for the railway network in Pakenham?

Bendigo West electorate

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) — (12 949) My consistency question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. I ask the minister to indicate what measures are being taken to address and prevent homelessness in regional communities like Bendigo. We know that homelessness affects over 100 000 Australians, with one in five sleeping rough on the streets. There are many reasons why people become and remain homeless. This week being Homelessness Week, it is important to note that homelessness is not an issue that affects only people in the metropolitan areas and that those experiencing homelessness come from all walks of life, both male and female, from all races, ages and cultural backgrounds — homelessness does not discriminate. I would like to be advised by the minister on what actions are being taken in my electorate.

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to sessional order 10 in relation to questions on notice. I would like to raise an issue with you in relation to one asked by me to the Minister for Health on 20 June. It exceeds the 30-day requirement of sessional order 10, and I ask you to request that that be promptly provided.

The SPEAKER — Certainly, I will do that for the member of Ringwood.

Mr Pearson — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek your guidance on a matter. I listened intently to the member for Gippsland South’s constituency question, and he raised a question for the minister for transport. My understanding is that there is no minister for transport under the Andrews government. There is a Minister for Public Transport, so I am not sure

whether the question stands or whether it should be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER — I am loath to rule that question out of order, member for Essendon, but I take it that the question was directed to the Minister for Public Transport.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (QUALITY AND SAFETY) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — As I was saying prior to question time, the bill is a very important bill. Obviously there are some really serious issues that the bill seeks to tackle, but if you look at the broader objectives that the bill is trying to achieve, greater levels of transparency and oversight, and improving governance are really important. I know Professor Duckett produced a really good report for the Grattan Institute talking about the differences in procedures across different health services. There is a wide disparity between the cost and sometimes the quality of those procedures. I think where we can try to shine a light on various practices across the disparate health services — where we have got the ability to look very closely at what is best practice and to try and identify some of those outliers — that is a really important initiative.

The bill is a really important piece of legislation. It is a great tragedy that we find ourselves in this position where we have to bring forward a bill like this to this place, but it is really important that we try to ensure that parents and their newborn and soon-to-be-born babies are well cared for and have the very, very best quality of care available to them. On that brief note, I commend the bill to the house.

Ms RYALL (Ringwood) — I rise to speak on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017 and state from the outset that on this side of the house we do not oppose the bill. The bill essentially brings quality and safety to the forefront in the objectives of the Health Services Act 1988 and other health acts. It aims to strengthen the ability of the Minister for Health and Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services with regard to oversight of safety and quality in public health services. It looks at improving the governance arrangements for public hospitals and introduces a nine-year board term limit. It establishes the board of Better Care Victoria in legislation. It improves the safety and quality of health

service provision in Victoria, and that includes collecting better information, improving clinical governance structures and also giving the minister and the department further powers to respond to risks.

Specifically the bill is a response to the very tragic cluster of perinatal deaths at Djerriwarrh Health Services and the subsequent findings and recommendations of reviews and investigations into that. In March 2015 the Department of Health and Human Services was notified by the Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity of a cluster of perinatal deaths that occurred at Djerriwarrh Health Services in 2013 and 2014. Others have gone to the tragedy of these perhaps preventable — and in some ways identified as preventable — deaths. It is very, very tragic to lose a child under any circumstances, but then to find out that it may in fact have been preventable is absolutely devastating. Currently we have the *Art for the Heart* exhibition in Queen's Hall, brought to us by Tobin Brothers Funerals, which shows how people work out their grief through art. I noticed that some of the art pieces in that exhibition deal with the grief of losing a child, whether the child is stillborn or dies after birth.

The investigation into perinatal outcomes at Djerriwarrh Health Services was conducted by Professor Euan Wallace. There were seven avoidable or potentially avoidable deaths as a result of what were determined to be clinical governance failures. A further review was undertaken of the management by the Department of Health and Human Services of a critical issue at Djerriwarrh Health Services in November 2015. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care undertook that review and found that within the department there were identified areas where there was inadequate capacity or oversight to identify risks. Further, *Targeting Zero*, the report of the review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria, which was conducted by Dr Stephen Duckett, made recommendations on how quality and safety in the Victorian health services could be strengthened to prevent a similar tragedy. This legislation goes towards implementing some but not all of those recommendations, and I anticipate a further bill to that effect at a later date.

As a former health professional and someone who has worked significantly in management systems as a senior auditor of hospitals, small, medium and large, I have become very aware of the governance issues in hospitals. Having audited the management systems relating to governance structures, the operation of clinical and non-clinical services, data, review, analysis, risk management and then obviously through to

improvement, one of the things that you pick up when you do these sorts of reviews is the level of work and data collection that actually goes into providing all of the information that needs to be provided for a range of compliance obligations. The compliance obligations on our health services are extraordinary, because they are such complex organisations, and the more services they offer, the larger the compliance obligations are. It could be data and standards required by anything from the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care to the other accreditation bodies and services or the department requiring things of different services, be they non-clinical or clinical. So there is a lot of data provided and a lot of work done in the areas of quality and safety.

One thing that we have got to be very careful of when we impose more obligations is that we are not adding to the workload and actually taking away from the deliverables in terms of improving outcomes, because it is one thing to do paperwork but another thing to duplicate work because things are asked for by different compliance bodies in different ways, which therefore requires the organisation to report to many different bodies data that is similar but not exactly the same, which actually increases the workload. I know many, many health professionals, and certainly I have done work in consulting with hospitals throughout the country in this space, and one of the issues is the level of compliance obligations they have, the amount of reporting they have to do and the amount of evidence they have to create to demonstrate that they are in fact complying.

So we want to make sure that when we impose further obligations it is actually going to improve outcomes and not bog people down with further paperwork that actually duplicates or is a slight variation on what they already have, which actually increases their workload. That is not something we want to do. What we are about is making sure that outcomes get improved, that risks are adequately analysed, that root causes are evaluated and most certainly that the improvements that need to happen are made, but ultimately we need those improvements to be cemented in and then for further improvements to be made as time goes by.

My colleague the member for Lowan has identified her very significant concerns about the nine-year term limit for members of rural and regional hospital boards and the difficulty at times of locating people to serve on those boards. Certainly the turnover and the access to a number of people who might be considered for those positions is very different in major regional areas to metropolitan areas.

There is not a one-size-fits-all on these things, but we certainly we need to make sure that the processes and practices are in place for governance. It is not just oversight. They need to actually work their way through the organisation and then back as well and not get stuck in process, because getting things stuck in process is a problem in itself within some of our health services — that is, that the information is slow to be analysed and slow to be responded to. It is a concern, and it certainly is a concern in the situation at Bacchus Marsh, where an external body had to find the trend, albeit a couple of years later. That is a very significant concern. These trends should be identified at the hospital first and foremost, and that is where the analysis should be picked up very promptly. While it is good to have oversight bodies and it is good to strengthen the oversight bodies, we need to make sure that the systems within the hospitals are actually delivering as well.

The legislation in terms of making sure that board members are paid is important. It is also absolutely vital to make sure there is information that people need in order to do their jobs, whether it be at board level, clinical or non-clinical services levels.

One thing that I will raise in response to an earlier contribution is the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, which was actually built under our government. The top floor still remains empty, and treatment for 10 000 cancer patients is still absent. These are absolutely vital. We need to make sure that our service provision for hospitals and patients is a top order priority within the state.

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — Improving quality and safety is at the heart of these reforms. Victoria is internationally renowned for the quality of our health care, but no system is fail-safe. The requirement for continual improvement and vigilance was tragically highlighted by the catastrophic series of failures at Djerriwarrh Health Services, that led to preventable stillbirths or the deaths of newborn babies. This bill delivers on key recommendations from Dr Stephen Duckett's review into quality and safety in Victorian hospitals, and I am now informed that 57 of his recommendations have been implemented.

Dr Duckett's review identified inadequate oversight by the Djerriwarrh board as a contributing factor to that tragedy. In response this bill extends the quality and safety obligations that already apply to the boards of large public hospitals to the boards of small and medium size public hospitals. These are systemic changes in the public interest to improve care and potentially save lives.

There will be new board composition requirements, ensuring that the right mix of skills are represented, and all board members will be paid. This is a significant development and goes to the Andrews government's commitment and the commitment of the health minister that I applaud. These changes include for the first time that the board of directors of rural public hospitals will be able to be paid. Volunteers are highly regarded by the Andrews government, contrary to claims from the opposition. I know there have been considered views put forward by some opposition members, but I will be addressing some of the factual inaccuracies.

We know the value of volunteers, from everybody who knits outfits sold at the doors of hospitals, to people who visit chemotherapy patients, to volunteers who serve on boards. But this bill and the community demand more of our hospital boards. It is not fair to ask them to be volunteers any longer. I applaud the Andrews Labor government for professionalising boards in recognition of their roles and responsibilities.

This bill will limit public hospital board member tenure to nine years. For boards to effectively oversee hospital standards they must be independent of hospital staff. Boards should be dynamic and open to new ideas and perspectives. For these reasons Dr Duckett recommended, and the government is implementing, tenure limits. The tenure rules will be phased in to accommodate such change. During the proposed act's first three years, long tenure will be a factor considered by the minister when deciding whether to reappoint a board director, but it will not be determinative.

A person who has served nine years will still be eligible for reappointment. That is a critical point. After this the nine-year limit will apply. But if the circumstances require it, an exception may be made, so there is an opportunity there. A person may be extended beyond nine years if, for example, despite reasonable efforts no-one can be found with the crucial skills to serve on the board. These are like clinical skills, for example. That puts paid to the misinformation that has been put by the member for Lowan on how this will apply. That needs to be addressed, called out and put in a factual way on the record. The changes will not result in the termination of any current board member prior to the expiry of their term. The length of time served will be considered when board members reapply.

The bill also allows the government to crack down on dangerous and unregulated private providers, including cosmetic surgery facilities. I really want to emphasise those critical points. They should not be used in a misinformation campaign, because we have seen a pattern of behaviour on these from the opposition. The

Victorian opposition is trying to trump the government by propagating ignorance, by conning and manipulating voters. They are now extending their strategy from the law and order debate to health. The Victorian coalition does not offer positive responses. It is playing into echo chambers amplifying fear. Such a strategy betrays the public interest and undermines the political system. I just want to make sure that people understand the facts of the matter.

I am informed that, to correct another misrepresented proposition, more than 200 regional board members have received board training already. These reforms, let us be absolutely clear, come after a catastrophic failure that led to deaths. They are about strengthening boards and ensuring that they are more qualified, more independent, more professional and more effective. There is absolutely no reason that improving the quality of boards would result in increased amalgamations. That is the other false proposition that has been put in this debate today by the member for Lowan, and it should be dismissed. There is no foundation in this bill to make that claim.

This is the pattern of behaviour that I am calling out in the way that some members of the opposition are misrepresenting what the government is doing for base political purposes. I acknowledge that other members of the opposition have made considered contributions in this debate, but where this happens it needs to be addressed, called out and dismissed as the propaganda that it is; it is not the fact of the matter. I think it is important for this debate to have that on the record.

I want also to refer to what is going to happen with data and information. There is also an improvement here to help improve the quality and identify and act on any risk. This comes from the *Targeting Zero* strategy, which found that there were serious weaknesses in our capacity to know what is happening in health services. I want to quote from the report:

Information is the lifeblood of a continuously improving hospital system, and it is not flowing in Victoria.

This is an important reform to address that issue.

Multiple recommendations in the report relate to improving the collection, analysis, reporting and use of data. Many of these will be addressed through non-legislative means, and a number will be addressed in subsequent legislative changes once the many complex information-sharing and privacy matters have been thoroughly considered and resolved. This is one of the real advantages that we have in the Victorian state health system. If we can harness big data, get the analysis done right with the analytics and then look at

what are the systemic changes that can help, that will make a huge improvement to public health and to the recognition of Victoria as a world leader.

I say this from a medical research perspective as well, because it was one of the key assets that Vice-President Joe Biden acknowledged when he came to Melbourne for the opening of the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC), the billion-dollar jewel in our medical research crown. He recognised the value of the data that we have and the system that we have so that we can actually extract the key information that benefits health services and medical research. That is really the proposition about the VCCC and its contribution. It is of world renown, and our science and medical research is of the highest order and should be something that we celebrate and do not continuously try to take cheap shots at.

In summing up I just want to make sure that we have the facts on the record — that the Victorian government has not neglected boards as was stated by the member for Lowan. That has been addressed. The proposition that this could somehow damage governance — that is a false proposition. That has been addressed. The facts are clear; the understanding is there. False propositions should not become part of a scare campaign that is based on misinformation. They should be dismissed as propaganda because that is really what they represent. I am hoping to hear more considered responses to this bill, because of its importance, from opposition members. The Victorian government will be implementing further reforms to address these issues in the public interest.

Mr GIDLEY (Mount Waverley) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017, and I must say it is a bit concerning that the previous member, the member for Broadmeadows, spent nearly seven out of his 10 minutes almost obsessed with the strategy of the state opposition. But I guess that should not surprise us given how bereft this government's agenda is on health. It says all of it, does it not? As I mentioned, this bill is an important bill, and the opposition is not opposing it, but I certainly will be engaging in this broad debate — it has been a broad debate on health — and identifying just the travesties that this government is implementing in health in my district in Monash and in surrounding areas.

In relation to the specifics of this bill, I think the member for Lowan and others have quite eloquently outlined some of the concerns the opposition has with this bill, and it is a shame that those concerns do not seem to have been picked up by members of the government. I hope

that they are picked up. I hope there is not the usual head-in-the-sand approach from this government when there are very clear shortcomings pointed out on legislation or on agendas, and I hope that they do take those matters up, because it is an important aspect that this bill seeks to improve, obviously flowing from the *Report of an Investigation into Perinatal Outcomes at Djerriwarrh Health Services*, the review of the Department of Health and Human Services' management of a critical issue at that service in November 2015 and also *Targeting Zero: Supporting the Victorian Hospital System to Eliminate Avoidable Harm and Strengthen Quality of Care* — the report of the 2016 review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria. The bill seeks to pick up on a number of those areas, and they are very, very serious issues. They are very, very serious in terms of the impact that they could have on future patients, and we owe it as a Parliament to improve things in those areas as much as possible so that when tragedies occur, at the very least there can be a reflection on improvement in that.

In relation to health generally, health is such an important area for our community, whether or not it is for individual members here, whether or not it is for the communities that they represent, whether or not it is for families, friends or loved ones. That is why it would be remiss of me as the state member for Mount Waverley district, when we are discussing such an important issue of health, if it was not highlighted to the house, and again, that the attacks on health services in my area were not asked to be ceased by this government.

They are a number of different areas that concern me greatly about the approach of this government to health. The first one is obviously the stripping of the dedicated emergency department at Monash Children's Hospital by this government when it was elected, and at 5 minutes to midnight it has now finally confirmed that there will be a separate, segregated, dedicated paediatric emergency department. The government has acknowledged the importance of that, but Victorians should not have to wait till 2021. Victorians should not have had to wait for a segregated paediatric emergency department at the Monash Medical Centre. It is a no-brainer. It was very clearly articulated and committed to by the previous government, and it is such a shame that this government dragged its heels so much that Victorian children will miss out on that.

That segregation in emergency departments is really important because regardless of whether or not you have a segregated triage area, if you still have an emergency department area that is not segregated, children are exposed to risks in emergency departments that they should not be exposed to from adults. The

other aspect of course is this government's decision not to commit, when it was elected, to another no-brainer in Monash, and that was the helipad at Monash Children's. It was very clear — I refer specifically to a *Herald Sun* article of 19 January — that the previous government made an unequivocal commitment for a rooftop helipad at Monash Children's, which has quite clearly been picked up in that article, and this government, when it was elected, refused to do that.

I note that a spokesperson for the Minister for Health, Evelyn Ek, confirmed the removal of the helipad on 19 January 2015. I quote:

There are many worthwhile projects which deserve support and the Andrews Labor government will continue to work ... to improve health services ... including Monash Children's ...

But again there was no commitment to the helipad at that time. The same article confirmed:

... a rooftop helipad connected to an emergency department is not in current plans.

And the government, on being elected, refused to include that.

The words of a senior Victorian flight paramedic at the time are probably better than mine. He told the media that not having a land-based helipad could risk lives, and I quote:

They —

the government —

are going to spend a bucketload of money on the Junction Oval so people can play cricket, but not on a helipad for people having heart attacks ...

It just makes no sense.

That senior flight paramedic was exactly right. This government, on being elected, had rivers of gold. It had a strong budget surplus, it had a strong economy and it had well-managed finances. Rather than doing what they should have done, whether or not it was the member for Oakleigh or the member for Clarinda, the other members in Monash should have stood up for their community and said on day one, 'This helipad that was committed to by the previous Liberal-Nationals government must be delivered'. They stayed silent until 5 minutes to midnight when, under enormous pressure in the last budget, they started to put some funds up for the helipad. But it should never have been in doubt.

The government's health agenda gets worse outside Monash. Not only are taxes up 20 per cent but health services have clearly been overlooked. The Royal

Melbourne Hospital, for example, which is being held together with chicken wire, has not received the planning funding for an urgently needed redevelopment. That is of enormous concern because the Royal Melbourne Hospital is such an important hospital. In addition there is the ongoing saga of the Victorian Heart Hospital, which is going to hurt patients. I note that under this government the cost of the Victorian Heart Hospital is likely to blow out to \$600 million.

A government tender document has revealed that the true cost of this government's new Victorian Heart Hospital has blown out from the promised \$300 million to \$350 million to as much as \$600 million. Once again, and true to form, this government before the election made it clear that the heart hospital was supposed to be delivered at a cost to Victorians of around \$150 million by 2018. Almost three years later the first sod has not been turned, funding partners have not been found and the cost of the project has skyrocketed to \$600 million. What that means is that patients are going to miss out on services, because the government has not managed the heart hospital project correctly, either in the timing of it or in the funding of it. The cost of the heart hospital has gone from \$300 million to \$350 million to \$600 million on an election promise of \$150 million. But then this is the government and this is the Premier who told Peter Mitchell that there would be no new taxes and who gave a commitment to every Victorian, and repeated it at the Sky News people's forum, that they could rip up the east-west link without it costing any dough, which has been found to be yet another lie.

I turn now to the challenges of the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC). As many as 15 000 fewer cancer patients will be treated annually at the VCCC because of the Andrews Labor government. As of July this year, a year after opening, the 13th floor of the centre stands empty, and the Labor government has announced that the 8th floor cancer ward has been scrapped. The Premier's decision to slash 42 Peter Mac Private and now 32 Melbourne Health cancer beds from the VCCC has cost Victorians \$100 million so far and will mean that as many as 15 000 fewer cancer patients will be treated at the centre each year. There is no question that there are other health needs such as stroke patients needing dedicated and expanded facilities, but they should not come at the expense of cancer patients and other sick Victorians.

This government's track record is clear. It attacks and cuts health services for children and adults in Monash. Its members in Monash do not stand up for patients or for Victorians. It does it at Royal Melbourne Hospital

by cutting funding for planning for a redevelopment. It has done it at the VCCC. It has done it at the Victorian Heart Hospital. The great tragedy is that Victorian patients are far worse off as a result of this Victorian Labor government.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the minister for her work on this important bill, because it is about protecting the community. My community want to know that there are quality and safety measures in place to protect them, so my community welcomes this bill. They also rely heavily on our public health system, particularly low-income households, so to have systems in place where the quality and safety areas are covered adequately is really important to my constituents.

The reforms in the bill are designed to improve safety and quality in Victorian hospitals. The reforms will support objectives that were identified in *Report of the Review of Hospital Safety and Quality Assurance in Victoria*, such as committing to stronger leadership of quality and safety of health systems, engaging clinicians in system improvements and oversight, elevating quality and safety in health service governance, making better use of information to improve quality and identify and act on risk, and strengthening departmental oversight and regulation for safer care and quality improvement. The bill goes to the core of what ought to be the priority of our health services and hospitals so that they are safe.

As I said, my community in Geelong are particularly concerned that quality and safety are major considerations for government. Under the previous government underperforming health services were allowed to continue unsupported and unfunded, and quality and safety did not get the attention they deserve. By contrast, this government has put quality and safety at the heart of the healthcare reform agenda. We have many great nurses and doctors, cleaners, volunteers and support staff working to make sure that there is quality and safety provided within our health system. However, we have heard about the tragic loss of the newborn babies where an investigation was required, and my heart goes out to those families who have had to endure that loss. But as a result the bill delivers on key recommendations from Dr Stephen Duckett's report of the review into quality and safety in Victorian hospitals, 57 of which have already been implemented.

In response to the report the bill extends the quality and safety obligations that already apply to the boards of large public hospitals to the boards of small and

medium size public hospitals. There will be new composition requirements ensuring that the right mix of skills is represented on all boards. And all board members will be paid, including first-time board directors of rural public hospitals. Volunteers play such an integral role in our hospital and health services, and I think the idea of a fresh approach, with new ideas that are more reflective of our community needs, is a really important change that comes through in this bill. The new approach also gives boards the opportunity to ensure that there is more consideration of cultural issues in board appointments. The important thing is that board members will be paid, which is something that has not happened for all community health boards. The fact that they will be paid reflects the importance we place on the role that they play. In the past they have been volunteers and have spent their own time sitting on these boards and making important decisions, so the bill shows the respect that we have for those local community people by introducing paid board positions.

More than 200 regional board members have received board training. The member for Lowan was banging on about the lack of training for board members, but that is just not true; 200 board members have already received training. These reforms are about strengthening boards and ensuring that members are better qualified. There is no reason to believe that improving these boards will force amalgamations, which was proposed by the member for Lowan.

The changes will not result in the termination of any current board member prior to the expiry of their term, and length of term served will be considered when board members reapply. I think an important thing about the board members is that if there is a shortage of people to take on board roles, exemptions can be made. I understand that in some communities there may be a lack of appropriately skilled community members to step up, but the bill allows for an exemption to be made and a person's tenure may be extended beyond nine years, for example, if despite reasonable efforts no-one can be found with the crucial or clinical skills to serve on the board. So there is provision to cover those concerns expressed by the member for Lowan.

The bill also allows the government to crack down on dangerous and unregulated private providers, including cosmetic facilities. Of course we have all heard the tragic stories of victims of these unregulated clinics that provide cosmetic surgery but do not always achieve the best possible outcome for the patient. The bill will help protect the safety and quality of service that patients expect and deserve. At the moment, if surgery is less than 50 per cent of their activities, a cosmetic facility is not regulated. The bill closes that loophole, ensuring that

private providers meet quality and safety standards, even if the dangerous activity is a small part of their practice. I think we adequately cover those areas in the bill.

The bill also allows action in response to unsafe practices in the private healthcare sector by introducing an ongoing obligation on private services to be safe, appropriate and subject to continuous improvement. The bill will ensure that all public and private hospitals, regardless of size or location, are held to the same high standards of quality and safety. Victorians should have confidence in our healthcare system, no matter what part of it they come into contact with. Certainly in Geelong that is a real concern that my constituents have had in the past and therefore, as I said, they very much welcome this bill. The bill builds on work already undertaken by the Andrews Labor government to strengthen quality and safety and will contribute to the Victorian government's goal of zero avoidable harm, which of course is very important.

For the community in my electorate, ending the ambulance crisis, improving response times and ending the war with our paramedics has been a welcome change. This all relates to the quality and safety of our health services. We have increased ambulance services in Geelong to keep our community and paramedics safe. Again we have not just sat on our laurels and done nothing; we have actually made significant improvements in the electorate of Geelong by increasing the number of paramedics and improving ambulance response times as well.

We have been reducing hospital waiting lists and putting back the much-needed health services that were lost in the four years under those opposite. There were many health services within our community removed under the previous government which we have now been able to put back. Cancer care and gynaecology were two significant areas pulled out by those opposite that we have worked hard to put back into our health system.

Reducing waiting list times has had a significant impact in my community, and people are feeling much more confident in our health service in Geelong. But we have also legislated nurse and midwife ratios to ensure patient safety and to get this issue off the bargaining table. This is another huge issue that those opposite did not deal with and in fact worked against the brave nurses in our hospital system who work hard every day to provide safe care for patients in our hospitals, including Geelong hospital.

We secured a historic eight-year enterprise agreement with the nurses union to deliver wage justice. Again this is about ensuring that we look after those who are

looking after the most vulnerable. Our nurses are amazing people and do an amazing job, but of course we need to look after them. This bill ensures that management will look after them. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to make a contribution on the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill 2017. The Nationals in coalition are not opposing this bill. The purpose of the bill is to elevate the role of quality and safety in the objectives of the Health Services Act 1988 and other related acts; to strengthen the ability of the Minister for Health and secretary of the department to oversee the quality and safety of our public health services; to improve the governance arrangements for public hospitals; to introduce nine-year term limits; and to establish in legislation the Better Care Victoria Board.

The bill is intended to improve the safety and quality of health services provision in Victoria by collecting better information, improving clinical governance structures and increasing the power of the minister and the department to respond to risks. Specifically it is a response to the cluster deaths at Djerriwarrh Health Service. The findings are subject to review and recommendation. I think it is worthwhile to run through some of the reviews and recommendations that were needed.

I think we all know well enough what happened at Djerriwarrh in 2013 and 2014. There was a report on the investigation of perinatal outcomes at Djerriwarrh Health Services and there was a review of the Department of Health and Human Services' management of that critical issue at Djerriwarrh, resulting in Dr Stephen Duckett's *Targeting Zero*, the review of hospital safety and quality assurance, which is the basis of much of this legislation. The Duckett review talked about Better Care Victoria, Safer Care Victoria and the Victorian Agency for Health Information, so in those main provisions of the bill safety and quality are added to the objectives of those various acts.

Now we will go through and look at some of those issues in more detail. The maximum term for board members is three by three-year terms, except in exceptional circumstances such as skills shortage or board terms all expiring simultaneously. There has been considerable discussion around this issue, particularly by the member for Broadmeadows, but I think it is worth talking further about it, particularly in relation to the rural and regional health services which have local skills shortages. That can mean that the mandatory nine-year term will see experienced and expert board

members required to be replaced. The bill does provide for those exceptional circumstances.

I think there are some issues that arise here. Often in our rural areas we need to have people who have corporate knowledge, particularly as we are going through a period of change now where we need to be mindful of that corporate knowledge. A country health service will often be based on a multipurpose-style model. It will have aged care, which is a commonwealth responsibility, it will have a primary health arm and it will have an acute arm. It may even include an ambulance service.

These are complex issues that require a great deal of knowledge, and one of the concerns that I have, which has been expressed in my electorate, is that this maximum term of nine years was decided on quite early. Many boards are currently going through the process of appointing new directors, so a number of very experienced people who had been on boards for more than nine years have chosen to stand down. If suitable local replacements cannot be found, there is a concern that people may have to be imported from out of town to fill those board placements. This can improve a board, I agree, but it can also detract from it because these people are not as well connected with local communities.

Another issue is whether there is an exemption for CEOs. Some CEOs have a position on the board and stay on it for nine years. I hope that this issue has been taken into account, because according to the legislation if a CEO has been on a board for nine years, they will not be able to be present at board meetings or participate in the way that is statutorily required. These are some issues that need to be cleaned up or explained further.

I also have issues with the implementation of this legislation. Stakeholders believe that the quality and safety framework contained in this legislation is sound. The challenge will be in the department's implementation of the legislation and the extent to which the new requirements are not unnecessarily burdensome on health services but ensure that the patients benefit from the practical improvements. I want to know whether the additional requirements are going to be paid for by a budget enhancement for these health services or whether they going to have to come out of the existing health service budget.

Similarly, to return to the issue of the payment of board members, which I welcome: is that going to be provided by a budget enhancement or is it going to have to come out of the current budget of health services? If both of these have to come out of the

existing budget, then what we are trying to achieve is an improvement in health services by taking away some of the pool of money needed to provide those services. It is important for health services to know that, particularly country health services. They run on very tight budgets, and I think they have concerns about how this is going to be paid for — because how can they make improvements if their budget allocation is declining?

There is also the reporting burden. It is essential that this bill and the three new agencies it creates deliver the meaningful and practical improvements they are intended to deliver, because the workload of the health services will increase to meet the reporting requirements in the bill. We have to be sure that the ability to meet requirements to report to these agencies is covered in health services' budgets. Similarly, when advice comes back to a health service, sometimes it will be advice that can be covered by the health service's budget, but at times it will not be. There needs to be a line of supplementary funding to allow the implementation of this advice, because otherwise these services are going to end up borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, which may defeat some of these services. That is the concern that I have.

There is also the issue that of all of the additional data and powers that the bill allows for, only the guidelines issued by the minister to health services are required to be publicly reported. We need to make sure that all those powers, and how they are to be implemented, are understood by the public, otherwise we are going to end up with misunderstandings and misconceptions which will add to the load of health service boards, because boards are made up of local people who are asked about these things and need to explain them. The minister and the secretary can issue additional data requests, board composition requirements and guidelines that must be complied with. These will all be contained in regulations, so I urge that those regulations are made clear. One of the previous speakers, the member for Broadmeadows, said there was nothing to fear from this, but we do need to be sure that that is the case. We need reassurance around how this will be structured.

To finish where I started, we know this legislation is very necessary. The quality of care and the safety of patients should be paramount, but in doing this we must also make sure, with our workload and budgetary requirements, that we do not make this unnecessarily burdensome on health services, otherwise we will not achieve what we need to achieve and what we must achieve. As I said earlier, hospital budgets are extremely tight; therefore we need to make sure that

this is implemented without — to use a health term — undesirable side effects.

Briefly, on matters in my electorate, I know that Mildura Base Hospital is undergoing a review. I welcome that review, and I look forward to the findings being made available towards the end of this year or early next year, because this will allow people in the Mildura area to know whether the hospital can meet their needs. Mildura has a growing population as well as an ageing population, and it faces all the other epidemiological issues that are occurring. The legislation is framed with the best of intentions and a focus on quality, but if these are not matched by an appropriate budget response, then the purpose of this legislation will be defeated.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

Sitting suspended 12.59 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

BUDGET PAPERS 2017–18

Debate resumed from 22 June; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport):

That this house takes note of the 2017–2018 budget papers.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) — It gives me great pleasure to be standing here today to talk a little about the Andrews Labor government budget and the great news and the great work that is being done for residents of the Thomastown electorate. In fact I recently had to attend and speak at a function about some of the work that the Andrews Labor government has been doing, not just across the state but also within the Thomastown electorate. In order to prepare for that I organised a summary of the amount of money in terms of capital expenditure that has been spent by the Andrews Labor government in the last three years and compared that to the amount of money for capital expenditure, let alone for services, spent in the electorate by the previous Baillieu and Napthine Liberal governments.

I have to say I was as shocked as anybody else when I saw the figures. In four years of a Liberal state government there was about \$24 million in capital expenditure spent in the electorate of Thomastown, in comparison to, just over a three-year period, over \$320 million spent by the Andrews Labor government in the area to build roads and schools, improve hospitals and many, many other things that we all need in our areas to make our lives more pleasant and to give us

good standards of living. That was just a bit of an overall picture and, as I said, I was as shocked as anybody else when I talked about this incredible comparison — \$25 million over four years by the Liberal state government and \$320 million by an Andrews Labor government.

Of course there are a whole lot of other things happening. They have been promoted and targeted within the budget as well because it is not just about building things; it is also about services, and it is about using your time in government to actually try to influence and effect the really important things that people need and use and rely on in their lives. When you look at, for example, housing affordability, we have spoken on a bill that is another step that the Labor government is taking towards improving the affordability or access of people to purchase their own home — to bring that great Australian dream just a tiny bit closer to realisation. Of course we did say when debating that bill that it is very difficult for the state government to do things alone; we really do call on the federal government to support us, which could make a big impact in this area and make the difference in making homes affordable for everyday people.

Of course the state is using all the levers that it possibly can to make sure that we do our bit. Look at the budget we are talking about; for example, the abolition of stamp duty for first-time buyers so that our kids, the generation that comes after us, can have a better chance of being able to buy their own home and not have to rely on rental accommodation and all the insecurity, both financially and in terms of everyday life, that renting a property can often bring. We know that the newer estates and the newer suburbs that are in the Thomastown electorate such as Wollert and Epping North are areas there are a lot of young first-time buyers trying to enter the market. While house prices there are a little bit less than in some of the established areas, they also need that little bit extra, which is the stamp duty, to support them.

There is the Northern Hospital stage 2 inpatient expansion. The number of people going there has been growing exponentially, with the growing numbers of new families that are coming into the area, not just in Thomastown but of course throughout the northern region. It was well timed that the Northern Hospital required expansion. I am really pleased to say that through this budget \$162.7 million has been allocated to build a seven-storey tower for the hospital. That is going to expand inpatient services and will include 96 new beds, three new operating theatres and a whole lot of extra treatment rooms. It is going to reduce the

waiting lists that have been a problem for some time now, especially over the last five or six years.

There has been a lot of pressure on the operating theatres because there were not enough of them and the hospital just could not cope. In fact when the Labor government was first elected it had to fix up the mess that the Liberals had caused. We put money into such areas as the Broadmeadows hospital to build new theatres so that we could get on with our commitment to really cutting the waiting lists for elective surgery.

Of course we know that elective surgery is not just, 'I elect to do it', or a bit of a touch up here and there. Elective surgery is for things that are non-life-threatening, but a lot of people are in extreme pain, are unable to get around and have real restrictions on their mobility. They are on so-called elective surgery waiting lists, and these funding announcements and this work is going to make it so much easier for those people to go about their everyday lives.

We are also upgrading the Hume Freeway and O'Herns Road interchange. That is a program that we made an election commitment on, and the funding is there and has always been there. We have just been waiting on the federal government, who have tried to hold the residents of Thomastown to ransom basically by saying that they will not support that project unless some money is put into roads that really do not need to be developed.

We know that there are other issues in terms of traffic and problems. Funding is going to go into increasing the number of lanes on the ring-road. We know that that is now a serious consideration — in fact it is going to happen — but the first lot of money for the north-east link is being looked at right now.

Another issue that people in the area raised with me is the number of police that they see around the area. We know that the Labor government has put a lot of money into policing, including recruiting new and more police as well as providing resources around community safety and putting together a plan and a strategy. It has used all levers of government to look at making a real difference to people's lives by putting in place systems that will make people feel safer, whether it is in their homes, in their cars or walking down the street.

In the Victorian budget the state government has put a huge emphasis on education. We know that a good, solid education can really make a difference in a child's life. All the research and all the indicators show that if you have a good education and a good start in life, then you are more likely to do well for yourself in the future. You are able to support yourself and lead a life that

allows you to fully participate in all the things that come along.

In the last budget there was a commitment to Edgars Creek secondary college, and that is really flying along. We are going to be looking at opening that school in the third term of next year. That was funded in the last budget, but with this budget — moving on and continuing with education — the government has provided money to purchase further land for the Edgars Creek primary school that will then make that school a P–12 college. The idea of making sure that the secondary college part of the school precinct was built was because there was a huge lack of secondary schools in the newer part of the electorate. This not only meant that people had to travel a long way but also that when they were travelling they were travelling on very congested roads and were contributing to the congestion. It was very important to build that secondary school as a matter of urgency, and that is happening. Now in this budget, following on and building on from the supports for education in the area, we are seeing funding for the Edgars Creek primary school.

I was talking about crime before. We know that there are issues in terms of victims of crime and their problems and concerns. The Premier sat down, listened and heard from people who were either themselves victims of crime or had loved ones who were victims of crime, and he has dedicated money to help support people through the process and through the system. As we know, often people do not know where to go. There might be something available or there might not, but you never really know what is happening because you are not really sure of the process. This becomes very frustrating and makes people very angry.

We are doing all these things. There is also money in the budget for the removal of the O'Herns Road and Epping Road roundabout. This has been a sore point for people for many years. The roundabout creates kilometres of traffic jams along one of the main arterial roads in the Epping, Wollert and Thomastown area. It is great that this roundabout is going to be removed. There is funding allocated to allow that to happen.

In fact under the general VicRoads budget allocation we are seeing a whole lot of work happening. Residents have been contacting the office, saying they are amazed that finally things are happening. The Dalton Road roundabout is being removed and a lot of work is also being done on existing roads that are full of potholes, full of lumps and bumps and things that are causing problems to people's cars. This shows that the Labor government is really trying to invest in the

infrastructure that we all need as well as in the services that people need.

Another education issue was the Lalor Gardens Primary School. There is a bit of funding to continue to plan for the school hall that we are hoping will be coming out of the next and what will be the final budget in this term of the Andrews Labor government. People in the area are getting really excited about having a great basketball stadium, hopefully with netball courts as well, or a basketball and netball court, a sort of dual system that could be used not just by the students at the school but also by families and other community members around the area.

There is also further support for apprentices. We have invested a whole lot of money, as everybody knows, in the TAFE system to make sure that young people have opportunities. If they do not want to go to university, they can go to TAFE and become apprentices, they can do trades work and other cadetship work and traineeships.

When you look at all the infrastructure building that is going on — whether it is the Mernda rail or level crossings — these things keep coming. In every budget there is more money being put in to fund these things. I think a fantastic initiative is that we are saying to big companies that make millions and billions of dollars out of government contracts that they must have a social conscience, that 10 per cent of their workforce needs to be made up of apprentices so that opportunities are being given to young people for the future. We are also looking at those young people who may have other difficulties and disadvantages that mean it is more difficult for them to get employment. Government procurement programs and our big infrastructure programs assist in providing jobs for young people so that they can also have a bright future and hopefully one day own their own homes, as has been the dream for probably everybody in this chamber, except perhaps for some of the younger members of Parliament, and most people of our era.

All in all, when I have talked to residents of the electorate of Thomastown, they have been quite impressed at the work that has been done by the Andrews Labor government. They have even said to me, ‘This is what a real Labor government does’, and they have been really excited and looking to the future, saying, ‘Thomastown is going to be a really great place to live’.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — It seems a little bizarre to be here in August talking about the budget. I think it is fair to say, and I think the house would agree,

that we are probably the only ones still talking about this budget. It faded into obscurity pretty quickly after it was first released, despite the deluge of press releases that came as a result of it. Most Victorians would not really have seen any impact from the budget whatsoever, although maybe they are feeling the extra taxes that have been put forward by this budget. Other than that, I think people are still feeling unsafe in their beds at night, they are still stuck on roads and their power bills are still going through the roof. Really, the trials and tribulations that this government has brought on them still remain despite this budget coming down.

I have listened intently to many of the contributions by the government backbenchers, and I will give them some credit. Having sat through Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, I would say that the majority of the backbenchers know a hell of a lot more about this budget than the ministers do. If you were privileged to sit through the contribution of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety as he sat before the estimates committee, the lack of knowledge he had about his own portfolio was embarrassing. You would have to actively try not to know about your own portfolio to know it to the degree the minister did. The questions put to him induced copious amounts of sweating, breathlessness and a complete lack of understanding of what was happening. If it was not for department and agency heads sitting next to him, he would have been in all sorts of trouble.

To add to that, the Minister for Industry and Employment was asked how was he going to help the 17 per cent unemployment rate in Morwell, when the job losses from the Hazelwood closure are added in. He said they were putting an employment hub into Morwell — into Gippsland. That is an admirable thing to do, to put an employment hub in. But do you know when that employment hub is opening? In three years time. That is not going to be a great help to those people who are unemployed down in Morwell. He said it with a straight face too. They did not have a site for it, and it is not opening for three years. I am not entirely sure that that is going to be too much help for those who are unemployed down in the Gippsland area.

As I said, I have listened to the backbenchers. I have listened to the sycophantic euphoria that they exude as they talk about the budget and as they talk about the various things that this budget delivers to their electorates. But they do not understand the real issues that are going on. Take the wide-eyed naivety of the member for Sunbury: he thinks that this budget is going to help him retain his seat. The fact of the matter is that the biggest issue down in that area is the Sunbury out of Hume issue. The Premier and the member for Richmond

both promised, hand on heart, that when they got into government they would deliver Sunbury out of Hume. The residents of Sunbury will not forget, no matter what the member for Sunbury stands up in here and talks about. He will know that they do not forget.

The member for Oakleigh thinks that this is a good budget for him, but sky rail is going to make sure that that honourable member is a oncer in this place — there is no doubt about it. The introduction of this intrusive piece of infrastructure has drawn anger and ire. It is a 20-metre-high concrete monstrosity that is within metres of people's backyards, and they did not know one thing about it before the election — but the member for Oakleigh will certainly hear about it when the time comes.

Crime in various places, including the member for Frankston's electorate and the member for Cranbourne's electorate — and I could go on and on — is the biggest issue on people's minds in the state. Crimes such as carjackings and home invasions were unheard of before this government came to power. Now people do not feel safe in their own beds at night. Even Labor's own Minister for Police said that she understood this. There are, disappointingly, countless examples of victims who have had their homes invaded, and those home invasions are becoming more and more brazen and the acts of violence have been appalling. As the member for Mordialloc carries on, we can see that he, just like the Premier, has little regard for the victims who are traumatised by these home invasions and carjackings. People now put locks on the inside of their own bedrooms. They make a joke about it — this is typical of Labor, which is soft on crime — but this budget does nothing at all for the ongoing trauma that these victims are facing every single day.

Let me talk to you about the electorate of Warrandyte. We all know the Premier is a divisive, politically driven Premier. We all know that. I have been the member for the electorate of Warrandyte for the last three terms. In the last three budgets this government has barely delivered a cent to the electorate of Warrandyte — barely a cent. The reason for that is obviously a political one.

The Premier is a nasty, divisive — very divisive — man who insists that because it is a Liberal seat with a reasonable margin he will not give money to that seat. He is punishing the 42 000 voters in the electorate of Warrandyte, and their families, because he is politically driven. There are no two ways about it. There are other seats which are also held by Liberal members to which successive Labor budgets have not delivered a cent. As much as the Premier likes to talk the talk about being an inclusive Premier, a Premier for all Victorians, the

budget papers do not lie: there is no money in the budget for the good people of Warrandyte.

In the last term we saw money being given to schools, we saw money being given to the local police station and we saw money being given to the railway station. Taxpayers in the electorate of Warrandyte saw some value from the previous coalition government, but as I say, this is a nasty, divisive, politically driven Premier. Fortunately the good people of Warrandyte will have to wait only one more budget before they can finally get some relief from this divisive Premier.

I do want to bring up particularly the schools in my electorate — schools which did receive funding under the previous coalition government but which now, unfortunately, do not get a cent. I want to quote from an email sent to me by a student at Warrandyte High School — a school we promised \$4 million to. Labor scrapped that \$4 million of funding on coming to office.

Laura Moorfoot of Warrandyte High School writes:

... our toilets are outdated and in poor condition. Just some of the issues the toilets have are, no or little ventilation, walls painted dark colours, a lack of toilets actually attached to the wall, door hinges snapped off and out of use for the last eight years at least to our knowledge, poor drainage that leads to large puddles of questionable liquids on the floor that are always present in the toilets ...

This is of no regard at all to the government and of no regard to our divisive, politically driven Premier because, 'It's in a Liberal seat, so you get nothing, sorry!'. It does not matter that kids are going to school with rubbish on the floor and toilets falling apart. It does not matter one jot to these people, but it matters to the people of Warrandyte and it matters to me, and I will continue to advocate for money for our electorate and schools, because putting 'The Education State' on licence plates does not mean you are doing anything for education. As far as the people of Warrandyte are concerned, that is all the Education State has given them: a new licence plate with a new slogan, which actually means nothing. What this government has done for education could be written on the back of a post-it note, frankly. As far as the schools in Warrandyte are concerned, they are seeing nothing from this government, and they are certainly learning very quickly what a divisive and politically driven government this is.

I will now turn to the issues that pertain to my shadow portfolio — roads and infrastructure. Before the election there were a lot of shovel-ready roads ready to go. The Premier made a lot of commitments about shovel-ready projects. You would have thought that after the election in 2014 the diggers would have been

called in and that by now all the arterials would have been paved in gold, that all the traffic problems would have been gone, that you would have been sailing down Hoddle Street at 70 kilometres an hour every day, that getting to work would have been a breeze and that you would have knocked 15 minutes off your usual commute time. But the fact of the matter is that, again, this Premier deceived people when he said that these projects were shovel-ready.

What projects in relation to roads and in relation to dealing with the congestion that Melbourne motorists see every single day has this government implemented? They have made a hell of a lot of announcements and put a lot of press releases out there. We have had maybe six, seven or eight press releases about the West Gate distributor or the West Gate tunnel or the western distributor. They keep changing the name; I do not know why. The West Gate distributor was shovel-ready. Not a sod of earth has been turned and not a contract has been signed despite the myriad of press releases. This government has not even started that project. Every expert out there — the RACV, the tunnelling experts and the government's own hand-picked expert — have said that that project will not help congestion one bit. After throwing away \$1.2 billion in the scrapping of the east–west link, we are now looking at throwing \$5.5 billion of taxpayers money into a project that will not help ease congestion one bit. If that is the way this government in its very cavalier attitude treats taxpayers money, it is no wonder they will be out on their ear in November next year.

The north-east link — another project. As reported in the papers, prior to the last election the Premier as opposition leader said of this project, 'I do not support this project. There are plenty of other projects that are of more importance than this. I'm not supporting a project that will take 50 years to build and cost \$100 billion'. That is what he said. It is a project that will take 50 years to build and cost \$100 billion. I am not saying that under Labor that might not be the case, because they are not good with major projects — not on time and not on budget. It may well under Labor take 50 years and cost \$100 billion, but to turn around just three years later after spending \$1.2 billion of taxpayers money to scrap an important road project —

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — I can show you the press release. After scrapping Australia's biggest road project, they are now asking Victorians to trust them to build another big road project, and what have they done? They are considering routes that have not been on the table for years. What they are actually considering is putting an

elevated road through the seat of Eltham and putting roads through green wedge zones in the biggest act of environmental vandalism this state has ever seen. They are actively considering putting this road through green wedge areas.

Ms Ward interjected.

Mr R. SMITH — I do not even know what the member for Eltham is trying to say, frankly, but she had certainly better have something more convincing to tell her own constituents, because I tell you what, there is going to be a big fight out there, and she is going to feel the full force of what her own constituents actually think. I cannot believe that you would even consider such a project. The two major road projects in this budget — the north-east link and the Mordialloc bypass — are not going to be finished this term and they are not going to be finished next term but they might be finished the term after that. What the Premier is saying to people after scrapping the east–west link at a cost of \$1.2 billion is, 'Trust me to build these other two road projects. Don't just vote for me one more time to get these projects built; vote for me two more times to get these projects built. Trust me, I can deliver a road project'. Well, he may or may not be able to deliver a road project, but he certainly can spend money to scrap a road project.

This budget has delivered nothing to the electorate of Warrandyte. That is patently clear. It is in the budget papers in black and white that this divisive, nasty Premier cares nothing for the electorate of Warrandyte. It is very clear that he has no idea how to deal with the myriad of problems he has introduced to this state. Congestion is getting worse every day, crime is getting worse every day, power bills are going up every day — and there are cost-of-living issues for everyday people who look at these bills when they hit the kitchen table and cannot work out how to possibly pay them — and businesses are going under because energy costs are killing them. These are the sorts of issue that this government has so far, after three years, refused to deal with.

This budget also does not deal with these issues in any way, shape or form, and many of the issues that Victorians face every day and many of the issues that affect people's lives and their families every day this government has actually caused. They have caused power prices to go through the roof and they have caused this sense of fear by allowing this crime tsunami to spread over the state. The government has only got one year left to see their pre-election commitments become reality. Just like the rest of Victoria I have no faith that the next budget will do anything for us. I have no faith at

all, just like other Victorians, that the next 15 months will bring any relief. I look forward to this government being held to account in November next year.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017 take-note motion. The budget, I would submit to the house, is planning for growth, because Victoria is growing at a phenomenal rate of 2.2 per cent — the fastest growth rate in Australia. Between 2011 and 2016 Victoria’s population increased by 650 000 people, nearly 12 per cent. These are amazing figures. According to the recent census, Victoria grew by nearly 147 000 people in 2016 against a projected population increase a year of around about 100 000. We significantly exceeded what the predictions were. Growth is being driven by natural increases: more births and deaths, in the order of 43 000; with close to 18 000 people moving from interstate; and Victoria having an intake of around 74 000 people from overseas. Think about these two figures alone: 18 000 people moving from interstate and 74 000 people coming to Victoria from overseas. These are disproportionate increases in population compared to what you would normally expect to be our share —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — Minister, I will need to interrupt business for a moment. I understand that you may have already spoken on this bill on 22 June. Yes, it is in the minutes that you did speak on 22 June. I will need to call an opposition speaker.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — I rise to make a contribution to the take-note motion on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017.

Mr Wynne — On a point of order, I am seeking clarification of this ruling if I can.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — Minister, the ruling is that you are unable to speak twice on the bill, and according to *Hansard* — or the minutes — you spoke on 22 June on this bill. I will need to call an opposition speaker.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — I rise to make comments on the take-note motion on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. I do so in an extraordinary circumstance and in one that I am actually taking quite great delight because we saw yesterday the shambles in this place when the minister at the table, the Minister for Police, called a quorum in the middle of a matter of public importance, and then they failed for quite some time to bring members into the chamber. The Leader of the House was beside herself, darting around trying to round up members and direct them to get into the

chamber. Today we have had a minister of the Crown who has spoken on this previously, and with his —

Ms Thomson — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, given that we are on the take-note motion for the appropriations, I would have thought that the member for Eildon could at least commence actually discussing the budget that was presented to the Parliament.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — I appreciate that debate on the take-note motion is broad ranging, but I will ask the member to not stray too far from it.

Ms McLEISH — I was beginning with the extraordinary circumstances due to which I was on my feet so quickly with regard to the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017 because the minister has spoken previously and has tried to have a second go. It is really quite amusing and concerning that the government are in such a chaotic state of disarray.

We are in August, and this budget that we have before us was presented, according to my notes, way back in May, so we are months and months after the event. But it is a take-note motion, and I am taking note of the big-taxing, big-spending, strategy-lacking budget that was accompanied by loads of spin. The Andrews government is failing to deal with Victoria’s booming population. They have not got a population strategy. It is evident that there is limited investment in rural areas, and it is also evident that this government continues to be completely city-centric.

I want to begin by looking at something of vital importance in the country area — and it is of vital importance to all of us — the area of agriculture. We have lots of issues. In my electorate we have wild dogs and in the broader area there is fruit fly which is making its way down. We have deer. We have roads and rail projects that really need to deliver produce to the market and to ports. Our roads are in an ordinary state, and there has been very little done to address that.

Within the agriculture portfolio, one of the things that has been a big fear for some time was that with the creation of this super department, DEDJTR, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, agriculture was actually going to be lost. There was this risk that agriculture would be forgotten about because it did not have its own portfolio and its own department — and in fact it was lost. It has been neglected. The fears have become the reality.

I refer members to budget paper 3. You will see that there is actually a \$32 million cut in the agriculture budget. Everybody in a country area that is relying on agriculture is paying more taxes and getting much less in return — a \$32 million cut in the area of agriculture. We rely extensively on agriculture. We rely on it for our own food, to eat and survive, but it is also a major contributor to our export industry.

Regional development is another area that continues to be neglected. You have only got to ask anyone in country areas about what is happening in their patch to find that there are very few grants that are available. Community groups and towns that need to revamp, revitalise or rebuild infrastructure find that they have no support to do so. We know that regional development is certainly another area that has been neglected.

In the regions, as with our agricultural area, tourism is also extremely important. Table 1.12 in budget paper 3 refers to ‘putting Victoria on the map’, but I can tell you that in my area and in many other areas neglect of this issue is also having an impact. People are looking for support for local festivals. I know the Alexandra truck show was looking for some support, as was the Marysville blues festival and even the Kinglake bluegrass festival. Lots of areas have been looking for support to increase the patronage of their events — but not only that; they want people to visit to enjoy the area, stay in the hotels, go out and have a meal at night and have breakfast the next day. There is very little to support local tourism events. It is really disappointing that the one line in budget paper 3 that refers to putting Victoria on the map will absolutely fail Victoria.

I cannot go without saying that the neglect of country roads is again apparent. The brilliant program that the coalition had in government, the country roads and bridges program, was scrapped. We had been waiting each year for country roads funding to be ramped up, and one year we found that the country roads money was being spent in the Premier’s electorate of Mulgrave, absolutely throwing it in the face of those in country Victoria. More to the point, we have had the sale of the port of Melbourne lease for almost \$10 billion, which is a significant sum and a very good price for that asset, but 10 per cent of the sale proceeds were to be directed to rural and regional transport projects. So what you see is an absolute diddling of country people.

I refer to box 2 and table 3 on page 10 of budget paper 4. We see where this money is being spent. It is over \$1 billion. We have the regional rail revival, the Gippsland rail upgrade and periodic maintenance on the regional rail network — \$288 million. You would think

that periodic maintenance on the regional rail network would be paid out of an ongoing bucket of recurrent funding rather than being pulled out of the sale proceeds to try and appease country people and make them think that the government is actually spending money in our area. Sustaining the V/Line fleet is also listed. Seriously, it is an absolute insult to people in the country that the money that is being pulled out of the port of Melbourne sale proceeds, which are really meant to try and boost transport infrastructure projects in country Victoria, has done everything but that. I find that completely offensive, as I know many people in country areas do.

I want to now draw the house’s attention to education. Budget paper 3, page 59, table 1.15, records investment in education. There is \$64.1 million in there over the next four years. If you compare that to the same table in the previous year’s document, that was \$151 million, so there has been an \$87 million reduction in rural and regional school upgrade funding. Not only are regional and rural roads being neglected but regional and rural schools are being neglected. I know my schools could certainly do with a bit. In fact they could do with a lot.

I know Pantom Hill Primary School certainly is in need of some help, and Kangaroo Ground Primary School as well. I was out there only a month or two ago. St Andrews and Arthurs Creek — all of these small schools are in need of an injection of short-term funding to make sure that they can improve their facilities. In addition, in the Upper Yarra, an area that has also been neglected, we have Woori Yallock Primary School and Launching Place Primary School — large primary schools that are doing their absolute best. We know that Woori Yallock needs 40-kilometre zone flashing lights, and I know that recently there was a bit of a spate of those — but certainly not in my area in the Upper Yarra.

Mr Battin — They are all in the member for Monbulk’s electorate.

Ms McLEISH — Many have been in the member for Monbulk’s electorate. I will talk about the pork-barrelling there in a moment. I know that we made a pre-election commitment of \$1 million worth of upgrades at Woori Yallock Primary School, and it is certainly in need of work. I have been to Launching Place Primary School — I was principal for a day there — and I know firsthand some of the issues that they have and the money that they need. Hoddles Creek and Don Valley primary schools are both smaller, and they would really love a funding injection, as would Millwarra at Millgrove.

All the secondary schools surrounding the Upper Yarra Secondary College have had investments — Healesville and the ones in Lilydale; there are quite a host that have all had investments — but Upper Yarra Secondary College seems to continually miss out. I have been principal for a day there as well, and I know that they do need quite a bit of work.

I want to note the investment in the marginal seats. If you have a look at the investments in Monbulk, Eltham and Albert Park, you will see how much money is being invested into schools in those areas. Mansfield Primary School did get some money, but it really needs more to plan for the future because Mansfield is a growth pocket. Jamieson Primary School did get some, but Mansfield is a growth pocket and the school is very constrained in what it can do at its site.

We know that this government is the highest taxing government. Whenever we look at their policies we see that we have got 11 new taxes. They have coal-taxed Hazelwood out of existence, and it is extremely disappointing that they have cut a whole lot of services and funding into rural Victoria and really put Gippsland under the pump, all the time increasing taxes.

I want to touch on pork-barrelling, because when the member for Monbulk was making his contribution he outlined all of the things that were happening in his area and went on to say that when you are in government you have to make sure that you pump it up into your seat. I was really quite disappointed to see what he has got and what I have not got.

In terms of what is needed in Mansfield, the secondary school got some money a budget or two ago, but it needs more. It has only got half of what it needs. I know the Premier visited there the other day. He certainly did not convince them that they were going to get the remainder of the funding. I really would have liked to have seen that come through this year. We have so many schools with visions and with master plans being developed. It is probably nothing at the moment like it was when we came to government, when every school had a master plan and thought they were top of the list for a new school.

Mansfield needs more for schools, and they need investment in the hospital, the ambulance station and the CFA station. The primary school, as I have mentioned, needs to cater for growth. The new road that was to go between Mount Buller and Mount Stirling to support tourism and egress and access in summer for tourists was a focus for the resort management board. That has been ditched completely.

If you look at the budget, when it was released one of the things that was coming to the Shire of Murrindindi was rolling stock. I thought, ‘Gee, that is interesting. I do not know what train lines that is for’, because there is not one active train line in the Murrindindi shire or in any piece of my electorate, other than the historic rail between Healesville and Yarra Glen, which is only one-quarter of the way developed at the moment. It was a big insult for people up in the Murrindindi shire to realise that they were going to be getting rolling stock, and it really made a mockery of this budget for them.

Another complete mockery for the Murrindindi shire was at page 97 of budget paper 4 — a completed project at Jerusalem Creek on Lake Eildon. In fact if it was not completed, it was to be completed by 30 June. That is not happening, and it did not happen. I have raised this with the minister. I was at Jerusalem Creek with the shadow minister a week or two ago, and they talked to us about the issues there and that this had not happened. It barely got past first base, but it was listed in the budget papers as ‘having been or will be completed by 30 June’. What an absolute insult to the people of Lake Eildon, who are reliant on improved facilities to help keep those country towns alive and to really make the most of what is a jewel in the crown up there.

The Yarra Ranges did not get much. Areas including Yan Yean and Eltham get plenty from the Interface Growth Fund, but Yarra Ranges seems to miss out. I know that the CFA in Healesville needs to be relocated. There is a mountain bike hub that is a shovel-ready project. It really needs some investment to give new life to the Yarra Valley. It is something that we had also committed to, and I would really like to think that the government would take that seriously rather than just saying, ‘We like it in principle’.

In the Shire of Nillumbik we have the north-east link. There is \$100 million to commence planning and project development. One of the options, corridor D, is to go through Kangaroo Ground and right through the middle of the green wedge. It is quite interesting. I heard the minister at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings refuse to rule out elevated roads in and around the green leafy suburbs of Eltham and Ivanhoe as well. That has not been ruled out.

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) — I rise with great pleasure to contribute to the take-note motion on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. In doing so I want to make mention of the fact that this budget really —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — I am going to have to interrupt the member. I understand that

the member has spoken previously on this motion, and I will need to call an opposition member.

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — It is lucky that I am ready to go. We seem to have some issues on the other side with the management of the house.

I am pleased to rise to speak on the budget, even though it is some months since it was passed. This is indeed a budget that, as the member for Warrandyte said earlier, has pretty much disappeared without trace in the public sphere, and there has been much disappointment, certainly in my electorate of Gippsland South. People were very concerned about the budget with respect to tax increases but also because the key issues that we were seeking in Gippsland have not been delivered. There are a number that I want to talk about today in particular.

We have been working for about 10 or 15 years on the duplication of Princes Highway east between Traralgon and Sale. There are two remaining unfunded sections of the Princes Highway duplication. The people of Sale and East Gippsland in the Shire of Wellington have been putting up with road works there for a long time now. We have got two more sections that are currently being dealt with, but there are two remaining sections to be completed around Kilmany and just to the east of Traralgon, and the government has not yet committed funding for this.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — It is a difficult time to be speaking, because there is a bit of confusion in the chamber, but I will go on.

Princes Highway east has been a bipartisan project; indeed it has been funded both federally and at state level by both Labor and coalition governments. We now want to see the Andrews Labor government put up the money for the final two stages that I mentioned that have not yet been funded — that is about \$35 million, with the commonwealth government to commit 80 per cent of the funds.

It is strange, and I have mentioned this in this house before, that last year the Andrews Labor government were looking a gift horse in the mouth in the form of Darren Chester, the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, who committed \$343 million to roads across the state. Included in that was \$5 million for the Hyland Highway, to be matched by the state government. The Hyland Highway runs between Traralgon and Yarram in my electorate, and bizarrely enough, the Andrews Labor government has not announced this \$5 million. I asked about the \$5 million in a constituency question. I asked the

minister, 'Is it actually being delivered?'. He said it was in the budget. He said that it had been announced and that it was in the budget. It is not in the budget and it has not actually been announced, but I will take his word for it — that the \$5 million has indeed been funded and that the \$10 million project for the Hyland Highway will go ahead.

Another issue that I have raised again this week is action on a new Sale campus for Federation Training. The community has been campaigning on this one for well over 10 years. We have been through quite a tortuous process in Sale. About 2003 an idea was hatched to move the Fulham campus, which is out of town and which was rapidly deteriorating, into Sale and onto the netball courts. My predecessor, Peter Ryan, often made the comment that he did not know that there were 500 netballers in Sale until he tried to move the 500 netballers. There were protests in the streets and all sorts of things.

But those netball courts, having been freed up for a new campus, a new campus that the previous Liberal-Nationals coalition government funded with \$1.5 million for design and development works, are still lying idle. The government has \$20 million. Federation Training was given \$40 million for its establishment when the member for Ferntree Gully was the minister. Of that only \$20 million has been allocated. As I understand it \$20 million still remains available, and the government should be putting that money towards a new campus in Sale.

Only a bit over a month ago Federation Training came out and said, 'We have got some news coming very soon on the future of Federation Training in the Wellington shire'. Yet here we are another five weeks down the track and nothing has happened. It is really important that the government deals with this. We have seen courses cut from the Fulham campus, we have seen student numbers plummeting, and the community is fed up. The community wants to see a decision made. They want a new campus built in Sale. Ideally they would have it built at the old netball courts site at the port of Sale. That would help to boost the CBD of Sale but also provide the necessary new services — new structures and infrastructure for students at Federation Training.

I have been campaigning since I was elected for new fire stations at Yarram, Mirboo North and Foster. For all the debate we have had over the last few years about the Country Fire Authority this government has not allocated anything for the major regional fire stations. When in government we provided funding which, I think from memory, funded 215 new fire stations,

many of them rural brigades, including a number in my electorate. We had the Welshpool station opened only earlier this year or at the end of last year. Yarram, Foster and Mirboo North are all outdated; all have situations where they can barely fit in the modern trucks because the trucks literally cannot get through the doors. I have been calling for that for some time. We have been through two emergency services ministers. Neither of them has allocated funding for new fire stations, and that continues to be the case in this budget.

The other thing that I was campaigning for ahead of the budget was stage 2 of the Korumburra Secondary College. This is a project that was desperately needed. Again, my predecessor in the final budget of the Liberal-Nationals coalition funded \$9 million for stage 1 of the Korumburra Secondary College rebuild, which effectively rebuilds about half the school. We have been seeking funding for stage 2 ever since. We took a commitment of \$9 million to the election; \$5.6 million was allocated in 2014 and I have been campaigning for it ever since, but in fact the Andrews Labor government has failed to deliver on stage 2 for Korumburra Secondary College.

Likewise I was pleased last year that we had funding in the budget for Yarram Primary School to totally rebuild the school, but it is now time for Foster Primary School also to be rebuilt because it is of exactly the same vintage and construction as Yarram — both built in about 1965, both full of asbestos and both starting to fall down. Yarram is being done, but it is time that the government stood up and actually started to fund the Foster Primary School.

I want to move now to rail. We have had the glorious spectacle of the government just a few days before the budget announcing \$1.5 billion for regional rail without a single cent of it coming from the state government. There has been argy-bargy over a period of time since then, and the federal government has come to the party. Darren Chester, the federal member for Gippsland and minister for infrastructure I mentioned earlier, deserves great credit because he is the first federal minister to commit funding for passenger rail in Gippsland and, I suspect, right across country Victoria, with the exception of the regional rail link. Five hundred and thirty-five million dollars will now be going to upgrade the Gippsland rail line. Much of it is funding that we committed at the last election, duplicating the line from Longwarry to Bunyip and doing other bits and pieces.

But what I am disappointed about in this budget and subsequently have confirmed with the minister is that this project does not include the construction of new

stabling in Sale, which is bizarre to say the least. It was committed to by us at the last election. It was a key plank in the Gippsland Local Government Network's rail project that they released in October last year which highlighted that stabling at Sale should be included. It was even mentioned in Labor's own regional network development plan, and yet this has not been included in the proposal that this budget now takes to the people.

Why am I interested in stabling at Sale? It is because some of the VLocity trains that currently originate and terminate in Traralgon, if there were stabling at Sale — and it would likely be just out of town at Wurruk, so not in the residential area — it could continue to Sale and give us an extra service at night, be stabled there overnight and then return again in the morning as one of the earlier trains. So at the very least we could get an additional service each way — one at night and one in the morning — to Sale. It is bizarre that the government has not mentioned this.

The response I got from the minister some time ago was frankly appalling. When I asked this question in Parliament she gave me a two-line response; the second line simply said 'the project will deliver the needs of Gippsland passengers'. It did not answer the question, and that tells me they are not interested in funding the Sale stabling, which would give us new services in Sale.

There are a number of other things in the budget. There are some small things for Gippsland South — upgrades of Seaspray Primary School and Cobains Primary School, a minor funding announcement for the Princes Highway roundabout and reconfiguration of the intersection at Rosedale, but once again even that is funded by the federal government. The other big one listed in the budget but was well known before budget time is the realignment of the Black Spur at Koonwara, another one that I have been campaigning on for quite some time. Again it took the federal government and Darren Chester and The Nationals to deliver \$25 million from the federal government, which has now been matched by the state for this important project to go ahead.

There are a few other projects that are ongoing that we have been campaigning on. One of course is the Macalister irrigation district 2030 program, MID 2030, which will save about 9000 megalitres of water by improving irrigation in the region. That will deliver a hell of a lot for our community. It shores up irrigation supply, and it saves water, which will go back into productive use. That is a \$60 million project funded 20–20–20 by the state and federal governments and the irrigators themselves.

That of course is very important for the Macalister irrigation district and has been championed for a long time by a number of people. One of those who would have been very pleased to have seen that sadly is no longer with us, and that is Isobel Arbuthnot. I pay great tribute to Isobel and to her husband Alex. Isobel unfortunately died a couple of weeks ago after a long illness. She was a stalwart of the Macalister irrigation district and an absolute champion of country communities and the dairy industry in particular. I pay great credit to the Arbuthnot family but particularly Isobel, who was also a staunch and dedicated National Party member and a great support to many of our members over the years.

At the funeral there were three current or former federal cabinet ministers and three current or former leaders or state cabinet ministers. It was an absolute tribute to Isobel, who did such a wonderful job on behalf of her community of Nambrok and the wider area of Gippsland, the dairy industry more generally and for women in agripolitics. Isobel was a great champion of women and a fierce advocate for her community and her industries. To borrow the words of my federal colleague, I hope God is prepared to lose a few arguments now that Isobel is there.

Returning specifically to the budget, we saw a number of increases in taxes. I think we are now up to 11 new or increased taxes that have been introduced by this government, which breaks the election promise that the Premier gave right on the eve of the state election in 2014. We are seeing higher taxes but we are getting less in country areas, and that is absolutely true for Gippsland South. We have missed out on all those important projects that I listed before. I will keep campaigning for them. I talked about a number of road projects, but roads in particular are probably the number one issue in my electorate. The cuts to the road maintenance budget in the first two budgets of this government and the axing of the country roads and bridges program have been to the great detriment of regional areas of our state, and the government must do more to deliver on roads. More generally it needs to stop increasing taxes and start to give more back to rural and regional Victoria.

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke) — Having not spoken on this matter before, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, given the chaotic way in which the house has seen the business of the house being mismanaged, I

respectfully ask for your assurance that the member is eligible to adjourn the debate on this take-note motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny) — I am assured of that, member for Warrandyte.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Debate adjourned until later this day.

**PLANNING AND BUILDING
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY AND OTHER MATTERS)
BILL 2017**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 8 August; motion of
Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning).**

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — I want to raise briefly with the minister, to provide him with an opportunity to respond, the principal concerns of the opposition which, as I indicated in my second-reading speech, were as to how the mechanics of the affordable housing supply provisions in relation to section 173 agreements would operate and how the wind farm permit amendment regime is expected to operate, and our residual concerns about the extent of indictable offences being imposed under the Building Act 1993. Clause 1 would be a valuable opportunity for the minister to respond on those matters.

Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) — I thank the manager of opposition business for the opportunity to expand, firstly, in a general sense and then specifically on the matters that have been raised in relation to the Planning and Building Legislation Amendment (Housing Affordability and Other Matters) Bill 2017. I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to bring this bill into the Parliament because I see the former Minister for Local Government in the chamber. Both he and I in our previous respective roles had received representations from local governments which were very keen to ensure that there was a head of power available to local government to work in a cooperative fashion with developers and housing providers, where appropriate, through section 173 agreements to be in a

position where we would be able to achieve affordable housing outcomes within developments.

To date, as we know, the head of power has been at best ambiguous in relation to the capacities of local government through section 173 agreements, but with the amendments that we are making here to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 we are bringing certainty to local governments to give them that head of power. We think that is important from the point of view of the government's policy settings. As we know, housing for Victorians has been the subject of a very comprehensive suite of policy initiatives that the government put in place which have spanned home ownership incentives, particularly in regional Victoria in relation to first home owner grants, and exemptions from stamp duty at a threshold of \$600 000 tapering to \$750 000. They have been very much welcomed by industry.

The reforms that the government has made in terms of the bill that was debated in this house around long-term leasing — up to 10 years — and the reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 are very important, and this arrangement that we are putting in place in terms of the definition and head of power for a housing affordability capacity to be negotiated with local government is something that we see as an extra arm in the suite of initiatives that we have provided. In that context I want to make some preliminary comments on how that will be implemented.

The bill makes it clear that, once and for all, affordable housing is a major concern of planning. It sits fairly within the Planning and Environment Act. It enables the planning system to facilitate — and this is an important point — the voluntary delivery of affordable housing, removing the confusion surrounding what affordable housing is and how arrangements are to be struck. Pursuant to this bill, voluntary affordable housing agreements can be struck, using section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act, between councils, developers and housing providers. As members of the house will know, there is now quite an expansive network of social housing providers. Some of them have amalgamated over the journey and some of them are now very, very significant housing providers in their own right, effectively managing in some cases many, many thousands of properties.

I am delighted to say that the recent initiative by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing to transfer a very significant number of houses that had been leased to a social housing provider, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, now means that those properties being transferred that had been leased is now being passed

over to Aboriginal Housing Victoria as freehold, which really significantly boosts the asset base of this very significant organisation but also gives them the potential borrowing power to ensure that there is more Aboriginal housing, both purchased and developed, going forward. The section 173 agreement, as the manager of opposition business and I know well, is a very well established mechanism that is available to ensure that we have a proper legal structure in place.

In terms of the ongoing management of affordable housing, which was an issue that I know was addressed both by the manager of opposition business and other speakers, housing delivered through these agreements will be managed either by the director of housing, obviously if they are within the purview of government itself, or indeed by one of the registered housing providers. Of course they are also bound by a very significant regulatory regime through the Housing Act 1983. This will ensure that the housing is directed to those households who meet, firstly, the eligibility criteria, and we are confident that the strong protections already in place for the director of housing and housing providers will ensure the housing is dealt with appropriately.

As members of the house will know, this regulatory framework has been in place and operating effectively and is currently regulating in excess of 19 000 rental units in the social housing network as of 30 June 2016. Importantly, housing created through these agreements will, as I indicated in the example of Aboriginal Housing Victoria, increase the financial capacity and indeed viability of these housing providers, expanding their asset base and diversifying their portfolios.

It is critical that industry is involved in the drafting of the model agreements and guidelines to ensure that they represent best practice, are practical from the point of view of both the housing provider and the developer and will hopefully, with this bill passing the Parliament, open up very extensive consultation between the development community, the Office of Housing and social housing providers to ensure that we actually put in place a sensible set of arrangements and guidelines — obviously for local government as well — to facilitate this particular initiative going forward.

We would argue simply that it was important to wait until there was certainty in the form of a definition before commencing that consultation, and now we actually want to get on with it. That, I think, settles the first matter that was of concern to the opposition parties.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — Minister, if these changes are legislated, what happens to called-in permits where the planning panel process has already begun, like with the Woolsthorpe, Ryan Corner and Hawkesdale wind farms in my electorate, particularly given these towers are significantly higher than were permitted originally? Also, what guarantees can the minister give that developers will not deliberately put forward plans that are favourable to communities, only to have them called in at a later date and have amendments made that are unfavourable to the community, with minimal consultation?

Mr WYNNE — I thank the member for South-West Coast for the clarification that she is seeking. As she is aware, there is a significant appetite for wind farms, as we know, and it is very clear that with changed technologies there are opportunities for modification of some of these wind farms going forward. What is important is that with many of these applications it actually means, as the member for South-West Coast knows, that because of changed technologies, changed heights of the turbines and the wingtips themselves, they are significantly bigger structures than may have been previously permitted but often less of them are required to generate the same amount of electricity.

Going specifically to the amendment, the amendment allows the planning scheme to specify a different determination pathway for applications to amend wind farm permits that have been called in. There will be no change to the right of people to object to the application. The minister will still advertise an application, and people can submit objections. All objections will be considered before the matter is determined. The amendment to the act will allow the planning scheme to specify whether objections to amend a called-in wind farm permit are referred to a full panel hearing or an advisory hearing or not referred to a public hearing at all, and I will come to that question.

Matters with a medium to large degree of change will be referred to a public hearing, and we understand the normal process for that, whether that be a panel or indeed an advisory committee. Only minor matters will be exempt from a public hearing — for example, the relocation of a substation, the change of an internal road layout or something else of a minor nature. Both the panel hearing process and the advisory committee process are obviously public hearings where objectors can make verbal submissions to the panel, and I am sure the member for South-West Coast is very aware of the process for that. The main difference between the two hearing types is that the advisory committee

process will operate in accordance with the terms of reference, which means it will be approved by the minister of the day, whereas a panel will not. This will help, in our view, to streamline the process and save time in processing applications.

As the member knows, we took a very strategic position as a government because we have very ambitious targets in relation to renewable energy — 25 per cent by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025. These are significant renewable targets, and we see that wind has a very significant role to play in that. That is why we have indicated that the Minister for Planning is now in effect the one-stop shop in terms of applications for and consideration of wind farm proposals.

In the past, as you know, there has been a bit of a disjointed situation whereby sometimes wind turbines may have been part of my considerations but other ancillary aspects of an application — for example, substations and other ancillary activities — have not been. These are now brought together in a holistic way to become, I think, a much more coherent process and one that is understood both by industry and indeed by communities. As the member for South-West Coast knows, people are making significant investments in wind farms — in the many hundreds of millions of dollars — but by the same token we have to ensure that there is always the opportunity made available for communities and councils to have their say in the process as well. Hopefully that satisfies the question.

Ms BRITNELL — Minister, if the owner of an apartment building in Melbourne wanted to add an extra 50 metres in height, would they have to apply for a new permit? If so, why do wind farm developers not have to reapply when they want to significantly increase the size of their towers, as has happened at the Woolsthorpe, Ryan Corner and Hawkesdale wind farms in my electorate?

Mr WYNNE — I thank the member again for her contribution, and I think I have indicated clearly what the process is. Where there is a substantial change to an existing permitted application — and I have indicated why, as you well know, there have been substantial changes made, where there have been changes in technology or in turbine technology in particular, which have often meant a significant increase in the height of some of these turbines and indeed the blades — that is a matter that ought to be properly considered through the process that I have already articulated.

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) — My question also relates to clause 1, in terms of the streamlining that the

minister has spoken of. I guess the concern that has been raised, which I think this bill does not seem to be accounting for, relates to public concerns being listened to and heard. In the past, the public airing of concerns has had clear effects on the issuing of planning permits.

For example, evidence presented by citizens from communities with valid objections, who were given the chance to object and be involved in the process, at panel hearings for wind farms at Berrybank, Stockyard Hill and Mortlake meant that the Mortlake East proposed wind farm was not granted. Berrybank was required to do further environmental work before it received its planning permit, once again because of issues raised by the community. Dundonnell has had to have nine turbines removed, and the amendments to many of the environmental findings that were initially presented in the planning permit were overturned, such as the planning panel conceding that the count of brologas was not accurate. Stockyard Hill had 58 turbines removed from their proposal because of information given at other panel hearings.

The fact that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning had allowed poorly planned proposals to get as far as panel hearings and had already signed off on companies' environment effects statement referral documents is another matter entirely, but if it were not for the concerns of local citizens, the minister would have happily signed off on these permits at the expense of the effect on the environment and local communities. As my colleague the member for South-West Coast highlighted, what reassurances are there in this legislation that a flurry of overseas investors are not going to put in applications in this area in order to assist the government to achieve its ambitions on renewable energy, which could quickly change the landscape in local communities?

Mr WYNNE — I thank the member for Polwarth. The examples that you have outlined for us speak to how the process has actually worked and will continue to work. As I have already articulated to you, where there is a project with an existing permit in place and the proponent is seeking to modify that permit and upgrade the wind farm, where substantial change is involved, it will go through a normal process. If it is clearly a scenario where there is a high degree of change, the application is advertised — which is a normal process — and objections are received. In that context you would imagine that the objections are referred to a panel hearing. The panel hearing is held. Objectors are given the opportunity to make representation and presentations. The panel delivers its report or recommendations to the minister of the day,

who then determines the application. That process can take probably three months — possibly a bit more — from the date the objections are referred to the panel. There is absolutely no diminution of the process in what is before us today and which has been readily understood by applicants, councils and objectors.

Mr D. O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) — My question is fairly straightforward, Minister, and hopefully the answer will provide confirmation. I have had some concerns raised in my electorate of Gippsland South from people around the Bald Hills wind farm, which is a farm that is currently constructed and operating, and I am seeking clarification. That wind farm was approved long before my time in Parliament. I am not sure whether it was one that was called in. But if it was, is there any chance that these changes will apply to an existing farm such as Bald Hills and, if so, that there could be additional towers, for example, built on an existing farm such as that?

Mr WYNNE — I will take that on notice and seek a specific piece of advice in relation to Bald Hills. But more generally, in the tenor in which we have had this conversation today, if there is a substantial change, whether it be to the Bald Hills wind farm or any others, that is of a significant nature, different to the existing permitted conditions that are available, obviously it would trigger the process that I have articulated. But if I could take that bit on notice, I will see if I can get a more definitive answer in relation to any changes to Bald Hills. If not, I will happily take it offline with you.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (*By leave*) — Just for clarification on the last question, I was actually asking if an apartment building developer wanted to add an extra 50 metres in height, would they have to apply for a new permit, and if so, why then do wind developers not have to reapply when they want to significantly increase the size of towers, like has happened with the Woolsthorpe, Ryans Corner and Hawkesdale wind farms?

Mr WYNNE — I say again to the member for South-West Coast that it is not as if where you have such a significant change it would be dealt with on the papers. It would have to be dealt with through a public process, and that is what we are articulating here. I again reiterate what the position of the government is. Yes, we fully support wind farm development; of course we do. We think that is, as I have indicated, a very significant contribution that is going to be made to the renewable energy target that Victoria has got. In that context those applications will be dealt with through a public process. The analogy you make is that

if somebody had an existing permit for a building in the CBD of Melbourne and they wanted to substantially change that permit, it would also go through a public process. Obviously if it is over —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr WYNNE — You may need a new planning and environment assessment or a modified permit. If it is below 25 000 square metres, it would go to the City of Melbourne. If it is above that, it would come to me, but even if it was coming to me it would go to the City of Melbourne as a referral authority in the first instance for their input to it. So it is analogous in some ways, but the important aspect of this is the public process that remains in place and the confidence that I think the community can have that their voice will be heard through that process, whether it be by advisory committee or a panel process.

The advice I have just received in relation to Bald Hills is that Bald Hills was called in. I am not even sure what this actually says. It is under construction, but consultation will continue to be necessary.

Mr D. O'BRIEN — Perhaps just for clarification then, Minister, it was called in, so technically this change in legislation could apply to Bald Hills. But given that it is already built, I guess it is a similar question to that of the member for South-West Coast. If the proponent came forward and said, 'We want to put another 10 turbines on', what would be the situation then?

Mr WYNNE — It will be exactly the situation that I have outlined. If there is a substantial change like that, where the applicant comes along and said, 'Well, that's all fascinating. I'm building this, and by the way, I want to put another 10 in. In the past that might have been 150 metres, but now it is 180 metres, and the blades are going to be significantly more', of course that is a substantial change that would have to go through the full process.

Mr RIORDAN — Further to the planning process and the way local communities are being dealt with in this process, using the analogy that my colleague from South-West Coast used of a significantly taller building, in order to get those permits through originally, communities are often cajoled through financial incentives, such as local landholders being promised X amount of turbines. We have seen, for example, the Mount Gellibrand wind farm, where initially the proposal was for over 100 turbines, and that got a lot of landholders on side. Then as the project shrinks down we are seeing a project of between 22 and 44 turbines. Is there a requirement in these changes about the

financial elements and also the environmental impacts? For example, turbines that are a certain height will obviously have some effect, whether it is on birdlife or a light effect on houses. If those turbines are to go taller, are the companies encouraged to redo all their environmental assessments and analyses? Are they also required to renegotiate with the community for any financial deals that they have made? The changes will inevitably see some landholders better off and others worse off. These are real concerns, and I would appreciate knowing how the minister deals with that.

Mr WYNNE — Thank you very much, member for Polwarth. Whatever financial arrangements are made are matters between the proponent and the relevant landholders. Yes, we understand that in some circumstances a group of landholders choose to come together in a collective way and seek to negotiate with a particular wind farm developer. They are commercial arrangements that are reached between the two parties, and it is not appropriate for the government to either intervene or have a view about that. We do understand that in some circumstances there is quite a significant return that is made available through a negotiated process with the proponents, and we understand that process. I do not think it would be at all appropriate — and it is certainly not envisaged in this bill — that we would have any form of intervention in any negotiation that would occur between the two parties. The second element of the question was?

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (*By leave*) — The second element was the relationship with environmental studies. Clearly a tower that is 50 metres high will probably have a greater effect on light and animals.

Mr WYNNE — The answer to the second part of the question is clearly. Through the panel process the panel has the opportunity to call upon expert evidence that they may well require, whether it is in relation to the flight paths of birds, noise attenuation or the various matters that do pertain to applications. So the answer is yes to that.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (*By leave*) — Minister, I am just wanting to clarify your words from before. You said in response to the member for Gippsland South's question that if there is significant change, then they would have to go through the full process. To me, that means the full process is reapplying for a permit. Given that some of these were nine years ago in my electorate, is that what you mean? Going through the full process means they reapply for a permit?

Mr WYNNE — No, not necessarily. You cannot always be that definitive. It is going to depend on the nature of the applications. The Bald Hills one is a good example. Bald Hills is being constructed; it is on its way —

Mr D. O'Brien — No, it is operating.

Mr WYNNE — I beg your pardon. Bald Hills is in fact operating, but if Bald Hills comes along again and says, 'This is all going fantastically well, but by the way we actually have now seen new technologies and new opportunities to further expand the Bald Hills wind farm', clearly that would be subject to a further application process.

Mr CLARK — Can I come back to the issue of affordable housing and some of the policy considerations that arise in relation to that. I refer to the minister's statement, if I correctly heard his previous response to clause 1 on this aspect. He envisaged that the affordable housing that was made available under the bill pursuant to section 173 agreements would be managed by the director of housing or by some other social housing provider. My concern and the clarification I seek in relation to that is that the bill is actually drafted a lot more broadly than that. It relates to agreements in relation to affordable housing where affordable housing is not limited to social housing or public housing but does include social housing. Within the scope of the bill it would be possible for a council to have an agreement that simply obliged the developer to ensure — by covenant or some other arrangement — that a certain proportion of the housing was suitable for people on various low-income levels without that coming under the director of housing or another social housing provider. Perhaps the minister could clarify whether or not that would be the case. If that is the case, how would he envisage that category of affordable housing to be managed on an ongoing basis?

Secondly, though, while we are talking about clause 1 more broadly, could I invite the minister to address some of the concerns about transparency and accountability in relation to the operation of this mechanism for providing affordable housing. In other words, how will there be an accounting to the community of the social value, the community value, that has been achieved through this affordable housing vis-a-vis the cost that has been incurred by the developer in relation to it? How can we assess the burden that is being put on the developer, the benefit that is being yielded to the community through the government or to the occupants or both? Attached to that, what can the minister say to demonstrate that this

approach to affordable housing — that is, via section 173 agreement — is preferable to alternative arrangements, which could, for example, be a cash levy or a financial levy on a developer to go into a fund that would be used to provide affordable housing, the argument being that that would be more transparent and arguably provide a greater social housing benefit at less cost than through the section 173 mechanism?

Mr WYNNE — I thank the manager of opposition business, the member for Box Hill. In relation to the definition, the broadly understood definitions of housing in this context are public housing, which is housing that is owned by the director of housing. That is all very, very clear under the Housing Act and all of the accountability mechanisms that are available there.

Social housing is understood to be housing that is provided by registered social housing providers, and we understand the context of that. That sits within a highly regulated environment with a housing registrar that oversees it all. Affordable housing is in fact the third phenomenon. Indeed I can point the manager of opposition business to a very important decision that the government made in relation to the Queen Victoria Market, where we have agreed to a planning scheme amendment for parts of the redevelopment of the Queen Victoria Market but in return 52 affordable houses will become part of that project.

Affordable housing, sometimes called key worker housing, is often characterised by housing for essential services — police officers, nurses, teachers, people who provide important community service to the broader community. In that context we envisage that what potentially would happen in the Queen Victoria Market matter is those affordable houses would be managed by one of the social housing providers as part of their broader portfolio. The details of the implementation will be determined through the development of a model voluntary affordable housing agreement. That will go specifically to the question that the member for Box Hill has raised, and guidance on these issues and what councils should have regard to when negotiating these agreements will be set out in a non-statutory ministerial guideline, so it will be made very clear.

How can we also then ensure transparency and accountability? If some of these affordable houses were going to be transferred to the director of housing, I think that is very clear. You would expect that to be articulated in the annual report of the director of housing. Similarly, as I know the member for Box Hill knows, where properties are going to be identified and transferred to the social housing provider, or indeed an

affordable housing component being transferred to the social housing provider, again they would have to be articulated to the housing registrar, but in their annual reports as well, so it will be very clear and transparent.

Obviously in the section 173 agreements that would be reached with councils, again they would be articulated both in the deliberations through the public process of the development of the reports that would support those sorts of decision-making and indeed in the minutes that reflect those decisions of those councils.

The question of a financial levy is an interesting one. The government has not taken a position to say that you could offset your obligation by way of an equivalent financial contribution. We do not preclude that in the future, but I think the sense of this was, 'The minister for housing wanted to get this away. Let's see how that goes'. We do not step away from the potential to look at that as an option in the future.

Clause agreed to; clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr CLARK — Further to the minister's response in relation to clause 1 and in relation to the definition of affordable housing proposed by clause 3, it is envisaged that affordable housing will be determined having regard to the housing needs of very low income households, low-income households and moderate-income households with regard to the matters specified by the minister by a notice published in the *Victoria Government Gazette*. To assist us in understanding how the definition of affordable housing is to operate, is the minister able to indicate what sorts of matters he envisages might be specified in a notice by him published in the *Victoria Government Gazette*?

Mr WYNNE — Generally speaking the definitions are like this. If you are providing public housing, public housing is 25 per cent of a person's income. That is defined as the threshold for public housing. If you are providing housing in the social housing sector, it is generally defined as being up to 30 per cent of income. In the affordable housing area and the example that I have given, whilst there is not a generally recognised definition of what an income threshold may look like, the general consensus is if you are paying more than 30 per cent of your income to support your housing needs — anything more than 30 per cent — you are moving into housing stress. I would submit to the member for Box Hill that they are pretty tight parameters that we are looking at in that context. We do have some income bands that I am happy to furnish the member for Box Hill with. We can articulate those a bit

further as the debate moves into the upper house, or I can read them in now.

The income bands — these are expressed in weekly dollars for 2016 — begin with 'very low income', which is \$506 or less for a single person. For a couple it is \$579, for a single person with one child it is \$579 as well and for a couple with one child it is \$651. The 'low-level income' band for a single adult is \$507 through to \$810, for a couple it is \$580 to \$926, for a single adult and one child it is \$580 to \$926 and for a couple with one child it is \$652 to \$1041. I remind the member for Box Hill what we are talking about here. The example I have used is the 52 affordable houses we will get in the Queen Victoria Market redevelopment. A 'moderate income' for a single adult is \$811 through to \$1215, for a couple it is \$927 through to \$1388, it is again the same for a single adult with one child and for a couple with one child it is \$1042 through to \$1562. They are the sorts of bands, in terms of income, which would be targeting the various sectors that I have indicated.

Mr CLARK — I thank the minister for that response. Just to clarify: given the fairly prescriptive nature of the criteria that the government is intending to specify, would it be fair to say that it would be difficult for section 173 agreements to provide for affordable housing other than affordable housing that is entrusted to the director of housing or a social housing provider? Because it would be very difficult for anybody other than the director of housing or a social housing provider to apply that sort of income test to a prospective occupant/tenant.

My concern is that if it were left at large and it was an ongoing obligation imposed on the body corporate of a multi-unit development, for example, it would be almost impossible for them to apply an income test to prospective tenants or residents. Therefore in order for those income tests to be applied effectively, this will have to be a scheme that entrusts the affordable housing to either the director of housing or a social housing provider.

Mr WYNNE — Intuitively, where the member for Box Hill has landed is pretty much where it is likely to go, although there are some emerging initiatives in the United Kingdom and the United States whereby developments are now occurring that are built to rent. Developers build properties for long-term rental, and they are not actually sold into the marketplace. So there are some interesting proposals that have emerged in those two contexts. I suspect in the future there may well be some of that occurring in Australia as well

because we do tend to look to trends that are occurring overseas. The UK has got quite a highly developed one, and the United States has also got a quite a significant build-to-rent market as well. We will have to see whether that manifests itself in Australia as well.

I think intuitively where the member for Box Hill is at is exactly right — that in the first instance it will be the director of housing and indeed the social housing providers that will be the primary providers of this product going forward.

Clause agreed to; clauses 4 to 7 agreed to.

Clause 8

Mr CLARK — I did want to raise one matter in relation to clause 8 which hopefully can be resolved quickly. On my reading of proposed paragraph (kf) to be inserted into section 6(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 by clause 8(1), there is a capacity to specify classes of application that are wholly exempted from the requirements under section 97E(1) or for which the requirements under 97E(1) are modified to require referral to an advisory committee. On my reading there will be an option either to totally exempt or to send to the advisory committee. I think that is consistent with what the minister said earlier — that there may be some categories of application which may be totally exempted from any sort of process, those being intended to be the more minor ones, and that other ones would go through the process.

I do want to confirm that as far as the bill is concerned it will be entirely open-ended. Therefore it will be up to the minister to determine and specify what classes go which way and what classes go the other way and to set the definitions of what is going to be minor and what is not going to be minor and has to go through the committee process.

Mr WYNNE — The answer to the question is exactly as the member for Box Hill has sought to interpret it. These matters that would not be referred would be of an entirely minor nature. It may be a redirection of a roadway — a track — for the servicing of the turbines. It might be around the relocation of a substation. I want to assure him and I want to assure the house that where there are any substantial changes that are made to an application they will proceed through the process that I have already articulated. I think the process is a good, solid public process which in fact gives surety to developers of what the pathway is going forward, but equally it gives some security to residents

and communities that their voice can be heard through a public process.

Clause agreed to; clauses 9 to 15 agreed to.

Bill agreed to without amendment.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

BUDGET PAPERS 2017–18

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport):

That this house takes note of the 2017–2018 budget papers.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — It is my pleasure to rise and speak on this take-note motion on the 2017–18 budget. The reason I do this with such pride is that it is a budget for all Victorians and certainly for the people of Dandenong. It is a true Labor budget, as we have heard many members on this side of the house say. It is a true Labor budget because it is about people, about strengthening communities, about addressing inequality and about creating opportunity no matter a person's background.

Unlike most Liberal budgets, this budget does not assume wealth and privilege. It cuts to the core of what people need to build a future for themselves and their families. It is ultimately about giving people hope, but more than that it is about giving people a meaningful pathway. It is unashamedly geared towards helping the most vulnerable in our community and ensuring that no-one is left behind — all principles that I personally stand behind. It is a sensible budget that aligns the priorities of this state with those of its people.

Through this budget the Andrews government is continuing its record of responsible financial management and providing strong surpluses and continued jobs growth over the next four years while also delivering the services and projects that really matter to Victorians. We are investing in education, we are investing in health, we are investing in infrastructure, and we are investing in the people of Victoria and the future of this great state. Only Labor governments deliver budgets that serve all Victorians and all communities, even those with diverse and complex needs like my community in Dandenong. This budget gets on with the job of consolidating our success and securing our future.

Most importantly this budget takes historic action on family violence, and I think this is the right place to

start my contribution when talking about this budget. We know that on average one woman a week is murdered by her partner or former partner and that family violence is the leading contributor to death and disability of Australian women under 40. As local representatives, we see evidence of family violence every day in the demand for local health and social services and also embedded within local police and homelessness statistics. Both victims and perpetrators make up our constituents, irrespective of the demography of our electorates.

Family violence is a national emergency that is destroying too many lives, and it has been underfunded for far too long. That is why the Andrews Labor government is implementing an unprecedented, comprehensive and long overdue \$1.9 billion package to combat family violence. This investment is more than every other jurisdiction in Australia combined, including the commonwealth, which goes to show that this is not just symbolic; it is real action. It is leadership in the truest sense of the word. We are protecting victim survivors, holding perpetrators to account, changing community attitudes and taking serious steps towards eradicating family violence in Victoria. We are implementing a \$448 million package for 17 brand-new family violence support and safety hubs in areas with the highest rates of family violence, and one of these hubs will be built in the Dandenong region and will also service the neighbouring areas of Casey and Cardinia.

Family violence does not discriminate. We have heard that many times in this place. We know it occurs in areas of disadvantage and of affluence. We know it occurs across cultures and ethnicities, and it occurs in both the regions and cities. However, the broader Dandenong region is one of these regions disproportionately affected by family violence, and this needs to be recognised and acted upon, and that is exactly what we are doing through this budget. A local safety hub in our area will provide vital protection and support for women and children suffering from violence in Dandenong. For many victims, knowing they have somewhere safe to go will make all the difference. These hubs were a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and they will put the safety of victim survivors first. They will serve as a visible contact point and give local communities access to highly skilled workers with connections to the justice system and social services.

This government is building a new system that will prevent family violence, make perpetrators accountable and, again, protect victim survivors. We know that this is a very complex issue and one that reaches into just about every policy area in government and as such

requires a whole-of-government response, which has been on our agenda from the very beginning. It is one that we have consistently acted upon through multiple budgets, and I know that we will continue to do so.

I turn now to another great Labor priority — education. The Andrews Labor government is continuing on its commitment to build the Education State. Education should not preserve privilege or perpetuate inequality; we all intuitively know that. It should drive equality and opportunity. We are committed to making sure that every single Victorian child gets the very best start in life irrespective of their background. Dandenong is an area where over 60 per cent of residents were born overseas and come from about 158 different countries, and we have a high population of asylum seekers and refugees within that community. This great diversity means that education plays a crucial role in building stronger communities and fostering greater social harmony but also in creating opportunities not just for individual children but for their families as well.

Fifty-five per cent of the Dandenong community is from a non-English-speaking background, and it is fantastic that this budget directly provides for these often forgotten members of our community. We are implementing a \$19.5 million boost to English as an additional language education for newly arrived students in government schools to support intensive English language learning. Believe me, from the stories I have heard as I have moved around my electorate over the past few years, this makes an incredible difference, a very significant difference, to many people in my community — many thousands of children but also by extension their families, who often benefit from that education.

Schools often act as a conduit between families and the broader community. It is through better education that we offer future generations the best shot at being able to carve out a better life for themselves. Places like Dandenong highlight how valuable education can be to transforming people's lives across generations. We are indeed building the Education State — in a literal sense as well as in a figurative sense — brick by brick across our state, ensuring that all our schools have the best possible facilities, that our classrooms have the best teachers and that every child is given every chance to succeed. It is my pleasure to be part of a government of action that delivers on what it promised the people of Dandenong and, more broadly than that, Victoria.

There is no greater example of keeping our promises than Lyndale Secondary College. Now Lyndale Secondary College, for those who may not be familiar with it, is located in Dandenong North. It had not

received a significant capital works injection since 1961. The school's buildings were crumbling, classroom ceilings were cracked and some parts of the school were uninhabitable in both hot and cold months. Students were studying in archaic portables, most of which had seen better days. Much like the previous government, the school was in a state of disrepair beyond any quick fix and needed to be replaced. Lyndale had submitted its plans for development in recognition of this fact before the previous government came to power in 2010, but the project was left sadly on the shelf for four long years. Nothing happened. They submitted that plan with optimism when the former Labor government into power, only to find that, when the Liberal government came into power, they were ignored.

The budget continues to make amends for the contempt shown by those opposite and includes a further \$6 million of capital in this budget to continue the desperately needed rebuild of Lyndale Secondary College, and that is in addition to the \$7 million that was contributed previously. Already works are well underway at Lyndale, and that school transformation is taking place. It is a source of great excitement for that school community but is also a sign of what this government is achieving for the broader community. I am personally extremely excited to see what the finished product will look like. This funding will have an enormous impact on the school community and others who benefit from the campus and from the school's fabulous staff. Sometimes we forget that schools service more than just those who attend the school. The students and families that form part of the Lyndale Secondary College community are no longer being ignored. They can stand tall as an integral part of the Education State and indeed as a symbol of what we stand for on this side of house.

Students in Dandenong are getting the funding they need to ensure they are educated in the school environments they deserve, and that is the commitment we made, not just in infrastructure, but through important programs like the School Breakfast Clubs program, which ensures our young people are provided the best possible opportunity to learn.

This government, unlike the one before it, understands the importance of supporting all elements of a child's education. Education has a transformative power for all children, regardless of circumstances out of their control, and the funding initiatives in the budget will directly enhance educational outcomes, ensuring that every Victorian community has great local schools and every child has access to the best start.

Another hallmark of a good Labor budget is our investment in health care. I had an opportunity to speak about those investments earlier today in my contribution on a bill. But we also know that this is an area which the Liberals are renowned for deserting when they get into government. Labor always invests in health, unlike the Liberals, who cut \$1 billion out of the health system and left families on their own. This is in contrast to the several billions of dollars we have injected into the healthcare system in order to make sure that when people are going through some of the worst times of their life they are getting the best possible care.

We are helping families by ensuring sick kids are treated quickly, calmly and in settings respectful of their needs with a new dedicated emergency department as part of a \$63 million boost to the Monash Children's Hospital in Clayton. I was really fortunate to be there for the opening of that hospital and, as somebody who does not have a clinical background, to see an environment like that one, which is state-of-the-art, world-class and has all of the comforts that you would hope to see in a children's hospital and in a setting where you know families are going through such a terrible time. It was a joy to see, and I would urge anyone in this place who has not yet had to visit it to certainly get down there and take a look.

This budget puts people first by investing wisely to reduce waiting lists and response times that were a legacy of those opposite. As I said in this place earlier, our response times are the best that they have been in seven years, which goes to show that our investments have truly paid off in a tangible and meaningful way for our community. It builds on our record-breaking investment into Victoria's health system, as I have articulated in this place earlier, with almost \$2.9 billion to ensure all Victorians, regardless of their economic circumstances, will receive world-class care. As we have seen from the latest hospital data and ambulance response times, our investment and our commitment to a better health system are resulting in those tangible improvements. I repeat that because it is so very important that this is not just about dollars; this is about outcomes.

Our investments in critical infrastructure were the cornerstones of our previous two budgets, and unlike those opposite, this government is committed to transport infrastructure projects that add value and stack up financially. This budget gets on with the job of overhauling our metropolitan public transport system, with \$880 million invested in new trams, safety measures, and train and station upgrades across Melbourne. A modern, easily accessible public transport

system is critical as it reduces the number of cars on the road, it positions us as a world-class tourist destination, and it gets Victorians home quickly and safely.

What is exciting for those in my electorate is that more trams and more trains mean more jobs for Dandenong. The \$218 million investment for 10 more E-class trams and \$311 million for 39 new VLocity regional train carriages is truly exciting because they will be made at Bombardier in Dandenong. Not only are we getting Victoria on the move with a first-class public transport system, but this investment is supporting some 500 jobs in my local community at Bombardier and obviously has flow-on effects through the supply chain as well. And it ensures ongoing opportunities for young workers and those reskilling from other industries, including ex-auto workers who, as we know, are facing a pretty uncertain and tough time, although it should also be noted that this government has done more than any other to ensure that that transition is made as smooth as possible and that adequate supports are being given to workers during this time.

The Andrews Labor government is taking real action to produce better public transport in Victoria while also investing in jobs. We see the two sitting side by side. It is important to our government because we believe in a Victoria that produces and creates; we believe in Victorian jobs. Unlike other states, we are not happy to just ship things overseas.

We are also committed to reducing congestion on Melbourne's main arterials and improving the quality of life for residents living near freeways, allowing them to spend more time in their backyards and making it easier for them to sleep at night. Thousands of local residents living near the Monash and South Gippsland freeways have suffered from ageing noise walls that are in desperate need of repair or replacement, and this issue has become a permanent fixture in their lives. We have listened to their concerns, and we have acted on this. In response to these concerns we are installing new and upgraded noise walls on both the Monash Freeway and the South Gippsland Freeway, which will greatly improve the quality of life for Dandenong, Doveton and Eumemmerring residents.

There are so many more things I could talk about in this budget — literally pages. I have got pages and pages of things I could talk about around community safety, multicultural affairs and affordable housing. Community safety is an issue that is very important to this government, despite what those opposite often try to say. This week the law and order chest beating of those opposite was revealed for the farce that it truly is when we saw that they are happy to hang out with those

who commission the crime that they are so offended by. I commend the bill.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) — I rise to take note of the 2017–18 budget papers. It is a budget that puts in black and white the Premier's broken election commitment that he would not increase taxes or charges for Victorians, a budget that will see Victorians pay more for new cars and more for the fire services property levy and see families slugged with stamp duty when they transfer property between spouses. We have seen land tax go up by 35 per cent — or \$615 million — since the election. Stamp duty is up \$1.7 billion, or 39.4 per cent. We have seen the fire services property levy go up by 11 per cent, the growth areas infrastructure contribution go up by 127 per cent and the duty on vehicle registrations and transfers go up by \$210 million, or nearly 30 per cent, since the election.

This budget neglects to really take advantage of the opportunity regional Victoria presents not only to help ease population pressure but also to help bolster the state's economy. The regions have the opportunity for growth in all sorts of areas. We have affordable housing, we have cheap industrial land for manufacturing and we have space and livability. What we do not have, though, is a government that is visionary and that backs the economic prosperity that is on our doorstep now that the demand for protein across the world is coming into its own and being realised. Instead we have a government that raises taxes and puts impediments in front of businesses like unaffordable and unreliable power. Before producers and manufacturers can even export product they are hamstrung by their own state government's imposed costs, regulatory burdens, bureaucracy and inefficiencies, making them less competitive internationally.

One glaringly obvious opportunity missed by this government is agriculture. If this sector is embraced with good policy, not only will the regions benefit but the whole state will grow. All that is needed is a government with the vision to have rail, roads and power infrastructure optimised to ensure that all the other natural livability factors are attractive. That is where this government and this budget are deficient. With good infrastructure, jobs will grow and the regions will prosper, but this budget as a whole does little to recognise that. It fails to address infrastructure issues and introduces taxes rather than providing any real incentives. It fails to set up any real plan for population growth and fails to provide any real support to growing industries like agriculture. In 2015–16 the gross value of food and fibre production in Victoria was \$11.9 billion, with over 25 per cent of the nation's farms being here in Victoria. Revenue from the

Victorian agricultural sector is two and a half times greater than the total revenue of the whole Tasmanian government. This is a huge industry that you would think deserves some major backing from government.

When the Port of Melbourne was leased we on this side of the house worked hard to ensure there was a decent amount of money put aside for regional projects — after all, agricultural products are one of the major exports from the port, and increasing world demand for clean and green Australian produce helped drive up that lease price. For the past year, regional Victorians have sat and waited to see how the government planned to spend the nearly \$1 billion that was set aside. We hoped the government would keep its promise and spend the money on creating efficient transport networks to get goods to market more quickly and programs to help the industries to grow and become more efficient and profitable. The possibilities were endless, and this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity missed by this budget. So when the budget was handed down, you can imagine my anger when it was revealed how this money was going to be spent. The majority of the cash will be spent on programs that will have little or no benefit for the regions, and very little of it will be spent in my electorate or indeed the western half of the state, arguably one of the state's richest agricultural areas and certainly the biggest dairy-producing area in this whole country.

The dairy industry is the biggest exporter out of the Port of Melbourne. Victoria produces 6.4 billion litres of milk every year from 1.3 million cows. There are more dairy cows in Victoria than there are people in Adelaide. Victoria is Australia's biggest dairy-producing state, accounting for almost two-thirds of all national dairy production. The dairy industry is worth almost \$1.5 billion annually to the Victorian economy. Despite the enormous scale of this industry's contribution, the majority being generated in the south-west, not a single dollar from the lease of the port will flow back to dairy. This government is ignorant to the opportunity and is taking the wrong view on the dairy industry. The industry might be going through a tough time, which every agricultural sector does, but the market is strong, the demand is high and the future possibilities are good if we get the policy signals right.

If we cannot produce food competitively as a nation, something is very wrong, and it is this government's lack of policy and lack of understanding that is standing in the way of optimising the boom that food will become. The mining boom is over and the food rush is here. South-west Victoria is set up perfectly, along with the rest of Victoria, to be part of this scene. Sure, the port lease money will be used to build new trains and upgrade train lines, but not in my electorate.

The most baffling line item, though, shows that the government plans to sink \$288 million into periodic maintenance for the regional rail network and \$12 million into sustaining the V/Line fleet — not a capital investment but maintenance. Cash flow should be used for this, not new money, to cover the ongoing running costs of existing assets. They are programs that would have needed to be funded anyway. It is just bad business practice and a wasted opportunity to make a real difference to our state's driving economic force.

The lease of the port of Melbourne was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to optimise Victoria's agricultural sector, but this opportunity has been squandered. That money could have made a real difference, but instead it is being put into existing programs, with the lion's share being tipped into Melbourne. It is yet another example of this government not looking beyond the tram tracks and being able to see the enormous potential the regions have to offer.

Regional Victoria, particularly South-West Coast electorate, is the perfect place to do business. Industrial land is cheap and housing is affordable, so attracting staff should be easy. We just need to market regional areas and show off what they have to offer. We need practical solutions. Companies like our abattoir, Midfield Meats, transport companies like Porthaul in Portland, and our vast agricultural sector are screaming out for staff to fill existing positions. This is where the government needs to work closely with the regions to find ways to support people to move to regional areas to live and work. The benefits are endless. We have good schools, quality tertiary education, good health care, a 5-minute commute and the beach is a daily factor of life, not just a holiday treat. Why would you not want to be part of that?

Members opposite will be quick to point out their payroll tax concessions and first home owner grants for regional properties as policies supporting regional areas. But these policies alone, without the endgame in mind, will actually do very little, particularly given that the new charges and taxes outweigh the benefits. We have seen the fire services property levy increase by 11 per cent — and just watch what happens when the freeze is taken off in two years time, if that poorly constructed bill ever makes it to the Governor.

Do not get me started on the disgraceful way this government is beholden to the unions, with an uncosted enterprise bargaining agreement sitting on the table that is going to end up costing taxpayers millions and millions of dollars. There is only one place that that can come from — that is, taxpayers pockets.

The amendment to the first home owner grant to increase the grant for new homes in regional Victoria could in principle provide incentives, but it is no silver bullet. Again it is not going to work unless it is part of a suite of policies aimed at developing the regions. If that policy sits in isolation, it will result in people moving from the city to the commuter belt, to areas like Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Are there enough jobs in these regions or will people have to commute into the city for work? Will the infrastructure cope or will we see more overcrowding on our public transport systems? Will the roads leading into the city be even more congested than they already are?

If we are serious about attracting people to live and work in regional areas, we need to make sure the infrastructure is in place to support them. There is no point doing one without the other. Are there enough schools and hospitals in these new growth areas to cater for the increasing demand? Would it not be smarter to attract people to South-West Coast, where there is room in our schools and jobs available, rather than building five new schools and a new hospital, which will have to be built in the western suburbs in the next five years?

Our roads are a real problem. They are falling apart. Even when they have been fixed the repair job only lasts a couple of weeks at best before they have to be done again. It is throwing good money after bad. Local councils are screaming out for assistance, highlighting roads that need to be fixed, but they are being largely ignored. The money allocated in the budget is mostly made up of federal funding and is for projects that have already been announced. Once again those on that side of the house are trying to hoodwink the people of South-West Coast into thinking that they are actually doing something.

I am pleased to see that the state government has finally stopped playing games and has submitted its plans for regional rail to the federal government. However, our train service is the slowest in the state. Ballarat passengers are complaining about punctuality being at 78 per cent. Warrnambool line punctuality has been as low as 12 per cent this year and is only now sitting at around 60 per cent — and that is with the goalpost being moved to include a new generous 11-minute safeguard. But even with that they still cannot run on time. It is now slower to take the train to Melbourne than it was in 1992. My husband was due to arrive at 4 o'clock today, but I have not heard from him yet. That is no surprise; it is probably 20 minutes late. That is normal. It is not before time that this government should listen to my concerns. I have been raising these concerns for some months in this place on behalf of the people of South-West Coast. Passengers on the Warrnambool line have had enough.

They just want a comfortable and reliable train service that arrives on time.

It is disappointing there were no new details in the Premier's media stunt during his first visit to Warrnambool in his role. The community could see straight through the stunt and were disgusted that he had no time to visit the special development school, but had an hour to have coffee by the beach when the school only wanted 10 minutes of his time.

The lower payroll tax rates for regional areas could actually go some way to creating jobs, but that is just one step. As I mentioned earlier, these businesses need infrastructure to ensure that they can do business. They need good road and rail links to ensure they can get goods to market. They need a reliable and adequate power supply so they can operate their businesses efficiently. This is a major issue in my electorate now, where many farm businesses and other energy intensive industries do not have adequate power supply. These are existing businesses that are able to expand and employ more people, but they are being held back. I note there is a \$90 million fund to modernise Victoria's energy supply system in the budget, but there is no detail on what it will be spent on. This is especially important to the Portland community, but there is no detail and time is passing.

As I said before, money allocated to roads in my electorate in this budget is mostly for projects previously announced. They are partially funded by the commonwealth and they are not expected to be completed until June 2021. Prior to the 2014 election the Labor opposition promised to spend \$1 billion to fix country roads, but we are still waiting and things are getting worse. This hurts productivity, with transport companies faced with increased repair costs for damage to axles, wheels and suspension. There are also losses associated with damaged stock being bounced around as trucks, vans and cars navigate the bumpy, cracked and warped road surfaces.

Bridges still have not been tested, meaning that trucks have to go miles out of their way. This government is reducing speeds instead of fixing roads, which will also decrease productivity — in fact it sends businesses broke by raising costs because it takes longer to get product to market. These costs then get pushed back to producers and manufacturers, making goods produced less internationally competitive.

It was disappointing to see no mention of the Warrnambool Special Developmental School in the budget. I fail to believe that this government can prioritise a school by buying land and then three years

later not do what they promised — that is, build a school. They delivered the budget saying it was about people. How can they say that when they ignore a school for children with disabilities, a school which has areas that cannot be accessed by children in wheelchairs, and fundamental areas for education like the library. Since the budget was handed down the school has been told they did not receive funding because they are not shovel-ready. What rubbish! How many projects in this state have been fully funded without being shovel-ready? I can list many off the top of my head. It is a classic move from a government that did not want any noise being made, and a way to silence any criticism that hurts the message. The Minister for Education has had two meetings and said he would look at immediate steps to address the school's key concerns around overcrowding and staff facilities. Last week the *Warrnambool Standard* reported that these measures will not be in place until the beginning of next year. That is hardly immediate.

It was also disappointing that the Premier could not find time to visit the school during his visit to Warrnambool last month. Rather than tackle the tough issues facing our region, he instead opted to talk about previously announced projects and opened a building that has been operational since February, a building that was funded by the previous Liberal government.

The people of Warrnambool and Port Fairy deserve better than to wait two and a half years for the Premier to just fly in, have his photo taken and fly home again. Our roads are our primary connection to the rest of the state. What a shame the Premier did not see fit to experience how bad they actually are for himself, which the community has been crying out for him to do.

The Great South Coast Food and Fibre Council's work has paid off, with funding for the plan secured. Well done to Georgina Gubbins, Basil Ryan and the team for their exceptional work and advocacy. But there is a lack of information around this too. It is to be funded from a general pool of money for regional partnerships, but there is no further breakdown. I have asked the minister to clarify this, but her response gave zero indication of how much money would be forthcoming, or when. This budget is writing into law the Premier's broken promises. 'No new taxes and no new charges' is what he told Victorians. These budget papers prove otherwise.

Those opposite are quick to talk up their support for rural and regional Victoria, but when you get beyond the tram tracks it soon becomes clear that it is all just smoke and mirrors, with only half the job being done

and empty promises that have absolutely no funding behind them.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VEHICLE INDUSTRY BILL 2017

Council's amendments

Returned from Council with message relating to following amendments:

1. Clause 1, line 6, omit "transactions; and" and insert "transactions—".
2. Clause 1, after line 6 insert—
 - (i) to recover the cost of transitional assistance provided to certain participants in the commercial passenger vehicle industry; and
 - (ii) to partly fund the regulation of the commercial passenger vehicle industry; and".
3. Clause 3, page 5, after line 12 insert—

"*ESC* means the Essential Services Commission established by section 7 of the **Essential Services Commission Act 2001**;".

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

That the amendments be agreed to.

I will not be speaking for long on this part of the process as we discussed this matter earlier in the week as we transmitted the bill back to the Legislative Council. I did, however, just want to make a few additional comments on top of what was said earlier in the week. I would first like to thank the upper house for dealing with this expeditiously and returning it to the Assembly in time — hopefully, pending what happens in the next 31 minutes — to get it through the Assembly and therefore get it through the Parliament this afternoon, and that is an important point. The sooner this bill passes the Parliament, the sooner this bill becomes law, the sooner people who are waiting for their transition support — waiting for that important financial assistance that the Andrews Labor government is providing as part of this package of reforms — can see that processed, which is why I am personally very keen to see this bill pass the Parliament today.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this debate. It has been a challenging debate. I said

this the other day: it has been a complex debate. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of my department, particularly Paul Salter, who has worked through this legislation through the Parliament —

An honourable member interjected.

Ms ALLAN — I could never forget David Money, and it is good to see he has bipartisan support for that. They have done an outstanding job in support. I think the shadow minister said this the other day: we have both appreciated the advice from the department on this policy matter.

Let us remember what we are passing here this afternoon. We are leading the nation by establishing a single commercial passenger vehicle industry. It will put all providers on a level playing field, but it will also give Victorians more public transport choices. It will give them more choices across a range of different platforms, be they taxi, hire car or ridesharing, and we will also be looking at how we can provide better security for drivers and passengers as part of our second tranche of legislation. We are reducing costs for operators, we are slashing red tape as part of this package of legislation and, most critically, we are also protecting the existing industry with that vital package of financial support that is part of these reforms.

We have the most generous transitional assistance of any jurisdiction in Australia. Sadly the shadow minister called it a slush fund to buy the vote of taxi licence holders when we announced this last year, but we have been determined to ensure that there is this financial support to the industry because we recognised they needed this support as they were going through this period of great change, and as I may have said earlier in the week, the payments out of the Fairness Fund have also started to be made.

I will just make some observations on some of the amendments that have been put forward both in this place and in the other place after I last rose to speak on this earlier in the week. I will say this about the opposition, particularly the Liberal Party: they have been consistent. They have been completely consistent on one matter — they have not supported the financial assistance to the existing industry. Indeed they have fought every attempt to provide that financial support to the existing industry.

We know they support Uber. We have seen the pictures of the shadow minister and the Leader of the Opposition — for now — hanging out at Uber HQ. We know they support removing taxi and hire car licences, but we just know from their repeated actions, including

today, that they just did not want any financial support for the existing industry. They stood in front of rally after rally, and I know the member for Oakleigh in particular could talk about the rally that was in front of his office. The behaviour of the shadow Minister for Planning at that rally was just disgraceful. They talked about fairness. Out on the streets they talked about fairness, and they raced into Parliament and voted against it at every opportunity.

This is an important feature of this debate because I think there are people who have been following this debate closely throughout. They are vulnerable. They are concerned. They need our support. They need the financial support that we are providing as part of this package, and this could have been done so much sooner if we did not have that blocking and stopping from the opposition. I think it is important to note that not once did the opposition put in writing how they would provide the financial assistance they claim they support. They claim they support financial assistance, yet they moved amendment after amendment to strip the package of the levy that would help pay for that financial assistance and they have not provided any alternative. It is with grave concern that that has added stress and anxiety into an already complex policy debate.

I will leave the final word on this matter to former Premier Jeff Kennett. He presented to the parliamentary inquiry on this matter — the upper house inquiry — on 23 May 2017, and he said this:

I am going to be ... frank with you. I have been terribly disappointed in the way my side of politics has handled this issue since the establishment of the inquiry under Ted Baillieu. With hardly any concept of what they wanted out of it, it has been an absolute, unmitigated, unfair balls-up.

I think the former Premier has represented strongly to me and other members of this place the need to support licence-holders and the need to support the industry, and we are doing that. I am very pleased that we are nearing the end of the process for the first stage of legislation, because when we get to the end of this stage we will have the framework in place. It means the industry can compete on a level playing field. It can mean there are more choices and options for passengers, and most critically it means we can get on and provide that critical financial assistance that those licence-holders are seeking. I again thank the work that the Parliament has done on this, and I commend the amended bill to the house this afternoon.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) — I am pleased the minister moved that the amendments be agreed to because I wish to propose an amendment to the amendments of the Legislative Council, and I ask that it

amendments of the Legislative Council, and I ask that it be circulated. I move:

That the house amend the Council's amendment 2 by omitting proposed subparagraph (ii).

Here we are at the conclusion of the debate on this bill and — well, well, well — we finally find out the truth behind some of the government's actions that we have been asking questions about over many, many months. The minister has outlined many things that we do agree on in relation to this bill. There is one thing we do not agree on, and we are prepared to fight this all the way, because we are after a fairer, better outcome for all passengers of all ridesharing transport in the industry and we are after a much fairer deal for taxi licence holders.

At the outset in this house we mentioned concerns about the need for a sunset clause. The government through the minister said, 'No, no, no. We don't need a sunset clause because there'll be an opportunity for any future government to remove the so-called levy' — or tax, as we call it — 'at any point in the future'. She went about her work to convince those in the other place to support her amendments and that we did not need a sunset clause. We even tried the position of a disallowance to give better oversight to the houses of Parliament when regulations need to be amended or implemented. Why would we not give greater oversight? Again the minister went about convincing the minor parties and the Greens that that was not necessary. 'We might even bring it in in the second tranche of legislation', I heard Samantha Dunn mention in a contribution in the other place.

We have fought hard and argued that the government should be funding a compensation package — a compensation package that we back, but we want a fairer compensation package — for licence-holders. The minister says you do not put a price on it. Well, as a starting point we back the recommendation of the ridesharing inquiry that an independent valuation of those licences should be done rather than plucking an arbitrary figure out of the air that is an insult to the hardworking, decent, honest taxidriviers that have spent many, many years building up their business.

We have spoken about taxidriviers who have come to us, and we have spoken to dozens and dozens and dozens, literally hundreds of them, and their stories are consistent and common. They have come here and they have worked 40, 50, 60-plus hours a week. They have missed out on time with their children. They have worked long hours. They have gone into debt. They have invested in their assets. Then this bill comes in that says they are not worth anything. 'We will give you a pittance, and you can take it or leave it', the

government says. The government has almost put a gun to their heads by saying take it or leave it, trying to blame us on this side of the house for trying to block the \$2 tax that should not be imposed on passengers and transport users to pay for the compensation.

We have argued against the tax all along. Fiona Patten, who represents the Australian Sex Party in the other place, moved to reduce the levy from \$2 to \$1. And just this week we wanted to remove that levy by reducing it to zero. Ms Patten's intention, as far as I know from my discussions with her, was to get a better deal. While that makes a bad bill better, if we could not get the levy down to zero, then we were prepared to at least get it down to \$1 rather than \$2.

The truth has finally come out about the intention of the government. If you look at the amendments that are being moved today, you see that proposed subparagraph (i) in amendment 2 says that the levy is in effect to recover the cost of transitional assistance provided to certain participants in the commercial passenger vehicle industry. Then we get to proposed subparagraph (ii). That is what Ms Patten would have understood it was for, and that is what James Purcell in the Council would have understood it was for. That is what the minor parties and the Greens would have been convinced it was for when this government put things before them to try to get their vote on this bill.

At the end of the process, in the dying days of the bill, the government then sneaks in proposed subparagraph (ii), which says the levy is to partly fund the regulation of the commercial passenger vehicle industry. Now we learn that that is the real intention of the levy. That is why there is no sunset clause on this. That is why the government do not want a disallowance motion. That is why they told the minor parties in the upper house that it is just to fund the compensation package. Well, it is not just to fund the compensation package. We now learn it is to fund the bureaucracy, the administration of the industry. How much of that money collected, we now ask, is going to go towards that, which is going to anger the taxi licence holders even further? Not only are they getting paid a pittance in the compensation put forward by the government, the money they are collecting that they have been told all along is to cover the cost of that financial package for taxi licence holders is not all going to go to them. One hundred per cent is not going to go to them. Part of it is going to go to fund the bureaucracy.

The government has been secretive, hiding the facts. The government should have been honest from day one when we asked questions about a sunset clause, when we asked questions around our rationale to deal with the government on a disallowance motion and when we tried

to argue whether the levy, the tax, should be \$2, \$1 or zero. All this was hidden from us — until now. Close to 4.30 p.m. on the final day of the sitting week, when this bill has passed the upper house and has come back to us, we now learn of proposed subparagraph (ii) of the amendment that is being snuck in to fund the bureaucracy. We think that is wrong, and we continue to oppose the bill on that basis.

Let me be very clear: we support ridesharing. We support deregulation of the industry. We support a fair package of compensation to be paid to those licence-holders who have worked long and hard over many, many years to build up their businesses. What we do not support is this government slugging passengers with a \$2 tax or a \$1 tax — we do not know how much it will be because the government could introduce regulations to change it at any point in time — that now we find is not just to fund the compensation package; it is to fund the bureaucracy. I think that is wrong.

The government comes in here and lectures us about being honest and up-front, to negotiate to get better outcomes on some of these bills, but now we learn in the final moments of this bill the truth behind this levy.

I was still getting text messages from taxidriviers before to remind the government that, exactly as the minister said, yes, there is great uncertainty out there. There is great anxiety, there is stress, there are medical conditions and there are bankruptcies out there. Jeff Kennett spoke of deaths, depression and different things. These people are doing it very hard and they are very stressed. Yes, they need some closure. Yes, they need some certainty. But what they really need is a fair and fairly argued compensation package, and let us argue in here how that might be funded.

The Treasurer, the Premier and the rest of the government have been going around beating their chests boasting about their budget, boasting about the huge \$9.7 billion, nearly \$10 billion, they received from the sale of the lease of the port of Melbourne. The Treasurer has been running around talking about surpluses. But the Premier, before the election, looked Victorians in the eye and said there would be no new taxes, and now we learn that they want to introduce this new tax to pay for the compensation — and, on top of that, to secretly fund the bureaucracy behind that. This is going to raise many questions for the industry.

I had a personal discussion with the minister before. I do not think the minister would mind me saying that we want to bring closure to this bill and give some certainty to taxi licence holders that compensation will

be paid. The minister then would obviously be able to move on from some of the issues that she has had to deal with in a very difficult, complex bill, which I acknowledge. But this is going to raise a number of further questions because many who have no doubt contacted the minister's office, the department and me will now be coming forward to argue about how much of this money is going to go towards them and how much is going to go towards the bureaucracy. 'Why can more not go to us?', they will ask. I think the government has left itself exposed in trying to answer some of those questions.

Finally, I will finish as I started the other day. If the government gets their way with these amendments and the bill is successful this afternoon, there is still a great deal of uncertainty out there amongst licence-holders. We think many are informed about this matter, but when you talk to them, many of them are unaware of this bill and the changes to the industry. So I think the government owe it to the industry and to licence-holders, stakeholders and the travelling public to get a message out there about the changes, about the transitional arrangements and how they will impact on them. For goodness sake, offer some support to these people who have experienced enormous uncertainty and been under a great deal of business and family stress over many, many months.

I will leave my contribution there. I think I have outlined my position. I am disappointed that only today have we finally find out why there has been an argument against a sunset clause, why there has been an argument against the disallowance and why the government is so desperate to have the \$2 or \$1 levy, not zero, and not fund the compensation themselves; it is because it is going to the bureaucracy. I think that is dishonest. It is a shame that we had to find out about that now, because we could have spent a great deal of time talking about it and getting answers to questions surrounding it. I will leave my contribution there.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — In support of the deputy leader's remarks I want to deal with the disgraceful misrepresentation by the Minister for Public Transport in insinuating that the opposition parties are not supporting compensation for taxi licence holders. That is exactly the opposite of the truth. One of the reasons we have so strongly opposed this bill and sought to have it thrown out in its entirety is to ensure that there is an adequate compensation package for taxi licence holders, many of whom have purchased licences in good faith and are being utterly destroyed by the government's appalling handling of their position. It is paying them a pittance in many instances when compared with the costs and investments they have incurred in good faith in acquiring

taxi licences under a regime that has been in place under successive governments.

To suggest anything to the contrary is a disgrace, particularly invoking former Premier Jeff Kennett in that regard because he, like we have, has been making the point very strongly that the way the government is treating taxi licence holders is disgraceful. We certainly do, as the deputy leader has indicated, also support deregulation of ridesharing, but it should not be at the expense of effectively defrauding many taxi licence holders in the way that the government is intending to do.

Let me just make absolutely clear for the record that all that is before this house at this point is whether or not we agree to the amendments that have been made in the Legislative Council. We do not have an opportunity in this house to vote against the bill in its entirety, albeit that is what our first preference would be. But of course our colleagues in the Legislative Council did vote against the bill in its entirety, demonstrating that the first and best preference of the coalition parties is to throw this bill out and come back with a bill that properly provides for both the deregulation of ridesharing and for proper compensation.

In support of the amendment being moved by the deputy leader to omit the reference to partly funding the regulation of the commercial passenger vehicle industry, this probably epitomises the appalling behaviour of the government in relation to this legislation. Potentially they have hoodwinked or pulled the wool over the eyes of some of the minor parties and crossbenchers in the Legislative Council. They have been saying all along, 'We've got a levy that is dedicated to providing transitional assistance to participants in the commercial passenger vehicle industry', but it is now becoming clear that the levy is also intended to fund the bureaucracy, to fund the regulation and to continue indefinitely for that purpose.

We have got a mishmash of amendments, some of which seek to guarantee that any increase in the levy be only to fund the transitional assistance. Other provisions in the bill, however, allow some of the levy to be funnelled off to fund the bureaucracy. We believe that the bill should give effect to what we understand has been represented to the crossbenchers and to the community — that this levy would only be for the purpose of transitional assistance for participants in the commercial passenger vehicle industry. It should not be used to fund the bureaucracy. We believe that the amendments of the Legislative Council should be amended to make that clear, and in that respect I

strongly support the amendment that has been moved by the deputy leader.

I reiterate that we would have liked to oppose the entire bill in this house and tell the government to go away and do it properly. We do not have that capacity with the question before us. We are, however, seeking to ensure that the levy is used for what the government has represented it would be used for — that is, to provide transitional assistance compensation, and not to fund bureaucracy.

Amendment 1 agreed to.

Amendment 2

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McGuire) — The member for Croydon has proposed to omit words from amendment 2. The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted from amendment 2 stand part of the amendment.

Members supporting the member for Croydon's proposal should vote no.

House divided on question (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 46

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

Noes, 35

Angus, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D.
Asher, Ms	O'Brien, Mr M.
Battin, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
Britnell, Ms	Riordan, Mr
Bull, Mr T.	Ryall, Ms
Burgess, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Clark, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Crisp, Mr	Smith, Mr T.

Dixon, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Gidley, Mr	Staley, Ms
Guy, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Katos, Mr	Victoria, Ms
Kealy, Ms	Wakeling, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McLeish, Ms	Watt, Mr
Morris, Mr	

Question agreed to.

Amendments 2 and 3 agreed to.

BUDGET PAPERS 2017–18

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport):

That the house takes note of the budget papers 2017–2018.

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — It is a great pleasure to finally get the opportunity to speak on this year's budget. It was a terrific budget, and I have got a lot to say about it. One of the things that I will be able to say about this budget is that since the budget has been delivered we have really got on with the job and started making sure that the things that we said we would do in the budget are actually up and going. We are making a difference in people's lives and making sure that families are getting better services. This budget is on track to being one of the best budgets ever.

I will give you a terrific example. In this year's budget we delivered a record amount for family violence. It was amazing to pick up the budget papers and see that this government, which had accepted all the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, had actually read those recommendations, worked very hard on thinking about how they would be implemented and put the funding in the budget to a record amount of \$1.9 billion so that women and children all around Victoria can access safe, reliable, improved and innovative services to prevent family violence and also to support families, many of whom live in my own electorate and are experiencing the scourge of family violence. This money was very well received by many of the agencies and local councils, not to mention many women and their children who are already benefiting from this record-breaking, significant investment in family violence.

That is not all that is in the budget. I expect that when I next resume the debate on the take-note motion I will have a lot to say about our incredible commitment to building the Education State in Victoria. When we were in opposition not one school in my electorate received an upgrade. I had the real pleasure of inviting the Treasurer to my electorate earlier this year. He came down to Narre

Warren South P–12 College and we had a little jig — we had a bit of a dance and a bit of a singalong with the students. We had a great time. The Treasurer got to see those incredibly talented young people. They come from a wide array of backgrounds and life experiences.

The SPEAKER — Order! The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has arrived and I am required to interrupt business. The member may continue her speech when the matter is next before the house.

YARRA RIVER PROTECTION (WILIP-GIN BIRRARUNG MURRON) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 August; motion of Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 August; motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (QUALITY AND SAFETY) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Mornington Peninsula Freeway barriers

Mr DIXON (Nepean) — (12 950) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is that the installation of wire barriers that are going to come onto the Mornington Peninsula Freeway be delayed in order to combine those works with noise wall installation along the same stretch of the freeway. I do certainly welcome the wire barriers that are going to run along the Mornington Peninsula Freeway from Peninsula Link all the way down to the end of the freeway at Rosebud. The section of the freeway between Safety Beach and Rosebud has been tested over numerous years, and the whole section of freeway, which has many homes abutting it, exceeds the allowable noise limits for freeways.

We have had a long-running campaign to have those noise walls installed along the freeway. VicRoads have said that, for them, the installation of those noise walls is a priority but that they have not received the funds from the government to actually install those walls, so the need is clearly demonstrated and is supported by VicRoads. The project to install the wire barriers along that section of the freeway will entail almost total removal of all the vegetation on the sides of the freeway and also on the freeway median. A lot of it is past its use-by date. Some of it is the wrong sort of vegetation, and it is going to be in the way of the wire barriers of course. Some of it is a fire risk.

Unfortunately what that means is that with all the trees gone, with all the vegetation gone and with the excess noise having been demonstrated by VicRoads, that is just going to make that freeway far noisier and destroy any amenity that is left for the locals who live close to that freeway. Also economically I think it is going to be far better to do both the projects at the same time rather than digging it up to do one project and then coming back, with all the traffic interruptions over many months, and doing the second project. It is important, I think, that the amenity of those who have been putting

up with that freeway noise for a long, long while is actually respected.

A bit over 12 months ago a section of the freeway was actually resealed by VicRoads. Some bright spark at VicRoads decided to put the coarsest road surface on that section of freeway, which just infuriated the locals who had been campaigning for noise walls. What they ended up getting as a road surface was the noisiest possible. In fact VicRoads in the end actually said, 'Yes, we've made a mistake there'. They had to come back six months later and resurface that whole section of the road, so a whole lot of money has been spent there. I want the two projects to happen together at the same time to improve both the safety and the amenity for those around the freeway.

Kambrya College

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — (12 951) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. It concerns Kambrya College in my electorate. The action I seek is that the minister visit this outstanding local school to mark the next stage of the school's \$3 million upgrade project, an upgrade that will deliver a fantastic new multipurpose facility and do away with its old portable classrooms. Students will no longer be forced to use these tired old classrooms at the rear of the school, which have left many feeling isolated from the rest of the school community. Instead they will soon have access to a state-of-the-art facility.

Their new facility will incorporate new classrooms and a multipurpose room that will utilise movable walls, allowing the school to create one large room, smaller rooms or whatever configuration works for them. This unique facility will also be available for use by the local community, another win-win. The architects McGlashan Everist were appointed earlier this year, and they have been hard at work on the design of this new learning space. I have seen some of the early designs, and I know that the school is very excited to see their vision start to take shape.

They have long been doing their absolute best to accommodate a fast-growing school community. In fact there are now well over 1200 students enrolled at the school, with enrolments expected to keep growing in coming years. It is in fact the 'revolution school' that featured on the ABC documentary, so it has become a school of choice. This project is vital to ensuring the hardworking team at Kambrya can provide the highest quality learning environment for their students. We worked tirelessly, I have got to say, over many, many years to ensure this program became a reality. I am really excited to see the progress being made. I hope

that the minister can join with me in visiting Kambrya to celebrate the next stage of this exciting project.

Briagolong Primary School bus service

Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East) — (12 952) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The action I seek is for him to address the situation facing Briagolong Primary School's one and only bus service. The school has been told it is not meeting the requirements to maintain the service, and that is specifically to have eight or more students from outside the 4.8-kilometre range using the service. While this information apparently came from Public Transport Victoria, I am told the final decision sits with the Department of Education and Training and the education minister.

Of the school's 101 students, 15 are on the bus roll. This number has constantly ranged between 13 and 20 over the past five years. Only five of these 15 children that use the bus live further than 4.8 kilometres from the school, which is the required distance for a student to be eligible to catch the bus. The other students from within the 4.8-kilometre mark use the bus as the seats are available. This is standard practice. However, the extenuating circumstances here are that for the other 10 students from within the 4.8-kilometre mark the nearest family is 2.4 kilometres from the school. This is too far for the kids to walk. In other words, all 15 students that use the bus live further than 2.4 kilometres away from the school. That is a classic example of hard and fast regulation not taking into account local issues and local scenarios that often arise in rural areas.

A number of the bus-travelling students are the children of parents who work outside of the township or are from single-parent families, so they cannot easily access education without the assistance of the bus. There are also no properly constructed walking paths, meaning children could be left walking for a number of kilometres on main roads should this bus service be removed as has been mooted. School community members have advised that losing this one and only bus service would have a devastating impact for the reasons that I have mentioned. So from both angles of safety and indeed common sense I ask the minister to review this situation with a view to maintaining the Briagolong school bus service for the 15 children who do require it.

Essendon African-Australian communities

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — (12 953) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police, and the action I seek is for a meeting to occur between

Victoria Police and the local African-Australian communities that live in the state district of Essendon to discuss how African Australians can improve their chances of being employed by Victoria Police either as sworn officers, protective services officers or unsworn employees.

Bayside bay trail

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — (12 954) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister and the CEO of VicRoads, Mr John Merritt, or their representatives, to visit Beach Road, Mentone, to inspect the impact of the proposed bay trail in concert with all — and I repeat all — relevant stakeholders. I have concerns which have been raised in the past regarding the impact upon traffic movements, cycling safety and foreshore user access as a consequence of the latest City of Kingston plan for the bay trail.

One independent regular foreshore user recently described the amended plan, in his understanding, as 'lunacy'. I note that there are significant potential impacts that are perhaps only fully evident upon a detailed site visit and evaluation.

The points of concern include the following. Parking is to be moved into the left-hand travelling lane on the bay side of the road on a key section of Beach Road, in turn removing parking places. The road becomes effectively single lane outside clearway times during times of high foreshore access demand — for example, on hot days. The membership of the Mentone Lifesaving Club has not been fully consulted on the details of the new Kingston plan. Between 6.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday there will be no parking at all on Beach Road between Mentone Lifesaving Club and Nepean Highway at Mordialloc.

I note for the record that there is currently a gravel verge that runs between the lifesaving club and Rennison Street which enables people to park along the foreshore between 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m., which is otherwise a clearway time. My understanding is that this gravel verge will be removed and will not allow additional parking. At certain times, such as on hot days when there is parking on both sides of the road outside clearway times, an important arterial road will be reduced to single lanes in each direction.

Additionally, the narrowing of lane widths needs to be reviewed in consultation with multiple cycling user groups, not just one. Leading Australian cyclist groups, such as the Amy Gillett Foundation, have expressed concern regarding the narrowing of lane widths. It is

my view that dialogue needs to be undertaken with people who are directly affected in situ so the matters can be discussed with council planners, representatives of VicRoads and also the minister's office.

I reiterate: the action I seek is that the minister and the CEO of VicRoads or their representatives meet on site with all relevant stakeholders.

Maygar barracks heritage assessment

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) — (12 955) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning. The action I seek is a reference to Heritage Victoria to conduct a new assessment of the history and heritage of the site in Camp Road, Broadmeadows, and to provide a view for appropriate development within this complex featuring the Maygar barracks. The reason I am making this call is that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection has made a submission to the Australian government and a federal parliamentary committee about its plans to build a \$29 million detention centre for high and extreme-risk offenders in one of Victoria's most disadvantaged communities, which is undergoing a population boom.

The Turnbull government's plan to construct a detention centre for convicted paedophiles, drug traffickers and members of outlaw biker gangs is in my view fundamentally flawed, inappropriate and wrong on economic, social and heritage grounds. The reason I am raising this is that the Department of Immigration and Border Protection submission declares there are no known heritage issues that are required to be addressed in relation to this proposal, yet they want to build a 140 hardened-bed detention centre adjacent to the Maygar barracks, from where the diggers, light horsemen and Victoria Cross winners were dispatched to fight at Gallipoli and the Western Front.

Is Australia's government using wilful blindness to ignore the significance of this nation-defining heritage, or is the department adopting alternate facts — the flip side of reality — to avoid scrutiny? The area is also significant for Australia's postwar settlement. Part of the compound was converted into a hostel where wave upon wave of migrant families answered Australia's call to populate or perish. There were large numbers of Turkish families who first called Australia home within this complex, so it has a rich heritage and significance.

My argument is that the \$29 million could be much better invested, along with the unspent \$1.324 billion that has been identified to help supply-chain companies survive the demise of Australia's automotive industry. Broadmeadows has been hardest hit by the closure of

the Ford Motor Company, the end of car manufacturing and the deindustrialisation that is going through Melbourne's north. My submission is that what we really need is a city deal for economic and cultural development with the federal government and, dare I say it, to have the \$29 million and at least some of the unspent \$1.324 billion reinvestment for that three-word slogan that was the election promise of the federal government: to deliver 'jobs and growth'.

This is the community where it is needed most, and it cannot be seen to be again treated as a dumping ground for these sorts of issues. There is an alternative way that I have put up to address this issue so that this detention centre does not have to be built. We can make much greater value from this significant and strategic site.

Political donations

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) — (12 956) My adjournment matter is to the Special Minister of State on the matter of political donations. The action I seek is for the minister to write to me and explain whether this government will reform political donation laws in Victoria.

The Greens support laws that: (1) ban donations from corporations in certain industries such as gambling and property development; (2) cap donations from individuals at \$1000; (3) require all donations over \$100 to be disclosed within seven business days to bring us in line with other states such as Queensland which have real-time donation disclosure; and (4) give the anti-corruption commission real teeth to investigate MPs.

Victoria has some of the weakest political donation laws in the western world. We know that donations under \$13 500 can be kept entirely secret, and larger donations can be kept secret until months after an election as our donation disclosure laws are so weak and disclosure is severely delayed. The Leader of the Opposition's recent dinner with alleged criminals, who discussed donating to the Liberal Party, has further highlighted the weaknesses in our system, but they are weaknesses that were already clear.

We have seen Labor accept donations linked to Crown Casino and extend Crown's licence. We have seen both Labor and the Liberals take donations from property developers who seek to have influence over government decisions. Big property developers, gambling lobbyists and apparently even alleged mobsters can fill the coffers of the old political parties, hoping to increase their influence over Parliament in return.

In December 2015 I introduced a bill to ban big developers from donating to political parties and candidates, and to introduce real-time disclosure of political donations. Unfortunately Labor, the Liberals and the National Party joined together to vote that bill down. We need our parliaments to be completely free from the corrupting influence of political donations. We need to know that Victoria's democracy belongs to us, the people, and not to vested interests. The community expects nothing less, and I look forward to the letter from the Special Minister of State on the issue.

Country Fire Authority Carrum Downs station

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) — (12 957) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Emergency Services. The action I seek is for the minister to provide an update on the status of the construction and completion of the brand-new fire station for the Carrum Downs fire brigade at the corner of Wedge Road and Frankston-Dandenong Road in Carrum Downs.

The Carrum Downs fire brigade is a tremendous volunteer brigade and a very busy brigade, responding to up to 500 emergency calls each year. The brigade performs a very important role in keeping our community safe. They service the suburbs of Carrum Downs and Sandhurst, and regularly support surrounding Country Fire Authority brigades at Skye, Frankston, Patterson River and Hampton Park.

Proudly serving our community since 1944, the Carrum Downs brigade has been at their current site since 1971. It is well and truly time for a bigger and better station for the Carrum Downs brigade so they can continue to do their great work. The new fire station has such strong community support. Carrum Downs fire brigade members are keen to move into their new home. Together with the Carrum Downs community, I look forward to the minister's update.

Wattle Park graffiti

Mr WATT (Burwood) — (12 958) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The action I seek is for the minister to ensure that Parks Victoria immediately remove graffiti from the trams that are situated in Wattle Park. Currently there are two trams that are both plastered with graffiti. I have raised a similar matter or request with the minister over an earlier incident on a previous occasion. The last time I think I raised it in this house was on 7 August 2016.

I have previously cleaned up the trams myself. I have been down there with the local scouts group, the

Bennettswood Venturers, and painted the trams myself. I also had one of the trams replaced because it was burnt out previously. We have had incidents there previously. Generally we pop down there once a year and notice that Parks Victoria has cleaned it up. I have noticed that the frequency of graffiti on trams has increased substantially, such that I cannot remember the last time I went down there and there was no graffiti on trams. It has become a serious issue.

I have stated previously that successful anti-crime measures abroad have treated graffiti and vandalism as a gateway crime for budding offenders, who end up graduating to more serious crime. The perception that graffiti crime such as this gives is that of a society that tolerates criminal acts of vandalism and displays a lack of motivation for tackling it.

I think we do have to take this seriously. You only have to wander through my electorate and you will see graffiti quite a way through the electorate. As a matter of fact, if you went into the Burwood police station today — although I must admit I have not been past the Burwood police station in daylight over the last couple of days, but the last time I was there it was still graffitied — there are at least three graffitied spots that you could find. So graffiti is a very big problem in the electorate.

Particularly what I raise today is the issue of Wattle Park and the fact that the graffiti is prominent. Wattle Park is an area which is used by a lot of children. The trams are there for kids to enjoy and play on, and I do not think it is a good look or a good message for us to send to our youth that graffiti is acceptable — 'Hey kids, get involved because it is nice, it is bright and it is colourful'. It is not appropriate. I do ask that the minister ensure that this actually gets cleaned up immediately.

Pascoe Vale electorate schools

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) — (12 959) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that the minister join me for a visit to Pascoe Vale Primary School and Pascoe Vale Girls College.

Pascoe Vale Primary School is a wonderful school that boasts a very strong leadership team, led by Susan Smith. It also has an active and committed school community, led by school council president Nella Caruana. In recent years Pascoe Vale Primary School has experienced a substantial increase in enrolments. Since 2012 the student population has increased by

over 100 per cent. This has placed considerable strain on the school's already inadequate facilities.

The school is a very old building. It is a heritage building. So far the only answer has been the provision of portables, but that is not sustainable in terms of the amount of ground there is to continue accommodating future portables. There really needs to be a more long-term solution and redevelopment of the school.

I would also ask that the minister join me on a visit to Pascoe Vale Girls College. It is another great local school, led by principal Kay Peddle, who is supported by an energetic and dedicated group of teachers and a board that represents the broad cross-section of the community. I recently visited the school, as I often do, and was taken on a tour of some of the areas of the school that are suffering. In particular, the food technology facilities are a very serious OHS hazard. There are also leaking roofs, and there are the issues of wear and tear that you would expect in facilities of their age.

I look forward to the minister joining me on a visit to both Pascoe Vale Primary School and Pascoe Vale Girls College.

Responses

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) —
There were 10 matters raised by 10 honourable members, and they will be referred to those ministers for their action and response.

**House adjourned 5.23 p.m. until Tuesday,
22 August.**