

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

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

**Thursday, 14 December 2017**

**(Extract from book 17)**

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## **The Governor**

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

## **The ministry**

(from 16 October 2017)

Premier . . . . .	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services . . . . .	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources . . . . .	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects . . . . .	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment . . . . .	The Hon. B. A. Carroll, MP
Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy, and Minister for Small Business . . . . .	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 Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence . . . . .	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State . . . . .	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government . . . . .	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs . . . . .	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water . . . . .	The Hon. L. M. Neville, 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 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

## **The Governor**

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

## **The ministry**

(to 15 October 2017)

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 Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence .....	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State .....	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and Minister for Local Government .....	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 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

## **The Governor**

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

## **The ministry**

(to 12 September 2017)

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 (until 23 August 2017) . . . . .	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, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Graley,  
Ms Kilkenny, Ms Knight, Mr McGuire, Mr Pearson, Mr Richardson, Ms Spence, Ms Suleyman,  
Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Ms Williams.

**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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>
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 <sup>2</sup>	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent <sup>3</sup>	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio <sup>4</sup>	Melton	Ind
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma <sup>1</sup>	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John <sup>5</sup>	Morwell	Ind
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>6</sup>	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 <sup>7</sup>	Northcote	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Riordan, Mr Richard <sup>8</sup>	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 <sup>9</sup>	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Thorpe, Ms Lidia Alma <sup>10</sup>	Northcote	Greens
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

<sup>1</sup> Elected 31 October 2015

<sup>2</sup> Resigned 3 September 2015

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 3 September 2015

<sup>4</sup> ALP until 7 March 2017

<sup>5</sup> Nats until 28 August 2017

<sup>6</sup> Elected 14 March 2015

<sup>7</sup> Died 23 August 2017

<sup>8</sup> Elected 31 October 2015

<sup>9</sup> Resigned 2 February 2015

<sup>10</sup> Elected 18 November 2017

**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, Ms Hutchins, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula 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 and Ms Spence. (*Council*): Ms Bath, Ms Patten and 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and 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 Gepp 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, 14 December 2017**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Edwards) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.**

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO  
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD  
SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Final report**

**Mr PAKULA** (Attorney-General) (*By leave*) (09:33) — The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is holding its final sitting today and will hand down its final report tomorrow. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the commission and the courage of the victims who have come forward to share their stories through this process. The royal commission has been a turning point in Australian history and will change the way we deal with victims of abuse and their abusers. In 2012 former Premier Ted Baillieu and the former Attorney-General, the member for Box Hill, established a parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations. The inquiry handed down its *Betrayal of Trust* report in 2013, with a number of members in this house participating. Also in 2013 former Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the establishment of the federal royal commission.

The *Betrayal of Trust* inquiry and the royal commission have provided an opportunity for the voices of thousands of victims of institutional abuse to be heard. These inquiries uncovered tragic and widespread abuse of children in institutional care. The response from these institutions suggest that children reporting abuse were not believed and their allegations were ignored. It is now up to everyone with responsibility for children to ensure that these failures to protect children never happen again. Drawing on its extensive consultation and research, the royal commission has made significant recommendations for governments and institutions to ensure that we can all better protect children and prevent the horrific crimes of the past from happening again.

The government and this Parliament have already implemented a number of recommendations made by the royal commission, including the establishment of an intermediary scheme, the introduction of new laws to prevent a court from taking into account an offender's prior good character or lack of previous convictions in sentencing for a child sex offence if the fact assisted the offender to commit the offence, removing time limits which applied to survivors of child sexual abuse in

commencing legal proceedings, creating a new statutory duty which allows an organisation to be held liable in negligence for organisational child abuse and strengthening the working with children check scheme.

We continue to be committed to a key recommendation of both the royal commission and the Victorian *Betrayal of Trust* report to establish a redress scheme for victims of institutional abuse. Victoria has indicated its in-principle support for a national redress scheme, and it remains our view that a national scheme is the best outcome for victim survivors. We are currently working through the detail of the scheme with the commonwealth before making a final decision about whether to opt in or to pursue a state-based scheme. Before deciding to participate in the national scheme this government, and I am sure everyone in this Parliament, wants to ensure that the scheme will appropriately acknowledge the harm suffered by survivors and provide effective care and support so that survivors can achieve a sense of justice.

The protection of children in society is of paramount importance to all of us, and the Victorian government and no doubt this Parliament are committed to continually improving the way in which organisations identify and respond to any allegation of abuse.

**Mr PESUTTO** (Hawthorn) (09:36) — I, on behalf of the opposition parties, welcome the comments by the Attorney-General. The handing down of this report tomorrow marks a profound milestone in a long journey which began with very courageous agents of change, many of whom have been in this Parliament and sat in the gallery in this chamber over recent years, in particular the Foster family and others who courageously voiced their anguish and grief over the trauma they were subjected to. It began with them, and those members of this house who were members of the last Parliament can stand very proud of the parliamentary inquiry which led to very significant changes in the law and began a process to hold to account authorities which had for too long covered up abuse of their power and the tragic trauma imposed on those victims.

We stand ready to work with the government, as they worked with us in the previous Parliament, to enact whatever changes are required out of the national royal commission, and we look forward to working together on that front.

## PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

**Ansett estate, Mount Eliza**

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of the residents of Victoria draws to the attention of the house that the RM Ansett Trust has engaged Ernst & Young (EY) to act for the trust with regard to the Ansett estate, located at 90 Kunyung Road, Mount Eliza, Victoria 3930, and is inviting proposals for the development of the property based on a range of flexible transaction options and structures before the deadline of Wednesday, 13 December 2017.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria consider the potential to have the state of Victoria acquire the property in order to preserve this significant geographic and historical area for public use such as a state park and to add the property to the Victorian Heritage Register.

**By Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (910 signatures).**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered that petition be considered next day on motion of Mr MORRIS (Mornington).**

**Ordered that petitions presented by honourable member for Ripon on 13 December be considered next day on motion of Ms STALEY (Ripon).**

## OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE

**Report 2016–17**

**Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General), by leave, presented report.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be published.**

**INSPECTOR-GENERAL FOR  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**Hazelwood mine fire inquiry report 2017**

**Mr MERLINO (Minister for Emergency Services) by leave, presented report.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be published.**

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

**Performance of Independent Broad-based  
Anti-corruption Commission and Victorian  
Inspectorate 2016–17**

**Mr WELLS (Rowville) presented report, together with appendix.**

**Tabled.**

**Ordered to be published.**

## DOCUMENTS

**Tabled by the Acting Clerk:**

Auditor-General — Managing the Level Crossing Removal Program — Ordered to be published

Children's Court of Victoria — Report 2015–16

*Parliamentary Committees Act 2003:*

Government response to the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee's Report on the Inquiry into the control of invasive animals on Crown land

Government response to the Family and Community Development Committee's Report on the Inquiry into services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder

*Professional Standards Act 2003* — Instrument amending the New South Wales Bar Association Scheme under s 14 (*Gazette G49, 7 December 2017*).

**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

*Correction to long title*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (09:41)** — I advise that an administrative error occurred in the publishing and printing of the Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. Copies with the incorrect long title were previously circulated in error. I assure members that only the long title has been corrected and that otherwise the content of the bill is exactly the same as the copies of the bill previously circulated. I advise that the correct version is now available online, in the chamber and in the procedure office.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Adjournment**

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (09:42) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 6 February 2018.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MEMBERS STATEMENTS****Bob Anderson**

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Education) (09:42) — On Friday, 8 December, the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of John Gould officially designating the helmeted honeyeater as its own species, the 50th anniversary of the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, an announcement of 2.3 additional hectares to the reserve and the unveiling of a beautiful new mural. It was a great day celebrating our state bird emblem but also with a tinge of sadness as the president of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Bob Anderson, told me of his intention to retire in that week in order to spend more time with his family.

The helmeted honeyeater recovery program started more than 27 years ago and is run in partnership with Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Zoos Victoria, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Bob was the founding president in 1989. An extraordinary and effective leader and a tireless and passionate advocate, he spent on average 20 to 25 hours a week on activities associated with the friends, and under his stewardship they have been active participants in supporting the recovery program, which has been highly successful. There have been three highly successful breeding seasons recently, and the population is now around 190. This is an endangered bird. Bob is a wonderful person. It has been a privilege to work with him over the last 15 years. I wish all the very best to him and his family on his retirement.

**Harold Holt**

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (09:44) — On this final day of sitting for 2017 I rise to recognise the 50th anniversary of the disappearance of Australia's 17th Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Harold Holt. Prime Minister from Australia Day 1966 to his disappearance and death off the coast of Portsea, Harold Holt was a proud Australian, a dedicated servant

to public life and lifelong adherent to liberal values. He was also a husband and father. Many Australians will remember those quintessential images of Harold Holt as the 007 Prime Minister, pictured with his skindiving gear and sons and daughters-in-law in their bathers — carefree, contemporary 1960s Australia.

It was a different Australia, a new Australia, and Harold Holt represented the transition from postwar to modern Australia. As Treasurer he steered our country towards the adaptation of decimal currency, and on 14 February 1966 he oversaw its introduction. Harold Holt removed the remaining traces of the White Australia policy. He relaxed discriminatory immigration provisions and, most importantly, initiated the case for change at the 1967 referendum to recognise and bring dignity to Indigenous Australians, so long discriminated against in and by their own country.

While so many people will remember Harold Holt's foreign policy achievements by one famous statement, 'All the way with LBJ', he was in fact our first Prime Minister to truly begin meaningful and direct engagement with our Asia-Pacific neighbours. At the November 1966 election he won with the biggest majority in history.

Harold Holt was survived by his wife, Zara, and sons, Nicholas, Sam and Andrew. Fifty years on, Nicholas and Sam certainly keep Harold Holt's liberal legacy alive. Fifty years on, may he rest in peace.

**Elaine Walsh**

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (09:45) — Deputy Speaker, today on behalf of you in your role as the member for Bendigo West and I, I stand today to place on the record our sorrow at the death of Bendigo Labor veteran Elaine Walsh and to express our deep appreciation for her lifelong commitment to the ideals of the Labor Party.

Elaine joined the Labor Party on 9 February 1962 and served with the local Bendigo ALP branch until the present time. She worked on countless federal and state campaigns, with her specialty being organising the postal votes. Elaine was a passionate and committed member of the Labor Party. She was a true believer. She never lost her faith in the desirability and possibility of progress and in the role that a progressive party plays in achieving it.

Elaine was an inaugural member of the Bendigo Labor ladies group, formed in the 1960s. The group supported numerous candidates on campaign days and at events. My grandmother was a member of the group as well,

and Elaine was a great friend of the Allan family, particularly my grandparents Rita and Bill.

Elaine not only saw a long period of Bendigo's and Australia's history — over half a century — but like the thousands of other committed Labor activists she helped make it happen. It gave her great satisfaction to know that Labor MPs today hold both the two state seats and the federal seat in Bendigo. It has not always been thus. She was particularly proud too that those three seats are held by women.

The Bendigo Labor movement will greatly miss Elaine, and my sympathy goes to her family at this very sad time. She most certainly was a wonderful, wonderful asset to the Bendigo Labor movement and family.

### Gippsland Carnival

**Mr D. O'BRIEN** (Gippsland South) (09:47) — Along with the member for Gippsland East it was great to attend the jam-packed launch in Traralgon on Thursday night of the Gippsland greyhound racing carnival, which will be held for the second time this summer. Starting with the \$75 000 Sale Cup on Boxing Day, the carnival also includes the Traralgon, Warragul and Cranbourne cups and will provide plenty of entertainment for families and punters alike.

The launch was a star-studded affair, hosted by former Brisbane Lions footballer Richard Champion and featuring greyhound ambassador Brent 'Boomer' Harvey as well as Sale's own rising sporting stars, Western Bulldog Josh Dunkley and his sister Melbourne Vixen Lara Dunkley. Greyhound racing is an important part of the social and economic fabric of Gippsland, and the Sale club is a hub in my own electorate and contributes greatly to local charities and community groups as well.

### South Gippsland electorate employment

**Mr D. O'BRIEN** — On Wednesday in Leongatha I met with the South Gippsland Shire Council, the Leongatha Chamber of Commerce and Industry and others to discuss support for the town in the wake of the loss of more than 60 jobs at Leongatha's Murray Goulburn factory in the past few months. The announcement of new jobs at Burra Foods at Korumburra and ViPlus at Toora will help soften the blow, but there are plenty of local projects that the Andrews Labor government could get on with to help stimulate the local economy, including an upgrade of the South Gippsland Highway, better public transport links, funding stage 2 of the Korumburra Secondary College redevelopment and many more.

### Christmas felicitations

**Mr D. O'BRIEN** — As we head into the summer holiday period I would like to thank in advance all those who will work to keep us safe over summer, especially our emergency services workers, medical and nursing staff and of course the many wonderful volunteers who give so tirelessly to their communities. This includes our Country Fire Authority, ambulance and State Emergency Service volunteers and of course on the beaches the great work of our surf lifesavers — the many people, young and old, who patrol the beaches and keep them safe. I thank you all in advance.

I would also like to wish a merry Christmas to all our colleagues, staff and parliamentary staff.

### St Kilda Life Saving Club

**Mr FOLEY** (Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing) (09:49) — I rise to acknowledge the work of the St Kilda Life Saving Club and in particular Simon Lewis, the club's captain, in saving lives — not just lives on the busiest beach in Victoria but increasingly lives of refugees across the world, particularly as they seek to join the human flow across the Mediterranean.

Since 2015 Simon and the club have been part of an international effort to both raise funds and deliver direct support for lifesaving for the hundreds of thousands of people who are seeking refuge from war, famine, dispossession and violence across the Mediterranean into Europe. Initially based in the Greek islands, where Simon was personally involved in over 500 rescues but sadly also had to watch scores of people drown and then retrieve the bodies of children, men and women, Simon has since moved his efforts across the northern summer season, together with his club, into North Africa, where the industrial scale of people smuggling and the destruction of the lives of refugees as a result has seen tens of thousands of lives put at risk as people put to sea in unsafe vessels with dodgy or non-existent life-saving gear provided by people smugglers.

Simon's and the club's efforts are now moving well beyond the direct activities of saving lives to raising awareness for the need for a global solution to this human tide of suffering. Simon's proposal to present the fake lifesaving jackets retrieved from the sea and from drowned bodies in an installation to raise awareness and support for an international support to this crisis is one that I support.

### Mornington Peninsula planning

**Mr MORRIS** (Mornington) (09:50) — Yesterday the Minister for Planning proposed, in his words, ‘Landmark legislation to protect the Macedon Ranges’. While we do not yet know what is in the bill, its very existence highlights the partisan nature of this government’s planning approach. The government will act to provide planning protection for Labor seats, yet at the same time it has introduced policies that are leading directly to the destruction of the unique character of the Mornington Peninsula. Clearly it is one rule for Labor and another very different rule for the rest. According to the minister’s media release:

The Macedon Ranges boasts some of Victoria’s most picturesque settings, stunning wildlife and a renowned food and wine sector.

I agree, and so does the Mornington Peninsula, but not for long if this government has its way.

The minister says the government will work with the public on the draft Macedon Ranges localised planning statement. On the peninsula that has already occurred. I led the community and council committee that drafted the Mornington Peninsula statement, which was adopted in July 2014. While the adopted policy undoubtedly reflects the community vision for the Mornington Peninsula, as the minister claims the Macedon statement is intended to do, it has unfortunately been routinely ignored by this government. Indeed even when asked a direct question about whether the minister was aware of the statement and had taken it into account when he cavalierly rezoned every residential area on the Mornington Peninsula, the minister declined to respond directly.

This morning I tabled a petition of over 900 signatures from local residents concerned at the risk presented by the foreshadowed sale of the remaining landholdings from Sir Reginald Ansett’s estate. The threat to the peninsula is real and must not be ignored. I welcome the minister’s actions to protect the Macedon Ranges, and I call on him to do exactly the same for the Mornington Peninsula.

### Niddrie electorate primary schools

**Mr CARROLL** (Minister for Industry and Employment) (09:52) — We are building the Education State in the Niddrie electorate, creating and supporting young talented artists to achieve their full potential. This year for the first time I decided to hold a Christmas card drawing competition, and I invited all primary schools in my electorate to participate, with the winner having their picture on the front of my

Christmas card, which will be sent out to hundreds of people later this year.

Entries were received from Keilor Heights Primary School, Niddrie Primary School, Avondale Primary School and St Martin de Porres Primary School in Avondale Heights. Such was the calibre and quality of the drawings sent in, it was decided to show them all off to locals passing my electorate office on busy Keilor Road in Niddrie. Today outside my office literally hundreds of pictures adorn my electorate office windows for locals to see and admire the young talent that is burgeoning in the Niddrie electorate.

I was so impressed by the response and the creativity of the future artists in my community that selecting a winner was a very difficult task. But after much consultation I decided to pick a winner from each grade that entered and an overall winner. I take this moment to congratulate Minnie, who is in prep at Keilor Heights Primary School, for her wonderful picture that is now on my Christmas cards and will be seen by hundreds of people after I write my Christmas cards and post them out. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other winners: Kevin from Avondale primary in grade 4; Alyssa from St Martin de Porres primary in grade 2; Ela, Aidan and Julian from Niddrie primary in grades 3 and 4; and from Keilor Heights primary, Aurora and Amiel in prep, Emma and Semsem in grade 1, Daniel, Lucy and Emma in grade 2, Blake and Auneet in grade 3, Sami in grade 5 and Grace in grade 6. Congratulations to all involved.

### Judy Milligan

**Ms RYALL** (Ringwood) (09:53) — Today we say farewell to Judy Milligan, an extraordinary woman who dedicated so much of her time and commitment to the Liberal Party. Judy was a long-serving member of the Mitcham-Heatherdale branch and enshrined the values of the Liberal Party in who she was and what she did — values like individual freedoms, reward for effort and supporting the vulnerable. Only a few weeks ago Judy dropped into my office a handbag full of essential items so a woman in crisis might have something special this Christmas.

Judy married the love of her life, Barrie, and was a cherished mum to Julie and David. Her love for her family was so evident and she would capture those moments, popping them up on Facebook for all to see. These included special times with her adored grandchildren Kirsten, Lachlan, Lauren, Nathan, Luke and Demi.

I recall so fondly the years of support from Judy. The Mitcham election campaign was a huge challenge for us to win the seat from our opponents after 13 years, and she worked so hard alongside me. I remember how Judy would meet me at my listening posts. She would be the first one there and then she would go ahead of me every half-hour, setting up the next one down the road. She would be with me at the coffee and chats, just quietly encouraging me. Judy and Barrie were here in Parliament in the gallery in 2010 when I was sworn in. It was a treasured moment, the first day in this house when my political career began, and they were so much a part of it. The Liberal Party and the Ringwood electorate conference have lost a gem in Judy. Farewell, Judy Milligan. We will miss you.

### **Plenty Road upgrade**

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (09:55) — Last week I had the pleasure of announcing the start of the first stage of the Plenty Road upgrade with my colleagues the member for Yan Yean and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Starting in the next few months, this \$139.4 million infrastructure project made possible by the Andrews Labor government will ensure that safety and travel times are improved for commuters in my electorate. This is a project that has been driven by community consultation, and our government has delivered. Part of this community consultation in Mill Park included discussion around Rivergum Drive. I can assure my constituents that this government has listened and Rivergum Drive will have traffic lights and left-hand turn lanes. Importantly Blossom Park Drive and Childs Road will both have left-turn slip lanes into Plenty Road. This massive infrastructure development will also have a significant effect on improving the accessibility to vital services in Mill Park. New families in the northern suburbs will be supported with increased access to schools, universities, health centres and their places of employment. This will ensure that our community is accessible with ease and safety for all. I commend the minister for his work in this area.

### **Plenty Parklands Primary School**

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** — I would also like to give a quick shout-out to some of the up-and-coming environmental activists, the Green Cadets of Plenty Parklands Primary School. Last Friday I presented the school with certificates for achieving two stars in the ResourceSmart Schools program. A quick shout-out to the Green Cadets team: Bridgette Leong, Mackenzie Cullen, Tiana Poposki, Georgia Fotiou, Jasmine Cincev, Chloe Nicolaidis, Ella Lee and Georgia Gikas.

I am sure this will not be the last time we hear your names in the environmental space.

### **Congo Week**

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (09:56) — Recently I attended a Congo Week event in my electorate hosted by the Goulburn Valley Congolese Association. The purpose of Congo Week is to raise global consciousness about the Democratic Republic of Congo's past two decades of war and political instability. Breaking the Silence Congo Week started in New York in 2008 and has since galvanised the participation of people in more than 70 countries and 500 university campuses and communities. As many in this place would know, Shepparton district is immensely proud of its multicultural population. I promised those at the event that I would talk about the Congo's plight in Parliament and today I am fulfilling that promise. Since the first 10 Congolese families arrived in Shepparton more than 10 years ago, the local Congolese population has grown to more than 150 people and they have worked hard to make a new home for themselves in my electorate. Unsurprisingly many still have large networks of family and friends living in the Congo. While they are now physically removed from the conflict and at a distance, they nevertheless suffer a sense of sadness and loss. But among the many people attending this event there was also joy in spending an evening celebrating Congolese culture through music, cultural displays and of course food.

### **Road safety**

**Ms SHEED** — At this festive time of year I would also like to take the opportunity to remind people to be careful on the road. Already this year seven lives have been lost on the roads in Greater Shepparton alone. Each death is a tragedy and we do not want to see any more. So when you are driving please be mindful of your speed, your capacity to be behind the wheel and other drivers on the road. Stay safe.

### **Epping Primary School**

**Ms HALFPENNY** (Thomastown) (09:58) — I was delighted to visit Epping Primary School on Monday, 4 December, to present 22 students with the Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge awards. This year I presented badges and a prize, as well as certificates, to recognise the outstanding efforts of seven students from the school who read many, many books above the challenge requirements. In particular I wish to congratulate Pulindu Rupasinghe, Karanbir Singh, Batul Ibrahim, Armani Ibrahim, Aadit Date and

Eveleen Bains for their efforts. I also offer special congratulations to Gurteshwar Brar for an outstanding 207 books read this year. This is an amazing achievement and something to be very proud of. These students, under the guidance of the wonderful teachers and staff at Epping Primary School, in particular Tina, do exceptionally well in their studies and reach new heights every school year. This is an important initiative in making Victoria the Education State. I congratulate all students in the Thomastown electorate and indeed the 950 schools across Victoria which participated in the Premier's Reading Challenge this year.

### **Northern Business Achievement Awards**

**Ms HALFPENNY** — On another matter, last Thursday, 7 December, I attended the Northern Business Achievement Awards (NBAA). The NBAA is an initiative of NorthLink, which is a business network and economic development support group. These awards recognise the achievements of small-to-medium businesses in Melbourne's northern suburbs. I offer special congratulations to Stainless Services Pty Ltd in Thomastown, which was awarded the human resources award for their ongoing investment in professional development and training. Stainless Services has come a long way over the past 30 years and now manufactures predominantly high-end food and beverage equipment in its steel fabrication plant in Thomastown.

### **Wimmera platypus conservation**

**Ms KEALY** (Lowan) (09:59) — Recurrent droughts have had a significant impact on the agricultural sector, the backbone of our economy, but have also had a disastrous impact on our local environment. A recent study of the number of platypuses in the upper Wimmera River region produced distressing results, finding that platypuses in this area are functionally extinct. The government must support conservation efforts to restore vegetation around riverbanks undertaken by local Landcare groups and landholders adjacent to the Wimmera River and support the fantastic local organisation Project Platypus in promoting and supporting the repair of the local platypus habitat to give our region the best possible opportunity to re-establish a viable platypus population in the Wimmera.

### **Rural general practitioners**

**Ms KEALY** — Country Victoria is in the grip of a critical shortage of general practitioners, and it is having a huge impact on the health of our local people. People who rely on prescription medication to manage their

health are unable to get an appointment to see a local doctor and are forced to skip medication, travel great distances to go to a doctor unfamiliar with their history or condition or end up in the emergency department, putting a huge additional burden on our public health system. I ask the minister: what is the Andrews Labor government doing to address the critical shortage of doctors in rural Victoria, which is having a significant impact on the health of country people and adding huge pressure to Victoria's country hospitals?

### **Regional and rural roads**

**Ms KEALY** — I would like to address the mistruth that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety is currently peddling regarding roads funding. When compared to the last Liberal-Nationals actual road asset management budget spend plus CPI, the Andrews Labor government have cut almost \$77 million in 2016 and almost \$65 million in 2017. Over the past three years of this city-centric Labor government they have underfunded VicRoads road management by over \$50 million. This is equivalent to millions of unrepaired potholes or almost 70 kilometres of new highway that we do not have because Labor continually cut the VicRoads roads budget. They have also cut the highly successful Nationals \$160 million country roads and bridges program. Country Victorians deserve better.

### **Moorabbin Primary School**

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (10:01) — It was a pleasure to attend the Moorabbin Primary School's assembly recently to announce \$100 000 for a new playground. This came about after some pretty smart lobbying by a group of mums wanting to replace the current playground, which is old and tired. The new playground will include much more interesting equipment for the students to enjoy.

### **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh**

**Mr STAIKOS** — It was also a pleasure recently to visit Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh to inspect construction works on their new performing arts centre. The Andrews Labor government has contributed \$500 000 to this project, which will provide a dedicated space for a growing interest among students in performing arts.

### **Glen Eira Young Citizen of the Year**

**Mr STAIKOS** — Congratulations to Georgia Shepherd-Petrocco, who has been nominated as Glen Eira Young Citizen of the Year. Georgia completed

some work experience in my office this year and oversaw a project providing care packs to vulnerable women, in partnership with the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence. Well done, Georgia, and good luck.

### **Moorabbin Reserve**

**Mr STAIKOS** — It was a pleasure to join the Kingston mayor, Cr Steve Staikos, recently to announce more than \$215 000 for a safety upgrade at Moorabbin Reserve which will provide lighting and pathways. It is all happening at Moorabbin Reserve, with the \$30 million redevelopment to provide a home for St Kilda Football Club, the Southern Football Netball League and the South Metro Junior Football League. As well as being a hub for football, Moorabbin Reserve is also a great place for passive recreation. These funds will go a long way to enhancing our beautiful local park.

### **Felicitations**

**Mr STAIKOS** — I also take this opportunity to wish members a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a happy new year.

### **Peninsula Health**

**Mr DIXON** (Nepean) (10:02) — I, along with many residents on the Mornington Peninsula, received an appeal letter from Peninsula Health recently, which is often a matter of course, but there is one part of the letter where Peninsula Health are saying the appeal is directed towards purchasing one piece of equipment that would make a real difference, which is a defibrillator and an echocardiogram monitor. This is from the letter:

A defibrillator and echocardiogram monitor enables our emergency staff to assess and then quickly shock a patient having a heart attack. For patients in the emergency department — where every second counts — that could be lifesaving.

I was quite surprised about this, because I would have thought that would be very, very basic equipment that this government should be funding for our emergency departments in what are two very important and very busy emergency department wards in my electorate.

### **Mornington Peninsula planning**

**Mr DIXON** — On another matter, for the 10th week in a row I have tabled 1000 signatures on a petition calling on the planning minister to protect and to recognise the Mornington Peninsula planning statement, especially regarding three-storey

developments and the protection of the green wedge on the Mornington Peninsula.

### **Christmas felicitations**

**Mr DIXON** — Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and staff a very happy Christmas and a safe and wonderful new year.

### **2nd Eltham Sea Scouts**

**Ms WARD** (Eltham) (10:04) — I rise to congratulate the 2nd Eltham Sea Scouts in my electorate, who recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. The group was founded in Eltham in 1957 as the 2nd Eltham Boy Scouts, evolving into the 2nd Eltham Sea Scouts. Over the decades sea scouts have supported generations of young people, aiding in their personal development and instilling values which push them to consider how to better themselves, their families and their communities. Sea scouts have also brought many local families together and played an important role in connecting our community. I congratulate the group and all current and former leaders, including Greg Nash, Simone Redfern, Mark Sells, Adrian Redfern, Peter English, Kathy Guy, Wayne Green, Meredith Bubner, Greg Phillips, Andrew Shepherd, Jo Edwards, Kate Green, Maria Nettleton and Ted Reaks.

### **David McKenzie Award**

**Ms WARD** — I congratulate the winners of the inaugural David McKenzie Award in my electorate. David McKenzie was the federal member for Diamond Valley from 1972 to 1975 and retains a strong passion for education. He continues to be a passionate advocate on social justice issues in and out of Parliament. David works tirelessly to care for vulnerable people and for a more compassionate society. This award is presented to local primary school students in my electorate who exemplify these qualities. This year's winners are Libby Fisher from Apollo Parkways Primary School, Annabel Page and Olivia Gauci from Eltham North Primary School, Cade Duncan from Glen Katherine Primary School, Maya Mangonaro from Greenhills Primary School, Emily Brennan from Montmorency South Primary School, Caleb Bloomer from Research Primary School and Tyler Murphy from Sherbourne Primary School.

### **Sue Plaisted**

**Ms WARD** — This year another important person in our community will celebrate 23 years of service to our community at Eltham South Preschool. She will

also desert us! Sue Plaisted has been an amazing teacher at Eltham South Preschool. Her approach to learning is fantastic. She is a passionate advocate for learning through play, which as we all know is vital. Both our two girls were taught by Sue. To see their confidence grow, their inquiry widen and their joy for learning develop under Sue's friendly eye and cuddly arms was a wonderful introduction to formal learning for Mark and me. I cannot thank Sue enough for what she has done for Ella and Molly and for what she has done for the more than 1000 children who have had the good luck to be taught at Eltham South Preschool.

### **Christmas felicitations**

**Mrs FYFFE** (Evelyn) (10:05) — I would like to express my deep appreciation to each and every member of the staff who work in and around the Parliament, whether it is the Clerk's office, front of house, administration, IT, maintenance, catering, library, Hansard or cleaning — thank you, and I wish you all a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

### **Country Fire Authority Yarra Glen brigade**

**Mrs FYFFE** — It was pleasing to see familiar faces at the Yarra Glen Country Fire Authority (CFA) forum on Saturday hosted by my colleague the member for Eildon and attended by the shadow Minister for Emergency Services and member for Gembrook. It is clear that our state's volunteers are worried, and there is wide support to hold a royal commission into the CFA culture and structure. We have heard of bullying reports sitting on the Premier's desk and read news reports about hazing rituals and an Andrews government that will do everything Peter Marshall tells it to do. This Labor government has sacked board members and management and bullied a minister out of cabinet — and it looks like out of this house. The CFA's volunteers and the community in the Yarra Valley can be assured that the Liberals in developing our plans for Victoria's fire services will listen to everyone, and in particular our volunteer firefighters.

Quite bizarrely Santa was banned last Friday from riding in a CFA truck at an annual event in the Yarra Valley. This is Grinchness at its best. Luckily the children were not disappointed and an old privately owned decommissioned fire truck delivered Santa instead. Sadly volunteers were not allowed to wear their uniforms, which they normally proudly wear at these events. The children had a great time. Thank you to all those involved.

### **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse**

**Ms KNIGHT** (Wendouree) (10:07) — Tomorrow we will see the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse report handed down. I would like to add my voice to the voice of the Attorney-General and the shadow Attorney-General and thank them both for their statements this morning.

It is going to be a bittersweet day for my community, and my thoughts obviously will be with the victim survivors of clergy abuse and their families and friends. All they ever wanted was justice, and I hope that happens. All they ever wanted was to be believed, and I hope that happens. All they ever wanted was a redress scheme that is accessible and has ongoing support and care for them, and I hope that happens. All they ever really, really wanted was that this not happen to another single child, and I think every single person in this chamber and in this state hopes for that — that there will never, ever be a need for another royal commission or inquiry such as this one.

It has taken a terrible toll on my community, but I am very proud of my community and how they have supported the victim survivors. As I said, my thoughts are with them, and I thank them all.

### **Phillip Island men's breakfast**

**Mr PAYNTER** (Bass) (10:08) — This time of year gives members a wonderful opportunity to attend end-of-year and Christmas-type events around our electorates and to acknowledge the great work of our community groups. Two such great events deserve acknowledgement. The men's breakfast in Cowes does not really have an official title. Quite simply it is a group of local men that enjoy each other's company, friendship, fellowship, humour and stories. We laugh together and sometimes even shed the odd tear. It follows a simple formula: a hearty breakfast, great coffee and a guest speaker.

For most blokes it would be easy to either stay in bed or head straight to work, but there is something about the group that keeps people coming along. I am sure there are textbooks and the like that would fully explore the psychology of these gatherings, but I like to summarise it in one word — mateship. Well done to Mal McCann for keeping them going after our great friend Pastor Craig Semple shifted to Portland earlier in the year.

### Heritage Springs Residents Group

**Mr PAYNTER** — A huge shout-out to the hardworking committee of the Heritage Springs Residents Group in Pakenham for another successful Christmas party last Saturday. Each year this committee organises the event so that families living in the estate get to enjoy each other's company in a casual environment whilst the children delight in receiving a gift from Santa. Congratulations to the committee for providing a warm, safe and fun community environment.

### Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) (10:10) — Firstly, I would like to endorse the remarks just made by the member for Wendouree. I grew up in the Ballarat diocese and I know exactly the matters that she is talking to. I commend her for her work and her statement, and I acknowledge the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse being concluded today and express my sympathy to the survivors of abuse.

### Brendan White

**Ms GREEN** — I also want to pay tribute today on the retirement of Brendan White, president of Diamond Valley Special Developmental School. For decades Brendan has been an absolute champion for people and students with disabilities to have true inclusion. He is a pioneer in having his students do all sorts of adventurous things in their learning, including horseriding. Farewell, Brendan. You have been a great mate and you have taught me a whole lot. One of the things that I really valued was you saying that your job will be done when there is no need for special developmental schools because all schools will have a true culture of inclusion.

### Whittlesea City Council

**Ms GREEN** — I also want to express my concerns about the poor governance shown by Cr Mary Lajos and her supporters at the City of Whittlesea who this week failed to turn up to a council meeting. This is a very poor example for someone leading the municipality.

### Yarra Hills Secondary College

**Mr HODGETT** (Croydon) (10:11) — I want to take the opportunity to congratulate all students on their academic achievements, which were celebrated last Monday night by Yarra Hills Secondary College

at the Karralyka Centre in Ringwood. Yarra Hills Secondary College is one of the schools that we were able to get funding for a couple of terms ago to fully rebuild that school. It is a wonderful college, and it is always a pleasure at this time of year as members of Parliament to attend the graduations and presentation nights for our colleges. Again I take the opportunity to congratulate all the students on their achievements for the academic year.

### Tony Robinson

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) (10:12) — What a joy it is to stand here today. I was reflecting this morning that it was 20 years ago today that we woke up to the exciting news that Tony Robinson had won the Mitcham by-election under a massive swing of 16.9 per cent. This is important because, as you will recall, back in the subsequent 1999 state election Labor was on 42 seats, and the Independents won the other three seats, which then formed a government. If it were not for Tony Robinson, there would not have been a Bracks Labor government. Twenty years ago today I woke up with a very sore head but a very big smile on my face.

### PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING AND EMPLOYMENT

**Mr CARROLL** (Minister for Industry and Employment) (10:13) — I move:

- (1) the Liberal-Nationals coalition have confirmed they will undertake a cost audit if they win the 2018 election;
- (2) the devastating cuts and job losses in the public service when the Liberal-Nationals were last in government; and
- (3) the grave risk to services and jobs following a Liberal-Nationals cost audit.

I rise today to speak about how those opposite pose a threat to Victorian jobs and future job creation in our state. On this side of the house we know that it is the primary role of any government to create jobs for Victorians, and this is exactly what we are doing.

The latest revised labour force statistics and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics released only last week confirm that since 2014 we have created over 266 000 jobs across this state. This is largely due to the great job-creating initiatives we have put in place on the back of record investments in infrastructure. We have underway some 80 strategic projects worth around \$49 billion. The Minister for Roads and Road Safety is with me at the table today, and getting people home more quickly and safely to their families is a result of

that investment in roads and the hard work the minister is doing in his portfolio.

We must remember that when those opposite were in government almost every single employment program was cut. Victorians can start to wonder what would happen to those job numbers if those opposite came back into government. In contrast we are making investments in infrastructure development, bringing local workers and businesses along with us. We have a multibillion-dollar pipeline of major projects, including the redevelopment of the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital and, in Melbourne's west, the construction of high-capacity metro trains in Newport, the upgrade of the M80 ring-road, the West Gate tunnel project and the Metro Tunnel project — city-shaping infrastructure that will transform this state for the next hundred years.

We are making sure these projects create thousands of jobs for locals, mandating requirements for local content. We are also creating opportunities by mandating that a significant portion of total hours worked on the major projects must be conducted by local trainees, apprentices and engineering cadets, giving young people a go, making sure they get their start on a job just as those opposite are giving the member for Kew a great go as he works his way up the ladder.

The \$68 million Jobs Victoria program is changing lives and breaking down barriers to employment. We have put over 33 000 long-term jobseekers into employment. We are actually averaging 40 to 50 young people a week getting a job through the Andrews Labor government's jobs program, transforming their lives. Whether it be locals in Ballarat or locals in Bendigo, locals right across this state are getting every opportunity to make sure they get a chance.

I was in the Premier's electorate only a few weeks ago at Daniel's Donuts, where I met some young people getting a great start in life. Twenty-year-old Kehlia from Tonga and 19-year-old Alisha from Samoa both face barriers to employment, but under our Jobs Victoria program we have given them a start in life that they never would have got should the Liberals have been in government. Every program was cut under the coalition when they were last in government, and under the sustainable government initiative so were public servants.

We had the Minister for Police out today speaking on the latest crime statistics. She should be congratulated for the downward trend. That is through record investment in police numbers and forensics. That is what you are seeing — the trend down. It is in the DNA

of those opposite to cut police, and that is what they will do should they ever get back into office.

We are doing more than that. My predecessors in the industry portfolio have really tightened requirements, and when it comes to local procurement we are making sure local industry get every opportunity to participate.

We have seen the announcement of the West Gate tunnel. I have the Minister for Roads and Road Safety here with me today. Already right around Victoria, whether it be in Benalla or whether it be down in the Latrobe Valley, we are making sure that small and medium-sized businesses get a chance to work on our record-breaking infrastructure program. We have 80 strategic projects underway under three Labor budgets. When they were last in office, under four Liberal budgets they only got eight projects underway. It was a four-year public holiday under the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw governments. The latest crime statistics show we are getting on with the job. The Baillieu-Napthine cuts would come back again should they ever be back in office. We know that is what happens. It is in their DNA.

**Mr Pesutto** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — The member for Hawthorn might get his opportunity later.

**Mr CARROLL** — They can talk all they want.

I was doing a bit of night-time reading last night, and it was interesting what I came across. The former Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Brighton, in this place back in 2011 — and she was the Minister for Tourism and Major Events at the time, before becoming Minister for Employment and Trade — said:

... there is a fundamental point of philosophical difference between the opposition and the government, and that is that the opposition seems to think the government's role is to provide jobs.

Yes, it is the government's role to provide jobs. We know you do not believe it and have never done it. They have got the world's biggest front bench at the moment with 25 shadow ministers. The latest revised labour force statistics show that since the election of the Andrews Labor government it has created 280 000 jobs. We are averaging about 250 new jobs a week. It is amazing, what we are doing. We are getting on with it. But those opposite seemed to be averse to making decisions. Let us go on and have a look at what they would cut and how they would take the state backwards should they ever get back into office.

On the Metro Tunnel, the most transformative project this state has ever seen, which was actually number 1 on Infrastructure Australia's list, right through their term of office they did not do one thing. It will create 7000 jobs, 500 apprenticeships, opportunities for small, large and medium-sized businesses throughout this state, right through country Victoria. All will get an opportunity to work on this city-shaping infrastructure that will get people home to their families at night, home to their kids, with less time in traffic. It is going to make a major difference. The Minister for Public Transport should be so proud of that project, as she should of the level crossing removal program.

The member for Essendon and I are seeing every day the work going on at the Buckley Street level crossing and we recognise the benefits of that massive, significant project. Those opposite like to talk about level crossings. They removed New Street, Brighton, when they were in office. They hardly removed any, and it was about number 250 on the list that needed to be moved. That is what they did. They looked after the seat of Brighton and nowhere else. The level crossing removal program will create 4500 jobs, including more than 125 apprenticeships, but more than that, it is also helping out some of the most vulnerable members of our community. It has a really important social justice element to it. You are seeing Indigenous Victorians working on this city-shaping infrastructure, giving them a chance in life, to live a life of purpose and to make sure they can make a contribution.

Acting Speaker Carbines, I know this is something very close to your heart because it will make a massive difference to your community. The north-east link is the result of the work of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It will involve up to 10 000 new jobs, but more than that, it will get trucks off local streets and people home more quickly. The RACV and the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce say it will provide the missing link that has been needed, and it will be done.

Then this week we announced the West Gate tunnel — 6000 new jobs, 600 apprentices, trainees and engineering cadets. If you do the maths, there are about 28 000 jobs being created, with over 1000 apprenticeships. If those opposite got into office, it would be 28 000 jobs cut straight away, and the young apprentices and the young engineering cadets, and that would make a massive difference, taking this state backwards. We know they were on a public holiday for four years, and that is what we would return to. They would be back asleep at the wheel for four years and nothing would be done. It was an indictment of them.

More than that, we are about building the Education State. The Minister for Education and Deputy Premier is at the table today. Every member on this side of the house should be so proud about the Education State. I know in my own electorate we are building the Education State. Who can remember Essendon Keilor College?

**Mr Andrews** interjected.

**Mr CARROLL** — The Premier remembers it. We had to bring the door from the school into the Parliament to the then education minister. He would not visit the school. It was incredible. The school was on the front page of the *Herald Sun*. It had 1300 items that needed fixing and it needed a \$10 million investment. So we brought the door in to the minister, and then the minister went on the public record and said, 'That school's disgusting and unsafe'. That is how a Liberal education minister described one of our schools, and he did not do anything about it. But commencing with our first Labor budget, through the work of the Premier and the Deputy Premier and education minister, we have been literally transforming that school with a \$10 million investment. Those 1300 items that needed fixing are being fixed. It is buying world-class science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and encouraging artistic talent. It is an investment in our future and I am very proud of that. It is probably my number one project locally, and I have had the education minister and Deputy Premier and the Premier supporting me in doing that.

Those opposite had four wasted years and only managed eight strategic projects. We have 80 on the way. The latest ABS employment statistics show we are leading the nation for employment growth. We are doing everything that any state government should do, and it is incredible. We should be so proud of everything we are doing. The Liberals have committed to a cost audit. They did it when they were last in power and they will do it again. They cannot wait to get into government, get their hands on the Treasury and undo all the great work of the Andrews Labor government. Only Labor cares about giving Victorians a job. We have our mandate, and we will do everything we can to make sure every Victorian gets an opportunity to work, has the dignity of work and can contribute to making society even better.

**Mr PESUTTO** (Hawthorn) (10:24) — I was going to go out to get a coffee, Acting Speaker. I thought the previous speaker would take up the other 20 minutes. What a stunt. What a lie. If I could talk to the good people of Victoria who sit in the gallery, I would say to them, 'Is this what your taxes pay for? Is this what you want to see your government do — engage in stunts

and lie to you?'. Let me ask: 'Ladies and gentlemen in the gallery, don't you want a government that governs for you?'

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — Order! The member for Hawthorn will resume his seat. The member for Hawthorn will direct his remarks through the chair.

**Mr PESUTTO** — Thank you, Acting Speaker, I will do that.

As I said in my opening comments, if I could speak to them, that is what I would say. I will tell you what we should be debating today, and that is issues of substance to the people in the gallery and the hundreds of thousands — millions — of people they represent, issues like crime. People in the gallery, don't you want a government that focuses on your safety and the safety of your streets? The crime statistics that came out today show that robberies are up under this government. The crime stats that came out today show that sexual offending is higher under this government. The people of Victoria want a government that sends crime rates down. Don't we want a government that will make the community of the people who sit in the gallery safer? That is what we should be talking about.

What about congestion? I wish I could ask all of the good people in the gallery how hard it was for them to come into Parliament today. Did they face traffic? Did they have to get through congestion? Did they have to wait for a train? And yes, I see hands up in the air. They had to deal with that, Acting Speaker — I am speaking through you, Acting Speaker, as you know. If I could talk to the good people in the gallery, I would ask them about the cost of living, and I would ask the good people in the gallery how they feel about the fact that under this government their electricity bills from 1 January — three weeks from now — are going to go up by 15 per cent. I wish I could ask them how happy they are about that. I wish they could tell me. They do not have a voice for us to hear directly from them, but we can be their voice on this side of the house. That is what we should be debating today.

What about those members in the gallery and the millions of people across this state they represent? I wish I could ask them about the Country Fire Authority and the dysfunctional management of it by this government on their behalf that has caused a threat to emergency services who keep our country areas in particular safe. I wish we could discuss that issue. If this government was true to this motion, I will tell you what we would discuss: we would actually discuss those comments by Mr O'Donohue in the Council — not

comments by him directly but that were quoted in the article upon which this motion sits.

I wish I could talk to them about the issues on that, because our prisons are in a state of crisis — the prisons which are there to keep violent criminals safely behind bars, off our streets and out of our communities. That is what we should be discussing: how we fix a dysfunctional justice system that has seen nearly 40 riots in adult prisons and youth justice facilities in this state under this government in the last two years. Does that keep the people in the gallery and the millions of people they represent safe? No, it does not.

What we said in that article was that this state of dysfunction in our correctional services needs to be fixed. We do not know what the government is spending money on. I do not know what the government is doing with the taxpayer dollars that the hardworking people in the gallery are spending on a corrections system that is dysfunctional and sees riots and outbreaks of violence almost every week. Under this government our corrections system is in a state of crisis. The people in the gallery deserve better. They do not deserve a lie, and this motion is a lie. It is built on an idea that the comments we made in relation to jails were to be extended right across the system. This was not a whole-of-government comment that was made. It was about the dysfunctional, chaotic and dangerously flawed system of corrections under this government.

The good people in the gallery deserve better. They did not come here to watch a stunt. They certainly did not. They came here to hear us talk about the issues that matter to them, and yet we are not doing that. If you really wanted to debate the issues, maybe a few other motions might come before this motion. If you really wanted to talk about matters of importance and the good use of taxpayer dollars, maybe we could talk, while those good people are here in the gallery, about the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker who ripped them off — who ripped off the good people of this state by rorting allowances that the good people's taxes paid for, pretending they lived in the country so they could get a few extra dollars. If I could talk directly to the people in the gallery, I would tell them that never in the Westminster world have we seen a Speaker and Deputy Speaker resign in disgrace.

You would think that is bad enough, but you know what is worse, Acting Speaker? And again through you, I wish I could speak to the people in the gallery because I would say: what is worse than that is the fact that the two people who had to stand down in disgrace continue to sit in this Parliament and get paid by their taxes. Never have either the former Speaker or former Deputy

Speaker ever risen in this house — their house, Acting Speaker; not ours, their house — and apologised to the people in the gallery and explained why they did it. All of us here are here on trust on behalf of the people in the gallery and the millions of people they represent across this state.

Maybe we could talk about the Deputy President, or former Deputy President, in the other place, Mr Khalil Eideh. It is alleged that we have a Deputy President whose office was issuing purchase orders to a printing company and getting paid for work that was never done — significant amounts of money, tens of thousands of dollars. So what has happened? He has had to stand down and say he will leave in disgrace. They are three members, the former Speaker, the former Deputy Speaker and the Deputy President in the other house — which some of the good people in the gallery might go and see later on if they have not already — who have had to stand down in disgrace. Maybe we should talk about that.

Maybe we should talk about the other issue which is still under investigation. Those two matters I mentioned — the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, as we know, are under police investigation and, as I am advised, the Deputy President in the other place — those allegations, are under police investigation.

So the good people in the gallery who have come here, how good do you think they feel when they see a government issuing a stunt, wasting the good people's time in the gallery with this nonsense, when there are more important issues? I wonder how happy the people in the gallery would be if they knew that this government — their government — is under investigation for another matter, as if all of the other things I have said are not bad enough. This government is under investigation by the Ombudsman. It has formerly been under investigation by police. Do you know what for, Acting Speaker? Because their hard-earned dollars, the hard-earned dollars of the people in the gallery and the millions of Victorian taxpayers that they represent, were used, blatantly, for partisan campaigning — a fraud. A fraud on the people in the gallery, a fraud on the people of this state, a fraud on this Parliament. So I wonder how good the people in the gallery feel having to watch this motion and learn that their government is under investigation — not once, not twice, but three times, with more to come.

This is a disgrace, this motion. It is an affront to the people who have come here today to listen to debate on parliamentary matters and legislation which affects them and everyone else. We will not dignify this motion beyond me as the speaker. We want to put on record for

the people in the gallery and for those opposite that we will not dignify this motion by contributing to the debate. It is a joke.

I want everybody in this chamber, including those in the gallery, to understand that there are more important issues that they have come to listen to that will not be reached because of this stunt. Their government, which tells them that they are building the roads and building the rail for them — I wonder how happy the good people in the gallery and the millions they represent would be to know that on all of these road and rail projects that they are boasting about the blowouts are larger than the cost of the projects themselves. I wonder how happy the good people in the gallery are about that. They are over budget and over time. How happy would they be about that? I do not think they would be happy.

We will not dignify this motion by having any other speakers. I foreshadow that we will be calling for a division on this stunt of a motion, and I plead with the government: if you want to get this over with quickly, we will cooperate. Let us have no more speakers altogether. Let us not have any speakers. As an act of respect for the people who have come here to listen to real debates on real issues that affect them — cost of living, community safety, congestion, emergency services, amenity, liveability; that is what the people in the gallery have come to listen to — why do we not just have the division now? They see through it. No-one believes you. You have been running this issue for weeks, and the media will not pick it up because they too know it is a joke. Let us get this over with and let us get onto issues that matter to people. If you have got no other business, then just say so, but do not insult the people who are watching and the people who have come here today with this absolute nonsense.

*Interjections from gallery.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Carbines)** — Order! Can we have silence in the gallery, thanks very much? Or you will find yourselves removed.

**Ms THOMAS (Macedon)** — (10:36) — I am very pleased to rise today to speak on this very important motion by the Leader of the House. Let us be very clear: those on the other side of this place present themselves to the people of Victoria as the alternative government. In 2018 it will be an election year, and it is going to be very important that the opposition, the whole 25 shadow frontbenchers there, are subject to some scrutiny. I am very pleased to be able to do that in this house today.

I want to tell you about an incident in my electorate last week when I had the good fortune to visit Hepburn Primary School. It is a very small primary school in my electorate, but it is one that is achieving big things under the Andrews Labor government. Principal Robert Walsh has a very focused approach to improving student outcomes and has used equity funding delivered by the Andrews government to intensively coach his teachers, who I might say have welcomed the opportunity for high-quality professional development. This focus is seeing a real shift in NAPLAN results at the school, which is welcomed by all.

But I was there last week to celebrate the 3 millionth school breakfast delivered under the Andrews Labor government's school breakfast clubs program. This is a fantastic program that is ensuring that 25 000 students at 500 of the most disadvantaged schools in our state are accessing that most important meal of the day: breakfast. In this fabulous program 50 000 free meals have been delivered every week. We know — research tells us — that since the program has started nine out of 10 teachers have seen improved student concentration in the classroom, while seven out of 10 teachers have noted improved attendance and more than eight out of 10 said they now have better relationships with their students. This is a fantastic outcome for this fabulous \$13.7 million program, and it is one of many examples of how this government is making sure that we are looking after those in our community who most need our assistance.

Despite its success, this program would be cut by an incoming Liberal government. That would be a disgrace. They have promised a cost audit. We know that that is code for cuts; we have seen it before. As the Minister for Industry and Employment said before, it is in their DNA. That is all they know how to do — cut programs that are serving the most disadvantaged members of our community. When they were last in power what did they do? They cut Free Fruit Friday and they scrapped the education maintenance allowance — initiatives designed to assist our most disadvantaged students in our schools.

I am very concerned, and I think the people of Victoria need to know, that those on the other side, should they win government in November of next year, would also cut \$15 million in funding that we provide to the State Schools Relief fund to assist families with school uniforms. They would cut that \$148 million that we provided to ensure that children from the most disadvantaged families could attend camps and excursions and so on. Things, I might say, that the member for Kew — the would-be education minister — would have no understanding of, he being a

person who has benefited from the most expensive education that money can buy. He would have no understanding of the real issues that confront struggling families across Victoria.

Kyneton Secondary College in my electorate was one of the first schools to embrace the Doctors in Secondary Schools program, which is a runaway success. What this program has meant at 100 schools — again the most disadvantaged schools in our state, half of which I might say are in regional Victoria — is that country kids, kids whose parents who are at work and kids whose families struggle to provide them with the health care that they need, are able to access that health care at school. What have those on the other side had to say about this fantastic program? What would an alternative Liberal government do? I am afraid to say that I am convinced that they would cut the Doctors in Secondary Schools program. They have had nothing positive to say about this groundbreaking program that, as I said, is delivering much-needed health care to teenagers across the state.

We know that teenagers are the cohort least likely to access the health care that they need. They are the cohort least likely to see a GP. This very important program is ensuring that young people are able to build a relationship with a general practitioner and that they are able to get the health care that they need when they need it. Unsurprisingly mental health plans are being taken up at a great number wherever there is a doctors in schools program. We know that many young people struggle through those very difficult teenage, high-school years. This is an amazing program that benefits more than 70 000 students in our Victorian schools. As I said, the former shadow education minister has done nothing but attack the doctors in schools program. I would say to you that this is a very important motion to bring before this house, because the people of Victoria need to know that any incoming Liberal government will cut this vital program.

I want to talk also a little bit more about my electorate. I spoke about it with the Doctors in Secondary Schools program. We are also investing \$11 million of capital and we are building a training and innovation hub at Kyneton Secondary College that is going to ensure a first-rate STEM education is available for kids across the Macedon Ranges. Not only that, the hub will be open for others in the community to access as well.

I will tell you what that mob did when they were in government. They dismantled the year 7 learning centre at Kyneton Secondary College and they closed the TAFE campus that was in Kyneton. This is what they do: they cut, they close, they destroy. We will never

forget, in my electorate, the fiasco that was the art room at New Gisborne Primary School. New Gisborne Primary School is the largest primary school in my electorate — it has more than 500 children and it is a fantastic school. The principal, Andy Kozak, does a great job. In 2011 the art room at this school — this is a school that really prided itself on its art program and had a fantastic program with a kiln and a lot of pottery — burnt down. In 2011 it burnt down.

Do you think in the years that they were in government — 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 — they could find it within themselves to rebuild that art room, despite the fact that it was fully insured? No, they did not. They sat on their hands and they did nothing. Do you know who did rebuild the art room? The Andrews Labor government. It was one of the first things we did.

School communities in my electorate will not forget what life was like during those four dark years of the Napthine-Baillieu-Shaw governments. They will not forget and they will contrast that with what is happening under this fantastic Andrews Labor government: 56 new schools, 275 school upgrades, 34 early childhood projects, 10 schools opening this year and next year the brand-new Kyneton Primary School will open in my electorate.

I did want to end with a comment and congratulate the Minister for Police on the fantastic achievement today with the crime stats released in Victoria. It is fantastic to see that crime in this state under an Andrews Labor government is trending down. This government made a commitment that we would employ an additional 3000 police: out on the beat, in the streets and keeping Victorians safe.

I would like to contrast that with what they did when they were in government. How many police do you think they funded when they were in government? Not a single one. That would be zero police from that lot when they were last in government. As I said, this is a really vital motion, and I encourage all members on this side of the house to take the opportunity to make sure that we can alert the people of Victoria to the plans of those who would control the government benches and the Treasury bench if they have the chance in 2018. The choice is very clear. The Andrews Labor government will continue to deliver for the people of Victoria on the things that matter: jobs, health, education and transport. I commend this motion.

**Mr McGuire** (Broadmeadows) (10:46) — No amount of theatrics from the opposition will hide the reality behind what they want to do. Facts speak loudest in this debate and we have seen the story before. We

know only too well how the hidden agenda is played out. How we have the reverse Robin Hood strategy: take the money from the poorest areas and redistribute it to areas for marginal seats. Those opposite were not governing in the best interests of the state or the community; they did not do that. Then we had the complementary proposition of managed decline from the federal coalition government.

So this is the strategy. Here is how it is framed. They say, 'Okay, what's the mechanism? It's a cost audit'. They want to argue about these issues. Do they have a needs-based approach to where the investment should be to get the greatest return for the benefit of the community? No. Do they have an approach in the public interest? No. They have an approach just in political self-interest — to game the system every time. The evidence is clear. The choice will be even clearer next year in an election year. Victorians will say, 'Do we choose to return the Andrews Labor government, which is building Victoria's biggest infrastructure project on record?'. It is exactly what we need. We are dealing with population growth. It is no use just having the opposition like the last galah at the end of the fence squawking. It does not solve the problem. It does not come up with a remedy. It does not matter how you aggregate anxiety and fear. That is not the solution. You have to have the plan.

The Andrews government is changing the face of the world's most livable city to adapt, to grow again, to set it up for the 21st century. There are a whole series of other reforms that we are driving because we have a AAA-rated economy and finances beautifully managed by the Treasurer. This is the way you set up the foundations for good governance and to build the prosperity of the state.

We do not refer to regional and rural people as the toenails. Who could ever forget that quote from former Premier Jeff Kennett? That is the dismissiveness that he had. We are trying to make sure that the jobs go right through the state of Victoria. The facts are that Victoria's economy is booming, state final demand growth is the strongest in the nation and we are creating more jobs than anywhere else in the country — 280 000 jobs have been created in Victoria since the Andrews government came to office three years ago, and about 190 000 of those jobs are full-time. It is the highest growth in full-time employment of all the states.

This is critical because this gives you your foundation for your life, your dignity and your family, and this is one of the key priorities of the Andrews Labor government. Why are the opposition so belligerent about 'Don't look at what we want to do in an audit that

might cut costs'? Why is that? Why did they only have one speaker? Then abandoned the chamber; they abandoned the Parliament. They did not mount a case. They walked out. You cannot just have gesture politics like that. You actually have to say what your plans are, what your strategies are and what you are going to do.

Here is the evidence that we know what happened the last time. There were more beds built in prisons than in hospitals. Can you believe that? Is that a law and order strategy? You cannot arrest and imprison your way out of these issues; you have to address causes — the causes of crime, poverty, unemployment, disconnection. These are the issues. That is what the Andrews Labor government is addressing. We are being tough on offenders and we are making sure that we have got the resources for police — the biggest resources ever, \$2 billion and more than 3000 police officers. This issue is being addressed from that side of the debate. That has been done. The Minister for Police has been driving this and has done a first-rate job in getting these deals done, getting the new police officers trained, and they are coming through.

Then you have to look at the other side of what we are going to be doing on addressing the causes, and only a Labor government addresses that or even wants to look at it. That is a key issue. Then we can drill down into what were the promises and what was delivered on different issues in different sorts of areas. I remember this well. Hours before the Baillieu government put out its first budget, there was a report on health in the Victorian hospital system, and it showed the greatest need and the greatest growth was in Melbourne's north. The former government buried that report because they knew it would not get media coverage because of the budget. It is the old tactic in American politics; they call it 'taking out the trash'.

So what has the Andrews government done? The Andrews government has addressed the issue. Northern Hospital, stage 2, more than \$132 million — there it is. There is a carve-out as well to establish the Broadmeadows hospital to take care of a generational aspiration also. So here is where the need is; here is what Labor has done.

Let us look at what those opposite also did on the projects where the money was provided. We had the then Minister for Planning, now the Leader of the Opposition, taking about \$80 million from a shovel-ready infrastructure project in Broadmeadows to sandbag marginal seats. That was for the seat of Frankston; that is where the money was going. So it was a redistribution from the poorest community that needed this project to get going. They cut \$25 million

from Kangan Institute at the worst possible time, given the need to retrain workers losing manufacturing jobs. Then they merged the Broadmeadows campus with Bendigo TAFE to pork-barrel another marginal seat. Craving the new seat of Sunbury at the 2014 state election, the Victorian coalition government committed to subsidising a breakaway council by redistributing \$25 million from the City of Hume, further punishing families in the poorest communities in another triumph of politics over rational decision-making. This gobsmacking example of the abuse of executive power was one of the last acts of a one-term regime, a ploy that was unprecedented, unfair and unsustainable. It was probably unlawful, according to the findings of a former Supreme Court judge, and was overturned by the Andrews Labor government.

From the big picture strategy to individual projects, when you hear the coalition saying that they are doing a cost audit, that is the trigger. That is really the clue that it will become the mechanism. It will be what they actually tell us in advance — where the cuts are going to be — that will be the critical question. Which communities are going to lose their potential to have better health and better hospital services? Which communities are going to have the money redistributed from them to pork-barrel marginal seats, taken away from the areas of greatest need to just take care of political self-interest? What are the declarations that will be made from this cost audit?

On law and order, the Andrews Labor government has established that here are the police officers, here is the retraining. There is a whole suite of legislative reforms that come together to manage this as well. Here is how the package unfolds in a logical, rational way to address these emerging issues, and a lot of them are driven by population growth. On infrastructure, here is the big picture strategy that has been designed. We cannot just have endless arguments about, 'Oh, I don't like this little project'. You have to do the big picture. You have to draw it together and be able to do it in an infrastructure way, in a legislative way, to actually deliver. That is what they are afraid of. For four years they were a do-little government. They were burned and churned in one term because of that. That is why this debate matters.

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (10:56) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this motion, a motion which I wholeheartedly support. It is an important motion because we are less than 12 months away from an election, and it is important that the people of Victoria remember what life was like under the last Liberal government. You know what life was like under the Liberal government before that because there were

some very, very clear synergies between them. At the start of the Baillieu government's term there was a cost audit, just like we can expect a cost audit should the Leader of the Opposition ever become the Premier of Victoria. Of course the Baillieu government's cost audit led to endless cuts, some very disgraceful cuts, to the most needy and vulnerable Victorians.

I have a Liberal opponent in my electorate; he pops up from time to time. Recently in my letterbox I got a brochure from him and the slogan on it was 'Back to Basics'. When a Liberal tells you that they are going to go back to basics, what are they actually saying?

**Mr Edbrooke** — Cut you to the bone.

**Mr STAIKOS** — Cut you to the bone. If we want to go back to their basics, let us consider what life was like in my electorate prior to the election of this Andrews Labor government. I think the most obvious policy area is in education, particularly our schools. Over the first three budgets of the former Liberal government, there were zero dollars spent to rebuild schools in my electorate — zero dollars. Not in 2011, not in 2012, not in 2013. In 2014 they realised there was an election coming on and suddenly they threw a little bit of money at Coatesville Primary School, but that took a lot of campaigning on the part of the school.

By contrast, this Andrews Labor government, over the first three budgets, has invested \$46 million in rebuilding schools in my electorate — something I am very, very proud of. Of course we are not done yet, but we were playing catch-up because we had three years of absolutely nothing. Of course that funding included McKinnon Secondary College, which is the biggest school in my electorate and one of the largest schools in the state. It has been built and rebuilt by Labor governments. The last Liberal government to ever throw any money to McKinnon Secondary College was led by Henry Bolte. That is how far back you actually have to go.

Bayside Special Developmental School has been caring and educating the most vulnerable students in the state. In the 1990s the Kennett government sold off their school oval. What sort of people sell off the school oval at a specialist school? Those sorts of people opposite do something like that. Not only are we giving them back their school oval, we are rebuilding their school from top to bottom.

That is the difference between Liberal governments and Labor governments. We actually invest in public education. Those opposite do not believe in public education. In fact their new education spokesperson has

told our public schools that they are mediocre; that is what he has said. I can tell you in the schools in my electorate that has gone down like a lead balloon. That is the big difference.

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE and MINISTERS STATEMENTS

### Taxi and hire car industry

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (11:01) — My question is to the Premier. With your government holding the selection eligibility criteria of the taxi industry Fairness Fund so tightly and secretly that you will not even give it to the Victorian Ombudsman, despite requests to do so, and with taxi families here in the gallery today whose businesses have been destroyed by your government yet with their claims for fair compensation rejected, Premier, can you look these taxi families who are here in the gallery in the eye today and tell them, just before Christmas, why their requests for compensation from the Fairness Fund were rejected? Tell them, Premier, after you destroyed their livelihoods, how is this fair?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Members of the gallery will not respond or speak. If you continue to do so, the gallery will have to be cleared.

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (11:02) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I would take issue with the contention by the Leader of the Opposition that the government is doing anything —

**Mr Guy** — Well, no compensation under you. No compensation under you! That is the reality.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! Calm yourselves. This is just the first question, and I know it is the last question time for the year. Try and calm yourselves, and have a reasonable debate.

**Mr ANDREWS** — The contention that the government is doing anything other than cooperating with the Ombudsman is simply wrong. In relation to compensation arrangements, I would note that the ultimate package was supported by those who would criticise it today. That is an interesting little point, isn't it? That is an interesting point — that those opposite would criticise measures they ultimately were dragged to voting for. Under previous positions put forward by the previous government, where there was no compensation —

**Ms Staley** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Ripon is warned.

**Mr ANDREWS** — and in debate prior to ultimately supporting the arrangements they criticise today, their position was no compensation. No compensation whatsoever. Those opposite have no credibility when it comes to these matters.

We will continue in an orderly fashion to support those in the industry, subject to the scheme as delivered and as determined by the Parliament. We will not be copying the crocodile tears from the Leader of the Opposition!

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The level of interjection is very high today. I will remove members from the chamber should it continue.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (11:04) — It is interesting that not once, Premier, have you looked at the taxi families in the eye. You have no courage to look them in the face. Andy Thompson was a taxi owner who finally met your Minister for Public Transport some weeks ago only after his plight was raised in Parliament. He has young children. As a result of your taxi changes, he has lost his house and he is now sleeping in a small factory. Your minister's only response was to offer Andy and his family a place on the public housing waiting list, an offer that was subsequently withdrawn. Premier, coming up to Christmas, maybe again you would like to face the gallery and tell these families how this is fair.

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (11:05) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his supplementary question. I wonder whether anybody in the previous government, including the now Leader of the Opposition, faced anybody when the Fels reforms were rammed through with not one dollar of compensation. Not one dollar of compensation.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Ripon will leave the chamber for 1 hour.

**Honourable member for Ripon withdrew from chamber.**

**Mr ANDREWS** — Not \$350 million worth of compensation and support, not \$350 million worth of

support, but zero support from people who would pretend to care about these matters now. They either had the complete opposite position — no support — or they —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Hodgett** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier was asked a question about Andy Thompson, a former taxi licence owner who has lost his house and how was that fair. I ask you to bring the Premier back to actually answering the question that was asked of him.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The Premier to answer the question.

**Mr ANDREWS** — They do not care about providing one dollar of compensation. Zero — that is what they would have provided. Any individual who needs support and assistance, we stand ready to provide it.

### **Ministers statements: crime prevention**

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Police) (11:07) — I rise to update the house on what this government and Victoria Police are doing to disrupt, detect and prevent crime in this state. Last year we released the *Community Safety Statement* — \$2 billion of investment in 3135 new police and 100 new protective services officers (PSOs) on top of almost another billion dollars. We have got new equipment. We have got mobile technology, new intelligence systems and new laws like banning cash for scrap metal, for DNA testing, for drug driving and firearm prohibition orders. All of these reforms are about targeting offenders, helping victims and supporting our police. We are starting to see positive results. In fact we have seen the most significant decrease in crime for over a decade. However, I can assure you, Deputy Speaker, and Victorians that the job is not yet over.

This government, Victoria Police and I remain absolutely committed to a relentless focus on driving this rate down further. The crime statistics released today show a drop of 6.3 per cent in the crime rate and a drop in the raw number of offences of 4.9 per cent. In every police region, in almost all crime types, in households, communities and businesses, we are seeing the crime rate head downwards. Most importantly, the number of victims is also down. We have got to remember that at the end of every statistic there is a victim. Those rates are coming down too.

I want to thank every police officer in every part of Victoria for their tireless and relentless effort to bring

crime down. We know each and every year there was an increase in crime under those opposite. In fact 21 per cent during their time — 21 per cent. That six-year trend is starting to turn around. What will not bring crime down is supporting organised crime figures, undermining the police, helping out organised crime and watering down our firearm prohibition orders.

### West Gate tunnel project

**Mr M. O'BRIEN** (Malvern) (11:09) — My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, you told Parliament that your West Gate tunnel project, which includes 20 years of higher tolls on CityLink and the imposition of a city access tax for the very first time, is 'the best possible deal for Victorians'. Global investment bank Credit Suisse has published research to its clients that says of the West Gate tunnel:

It is a highly attractive investment opportunity that TCL (Transurban) negotiated with the Victorian government without a competitive process ...

It then says it delivers to Transurban:

\$2.7 billion value creation from (an) unsolicited proposal.

Treasurer, given investment banks are crowing over your \$2.7 billion gift from Victorians to Transurban, how can you justify this rip-off of motorists by a private company on a project you never took to an election?

**Mr PALLAS** (Treasurer) (11:10) — I thank the member for Malvern for his question. Every time the member for Malvern asks a question about probity, the people of Victoria will be reminded that his is the hand that signed the dodgy side letter. He kept it secret from Victorians and hid a business case that showed a road where literally billions of dollars would be invested would return 45 cents in the dollar. Let us also not forget that the market-led proposals, what were unsolicited bids, the direct subject of the question from the member —

**Ms Ryall** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on the question of relevance, the Treasurer is debating the question and failing to answer the question. I would ask you to bring him back.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The Treasurer is referring to the West Gate tunnel. I do encourage the Treasurer to take heed of the question and respond with an answer.

**Mr PALLAS** — It was not this government that introduced unsolicited bid proposals; we refined them. Did you know that under those opposite an unsolicited bids proposal, a contract, could be signed without the

public even knowing about its existence. We made them public. We made them transparent. We placed obligations upon the state to declare to the public that these proposals had been submitted, and the state had to justify that we were getting value for money, which you never did.

**Mr M. O'Brien** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the question related to analysis from Credit Suisse talking about a \$2.7 billion value creation and asked the Treasurer how can he justify this rip-off of motorists on a project he never took to an election? I ask you to bring him back to answering the question that was asked.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I remind members that points of order are not an opportunity to repeat questions.

**Mr Pakula** — On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, the preamble to the question went to the fact, as the member for Malvern suggested, that this project did not go to market. The Treasurer is explaining in great detail the process and comparing it to the process that was far less transparent under the previous government. So he is entirely in order to respond to the assertions made by the member for Malvern about this project, in his words, 'not going to market'.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I believe the Treasurer was being relevant in terms of going to market, and I rule the point of order out of order.

**Mr PALLAS** — Under the unsolicited bid processes that the previous government operated there would have been no contestability, no capacity for the state to satisfy the community that it got value for money. If you would like to go to the website of Treasury, you will see PricewaterhouseCoopers advice to the state of Victoria that there is a value-for-money proposition. Might I also add that the question went to who liked and who disliked this proposal. Well, of course the Victorian Transport Association is a big supporter of this proposal. Who else likes it? The Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Not that the interests of business would concern those opposite, because they are the people who want to sign dodgy contracts, who want to reach agreements in silence and in secret, and now what are they proposing? Are they going to tear up contracts or are they going to do what the people of Victoria expect to happen? In relation to the 50 000 jobs that our 2016–17 budget said we would deliver, we are getting on and doing. That is why this is the fastest growing economy in the nation.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr M. O'BRIEN** (Malvern) (11:14) — Treasurer, in a research note to its clients on the West Gate tunnel, Macquarie Wealth Management referred to:

... the surprise increase in CityLink tolls to 4.25 per cent over 2019–29. In a low inflationary environment, this is as much as a 20 per cent real toll increase!

Treasurer, why should CityLink users accept paying 10 years of higher tolls and 10 years of new tolls for your dud tunnel that stands to benefit Transurban shareholders at the expense of Victorians?

**Mr PALLAS** (Treasurer) (11:15) — There is only one certainty about this: this proposal is the project that the people of Victoria desperately need. We cannot retain our reliance upon the West Gate Bridge. We need to put in place arrangements.

**Mr M. O'Brien** interjected.

**Mr PALLAS** — Now he is talking about taking things to an election. These are the people who lied to the people of Victoria about east–west; they said they had no plans for an east–west tunnel. You lied to the people of Victoria and then you hid your dodgy contractual arrangements from them.

**Mr M. O'Brien** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I would ask you to bring the Treasurer back to the question. I am happy to make available to the house the reports from Credit Suisse and Macquarie demonstrating what an absolute gift he has given to Transurban at the expense of Victorians.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — There is no point of order. The Treasurer to continue.

**Mr M. O'Brien** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Malvern seeks leave to make documents available to the house.

**Mr PALLAS** — This is feigned indignation from the member for Malvern, who signed arrangements that put in place a 4.5 per cent adjustment on tolls. We have done better than him at 4.25 per cent, but let us be clear: the cost of this project in today's dollars is \$4 billion worth of capital works, \$4 billion worth of toll revenue to Transurban.

**Ministers statements: employment**

**Mr CARROLL** (Minister for Industry and Employment) (11:17) — I rise to update the house on

the latest employment statistics released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The revised labour force data shows that since the election of the Andrews Labor government 284 000 new jobs have been created — since November 2014. This is the highest in the nation in both absolute and percentage terms. It equates to 250 new jobs every day since the election of the Andrews Labor government

**Mr T. Smith** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Kew is warned.

**Mr CARROLL** — Importantly, 190 000 of those jobs are full-time, which is the highest growth in full-time employment in the nation and something we should be all very proud of. We have an annual average jobs growth rate of 3.92 per cent. When we had the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw government —

**Mrs Fyffe** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the minister appears to be reading from a document. I wonder if he would make that document available to the house?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Is the minister reading from a document?

**Mr CARROLL** — I am referring to notes, Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The minister is referring to notes. The minister to continue his ministers statement in silence.

**Mr CARROLL** — Do not just take our jobs opportunities and job strategy from me; take it from the member for Brighton — wakey-wakey over there! Back in 2011 — and I am happy to quote this one, Deputy Speaker — there was a fundamental point —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I know it is the last question time for the year, and I understand your excitement about going home. Everyone is very excited and I understand that it is pretty funny when the minister knocks the lamp, but I encourage you to control yourselves. The minister to continue.

**Mr CARROLL** — The member for Brighton back in 2011 said to us:

... the opposition seems to think the government's role is to provide jobs.

I am happy to quote that and happy to table it. We do believe there is a role to provide jobs for Victorians. That is why 284 000 people are proudly in work.

I congratulate the Minister for Police on her statistics released today. The landmark report on crystal methamphetamine was handed down on the now opposition's watch. We are putting Victorians into work. I remember when former Premier Napthine came to office he recruited 11 new sniffer dogs. That was his answer to crystal methamphetamine. While we are putting people to work, they are putting labradors to work. They are a whole frontbench of labradors, and the member for Kew, what is he? He is the young puppy.

**Ms Victoria** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I am sick to death of the bullying in this chamber, and I ask you to caution the ministers on the other side of the house as to their conduct in this house and the name-calling, which is beyond what the people of Victoria expect from this house.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I encourage all members to take heed of the rules of the house.

### Taxi and hire car industry

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (11:21) — My question is again to the Premier. In the gallery today is a lady whose father was a hardworking migrant who worked tirelessly to support his family and himself in retirement. He used to —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I caution the deputy leader. I caution the Leader of The Nationals. The Leader of the Opposition to continue his question.

**Mr GUY** — In the gallery today is a lady whose father was a hardworking migrant who worked tirelessly to support his family and himself in retirement. He used his taxi licences to fund his stay in a nursing home. Once your government devalued taxi licences this man did not have enough money to pay for the nursing home fees. Centrelink valued his licences at \$800 000, so he is unable to receive a pension. His taxi licences are worth zero to you but \$800 000 to Centrelink. Premier, how much longer must this lady's father wait for the so-called Fairness Fund to pay for the debt he has now incurred as a result of your destruction of the value of his asset?

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (11:23) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I would just draw to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition and anybody else who has been directly affected by

these measures or anyone with even a passing interest in these matters that the opposition described the compensation arrangements that we put in place as 'a slush fund'. Who said that? The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party described it as a slush fund —

**Mr Guy** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I have asked the Premier how much longer this lady's father must wait for the Fairness Fund to pay the debt he has now incurred. I ask you, on relevance, to bring him back to answering a straightforward question.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I encourage the Premier to answer the question.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Individual cases for support and compensation under arrangements that were opposed and then ultimately supported by those opposite are dealt with as quickly as they possibly can be. I am more than happy to follow up on any individual case beyond the correspondence and discussions that have already occurred. I am more than happy to follow those matters up.

But I would say to anybody interested in these matters that those who oppose compensation are no friends of people who are seeking it. Those who describe compensation as a slush fund are no friends of those who would like to access that fund. The hypocrisy of those opposite is on display today, and it is no different from when they come in here pretending to care about victims of crime and they take the Mafia's money. You are a fraud and everyone knows it.

### Supplementary question

**Mr GUY** (Leader of the Opposition) (11:25) — Premier, will you immediately release the criteria for the so-called Fairness Fund so that this family and many other taxi families adversely affected by the government's decisions, including those here in the chamber today, can see for themselves whether payments from the fund are not being made or are being made capriciously? If not, will you please explain to those families present why they are being so poorly treated by you.

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (11:25) — Each and every application for assistance, support and compensation under the Fairness Fund, opposed by the Leader of the Opposition, is dealt with on its merits —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr ANDREWS** — Well, you opposed the Fairness Fund, so you are no friend of the Fairness Fund; you did not want one.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Eltham is warned.

**Mr ANDREWS** — I would again make the point that every case is unique, every case will be dealt with on its merits and payments have been and will continue to be made from a fund that was opposed by those opposite. I will again make the point that if you oppose a fairness fund, you are no friend of people who would make a claim from that fairness fund. You are a hypocrite and everyone knows it.

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Burwood is warned.

### **Ministers statements: health and ambulance services**

**Ms HENNESSY** (Minister for Health) (11:26) — I am delighted to rise to advise the house about some very significant achievements that have occurred in the health and ambulance services portfolios this year and how our government continues to deliver for all Victorians with the wonderful work and the wonderful support of our health and ambulance services workforce.

It has been a year of record achievement when it comes to health and ambulance services. Our ambulances are arriving faster, with the best quarter one response times on record and the best annual response times in eight years.

In our hospitals we have achieved the best annual elective surgery waitlist on record. More patients than ever before have also had their elective surgery within clinically recommended time frames.

We have spent the last three years making sure that we rebuild our health and ambulance system after the cruel and vicious billion-dollar cuts that were made to our health and ambulance system. None of this would have been possible without our \$1.67 billion investment to meet hospital demand.

This has been a very, very challenging year for our health and ambulance system. From the great challenges of responding to the Bourke Street tragedy in early January to one of the worst flu seasons on record, to achieve this kind of performance for Victorians is something that means that we should hold our health and ambulance system in incredibly high regard.

As we crawl to the end of the parliamentary sitting season we should remember that our health and ambulance services and workforce will be working over Christmas to make sure that all Victorians are safe. They deserve our respect and they deserve our support. I want to place on record my deep appreciation and gratitude for the incredibly hard work that they have done for us this year and for sacrificing time with their families over Christmas to make sure that we keep Victorians safe.

### **Goulburn-Murray irrigation district**

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (11:28) — My question is for the Minister for Water. The RMC report finds \$550 million each year is being lost in agricultural production in the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district, and that about 1000 jobs have been lost to the region so far as a direct result of reduced water availability under the Murray-Darling Basin plan. Farmers have been leaving the region in significant numbers since the water buybacks commenced a decade ago. This week dairy farmer and Australian Dairy Industry Council water task force chairman Daryl Hoey has spoken out again about the serious risk to dairy farmers in our region if more water is taken out of the consumptive pool. All signs indicate that the federal government is burying its head in the sand and is intent on rolling out the plan regardless of its impact on river communities. I ask the minister: what steps will the Victorian government take to protect access to water for our dairy industry and other food producers, who account for at least 25 per cent of the total value of Victoria's agricultural production?

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Water) (11:29) — Can I thank the member for Shepparton for her question. It is a very important question and one that confronts us immediately with the ministerial council coming up next week, but also over the coming months and where we head with it. I completely understand her frustration. She is really reflecting the frustration of her communities, not just in the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district (GMID) but also along the Sunraysia as well in terms of some of the issues we have faced around allegations of water theft et cetera.

We do know from our own socio-economic report and that done by the communities in the Goulburn-Murray region that we have significant pressure because of the significant buybacks that happened during the start of the Murray-Darling Basin plan. In fact we know that dairy in particular was subject to selling off a large quantity of their high-reliability water shares, to a much greater extent than horticulture, although our socio-economic reports show that we are at a pretty significant trigger

point not only for dairy but also for horticulture. So this is an issue right across the basin in Victoria.

At the Ministerial Council for Corporations (MINCO) on Monday and Tuesday of next week we are meeting with stakeholders, and then the ministers are meeting. Firstly, I will be calling for a high-level independent review. We have been doing that consistently; we have been asking the commonwealth to do this because we do need to get to the bottom of what has occurred. We have got multiple reviews going on, none of which go to the issue of improving turbidity confidence. I would be very keen for those opposite to perhaps support that independent call to Barnaby Joyce.

Secondly, I will be telling MINCO — and I am sure the member for Shepparton will agree that the evidence does not yet exist for us to be able to proceed with the recovery of the additional 450 gegalitres that South Australia is seeking. There is no community confidence — every single socio-economic report shows us that 450 could significantly harm our communities.

Thirdly, I will be calling for the work to continue on delivering the projects under the plan that will deliver the 605 gegalitres. That is currently before the Senate, and unless we get that through, our communities will potentially face further buybacks from the commonwealth. There is a legislative component around that, so again we need the commonwealth to get this through the Senate to support that and get the 605 gegalitres and the sustainable diversion limits adjustments and the projects on the ground.

I can assure the member, I can assure this house and I can assure northern Victorians that we are going to be continuing to advocate strongly to protect their water interests. This is significant to the economy of Victoria but also for that region. Unfortunately others signed up to this plan that I do not think has been in the interests of Victoria.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (11:32) — Minister, will you go to the ministerial council meeting of water ministers in Albury next Tuesday and call for a pause in the basin plan while the current shambles is addressed; the results of at least 11 different inquiries, evaluations and reviews are assessed; and a practical way forward is found that meets the needs of the environment and supports the local, social and economic future of the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district?

**Ms NEVILLE** (Minister for Water) (11:33) — I thank the member for Shepparton for her

supplementary question. Just as I indicated, firstly, we need an independent review with powers to subpoena people and subpoena records. In my view the Ernst & Young report will not give us the answers we need. We are absolutely clear that there are socio-economic impacts of taking any more consumptive water out of that region, and Victoria will be strongly saying that we cannot sign up to that 450 gegalitres unless it can be delivered in a way that is neutral or better in terms of socio-economic impact. I do not think that is going to be possible, but we will not be signing up to that until that is assured. Thirdly, we cannot fully pause the plan because we do need to deliver the 605 gegalitres, the offsets, the infrastructure, and we need the commonwealth to get that out the door. I do not want to risk any more buybacks from the commonwealth government in relation to this.

**Ministers statements: education**

**Mr MERLINO** (Minister for Education) (11:34) — It has been an amazing year of achievement and delivery in the Education State. We signed an enterprise bargaining agreement with our government school principals, teachers and support staff without industrial action for the first time in 20 years, treating the profession with the respect it deserves.

**Mr R. Smith** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The member for Warrandyte is warned.

**Mr MERLINO** — We reformed our initial teacher education requirements with the introduction of a minimum Australian tertiary admission rank for year 12 entry into undergraduate teaching courses, starting at 65 for this year's year 12s and 70 next year. We want the top 30 per cent of students to become teachers. We have undone much of the damage inflicted by those opposite. They cut \$1 billion out of education. We have invested \$5 billion, and we are seeing the results.

The 2017 NAPLAN national report shows that Victorian students achieved the highest mean scores across Australia in year 3 reading, years 3 and 5 writing, year 3 grammar and punctuation and years 3 and 5 numeracy. This comes on the back of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study results, an international report, which confirmed that Victoria is well ahead of every other state and territory in this nation, and we are one of the leaders in the world. Despite this, there are some who continually disparage government schools, who say, and I quote, 'There is a culture of mediocrity' in state schools around Victoria. Who said that? It was the member for

Kew, shadow minister number 25. Students and teachers across Victoria are proving the shadow minister wrong. We are leading the nation in education.

**Mr R. Smith** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The member for Warrandyte! This is your second warning. I will not hesitate to remove you from the chamber.

### Energy supply

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) (11:36) — My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Yesterday the temperature reached 38 degrees, and places like Mountain High Shopping Centre in Bayswater were already asking the tenants to turn off their air conditioners. Minister, you stood by and watched Hazelwood close. Despite all the hype your batteries are still not ready, diesel generators are going to cost a fortune and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has reported that Victorian energy costs are now the nation's highest. Can you confirm, on top of all of that, that Victorians will now foot the bill for companies that are being asked to shut off power in order to stop blackouts?

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (11:37) — I thank the member for Caulfield for his question. He is absolutely wrong on all those counts. The facts speak for themselves. Back in 2014 the market operator called for additional supplies of energy for that summer period under the watch of the previous government and at the time when the Hazelwood power station was still in operation. We are seeing the same tools being put in place this time round for the market operator. The market operator's role is to ensure that there are sufficient supplies to meet the demand needs of the eastern market for electricity. They are doing that. Yesterday was an example of them being successful in being able to meet the supply demands, and they have given everyone the confidence that that will continue.

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question. The question was specifically: will Victorians be paying more as a result of being asked to shut down their supply, thanks to the failure of this government — yes or no? And how much will that be if the minister would like to elaborate and tell us? And if she does not know that, could she just sit down.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change to respond to the question.

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** — Thanks very much. Can I just say quite clearly that I do not take any lessons from the member for Caulfield, who actually does not understand the system whatsoever. The fact is that the market operator's role, as they did in the past in 2014, is putting the measures in place to ensure that there is sufficient energy supply to meet the demands for the coming summer. They are doing their job. The question will be about whether there is any activation of those reserves. If that is the case, then of course, as the market operator has made clear, there will be costs that retailers will bear from that.

We are at the beginning of summer. Ultimately the market operator's role is to ensure that we do have sufficient supplies. They have given all consumers, and they have given governments across the eastern seaboard, the confidence that they have that in hand, and we will look towards the summer to see how that goes. Yesterday was a very important day in demonstration of the market operator doing its job. It ought to be allowed to get on and do just that and ensure that we have got sufficient supplies to meet the demand.

### *Supplementary question*

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) (11:40) — I take from that the answer is yes, that Victorians will be paying more. With the disastrous and half-baked policy decisions the Andrews government has made or allowed to happen in the energy portfolio, Minister, will you today give Victorians a guarantee that there will be no blackouts due to the power shortages this summer — yes or no?

**Ms D'AMBROSIO** (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change) (11:40) — I thank the member for the supplementary question. The fact remains that the market operator has given assurances and confidence that there will be sufficient supply to meet the demands for this coming summer. We have confidence that they will do that, and we expect the market operator to see through its commitment to all consumers across not just Victoria but all of the energy market.

**Mr Southwick** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the question was to the minister, not to the market operator. Will the minister give the guarantee — yes or no — that there will be no blackouts this summer? This is very important to every single Victorian and every household and every business. Will we see blackouts under this government — yes or no?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The minister has concluded her answer.

**Ministers statements: employment**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Premier) (11:41) — I am delighted to be able to update the house, firstly, on November labour force data which has just been released, showing unemployment is down to 5.5 per cent and nearly 320 000 jobs have been created since this government came to office — 320 000 jobs. Compare that to a record of doing absolutely nothing, or nothing good, from those opposite. What a proud day for those workers.

**Mr M. O'Brien** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I do not understand why the Premier is not telling us that Victoria's unemployment rate has been stuck above the national average for 15 consecutive months — 15.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — There is no point of order.

**Mr ANDREWS** — The member for Malvern would know all about being average, I would reckon. Keep taking your points of order, come on. Another one!

**Mr M. O'Brien** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I just remind the Premier in our four years Victoria created more jobs than any state in the country. He cannot boast that record.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — There is no point of order.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — This is the last ministers statement in the last sitting week. The member for Hawthorn has a point of order. I would like it to be heard in silence.

**Mr Pesutto** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, were it not for population growth, gross state product would actually be going backwards under the Premier.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — As the member for Hawthorn would be aware, that is not a point of order.

**Mr ANDREWS** — Here I was, thinking it was question time. It is audition time, it would seem. *Don't You (Forget About Me)* — that is your favourite song, isn't it? *Don't You (Forget About Me)* over here. Have you got another point of order?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — With 57 seconds to go, I call the Leader of The Nationals on a point of order.

**Mr Walsh** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, in the absence of the member for Box Hill, I feel compelled to ask you to bring the Premier back to making a ministers statement, because he has strayed a long way from that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I am inclined to agree with the Leader of The Nationals. I call the Premier back to making a ministers statement.

**Mr ANDREWS** — I could of course update the house on our fishing policy, Target One Million. It seems many people are taking the bait today. Many people are jumping on the hook, it would seem.

But no, what I want to do, apart from celebrating those very, very important employment numbers, is to spare a thought for all of those who will work over the summer period to keep us safe — our Victoria State Emergency Service, our Country Fire Authority, our Metropolitan Fire Brigade, our ambulance paramedics, our members of Victoria Police and so many others who, while others are having a break, a well-earned rest, will work right throughout the day and night to keep us safe. Retail workers will continue to work to make sure that our international guests get the best experience possible. Our doctors, our nurses, our ambulance paramedics will work to make sure that we continue to provide the very best care. We will spare a thought for them this Christmas.

**Mr Wakeling** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I just wish to draw your attention to a number of questions that I have put to the ministers for environment, police and education which are yet to be answered. These relate to questions on notice 13 426, 13 423, 13 060 and 13 030 and constituency question 13 334. I ask you to draw those matters to the attention of the relevant ministers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — We will refer those matters to the ministers for response.

**Mr T. Bull** — Deputy Speaker, my point of order also relates to some overdue correspondence: constituency question 13 332 to the Minister for Police, asked on 19 October, regarding the allocation of additional police at Lakes Entrance over the summer period; and question 13 385, also to the Minister for Police, asked on 31 October, regarding policing in Omeo in the case of staff absences.

The following were questions on notice: 13 167 through to 13 172 to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, asked on 17 October, regarding a VicRoads infrastructure program; questions 13 176 through to 13 217 to the Minister for Housing, Disability and

Ageing, relating to the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme; question 13 282 to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety on 18 October, regarding the installation of warning signs for deer on roads in East Gippsland; question 13 285 to the Minister for Emergency Services, asked on 18 October, regarding roadside fuel reduction burning; and question 13 288 to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, regarding the VicRoads Safer System Roads Infrastructure Program.

Deputy Speaker, I raised these points last sitting week. They were overdue then. They are very important to the people of East Gippsland. I request, with Christmas approaching, that if you could expedite those answers from the relevant ministers I would be most appreciative.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — I thank the member for Gippsland East. We will follow those up with the ministers responsible.

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk about a number of questions on notice that I have asked: question 13 220 to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and 13 249 to the Minister for Local Government. I raised yesterday that question 13 249 is overdue by almost a month. Given that Christmas is upon us and given that we will not actually sit between now and Australia Day — and the question was specifically about Australia Day and residents in certain municipalities being disadvantaged by their councils not showing some respect for 26 January as Australia Day — I would appreciate if that question could be answered before Australia Day so that I could have some satisfaction. That would be good.

I am a little bit reticent to raise this particular point of order, but nonetheless today is the 30th day since I asked four questions of the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. I understand there are personal circumstances in relation to the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, but given the fact that there were 75 374 instances of family violence reported between September 2016 and September 2017, I do not think it is unreasonable to think that, even in the absence of the minister, the government might be able to find an answer to those four questions around domestic violence. My questions were about support services for victims of domestic violence. We know that during the summer period and during the Christmas period instances of domestic violence can be difficult and increased, but in particular access to services can be difficult over the summer period. I would ask that you have these questions answered in a timely manner — and I am reticent because I understand the minister's personal circumstances.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Thank you, member for Burwood. I understand your concern. Those matters will be referred to the ministers that you have referred to. I understand that letters have already been written to the ministers in relation to the points of order you raised yesterday, and we will seek a response for you.

## RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

### Questions without notice

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** (11:51) — Order! In question time yesterday the member for Malvern took a point of order in relation to the responsiveness of the Treasurer's answer to the second substantive question. I have reviewed the transcript and consider that the answer was responsive. The member for Croydon took a point of order about the responsiveness of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety's answer to the fourth supplementary question. I have reviewed the transcript and consider that that answer was responsive.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### Brighton electorate

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) (11:52) — (13 836) My question is the Minister for Water. My question is: when will the government complete meaningful flood mitigation work around the Elwood Canal? As the minister would know, because I have raised this with her previously, houses in proximity of the Elwood Canal flood when it rains. Constituents have now written to me saying that in view of the dire warnings issued, whilst their homes did not flood in December this year, they of course still sandbagged their homes and experienced a whole range of stress associated with impending flooding. They are the people who have used the term 'meaningful flood mitigation'. I am in possession of a confidential plan called *Elster Creek Catchment Action Plan* from October 2017, and many actions in this require Melbourne Water to act in 2018. A good first step for the minister would be to commit to these actions. So when will these residents of mine be relieved with flood mitigation?

### Narre Warren South electorate

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) (11:53) — (13 837) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it concerns the intersection of Pound Road and Shrives Road in Hampton Park. I ask: what stage has been reached in the Andrews Labor government's \$7.5 million project to upgrade this notorious intersection? I was so pleased to kick off construction on this much-needed project earlier this

year. It followed a really long and hard-fought campaign with the local community to ensure that action was taken. Naturally it was only Labor who was willing to act and get on with the job. The Liberals wasted four years and refused to lift a finger to fix this congested and dangerous intersection. Soon give-way signs will be replaced with a two-lane roundabout that will ease congestion and prevent accidents. It is yet another example of how only Labor governments deliver for our community.

### Gippsland East electorate

**Mr T. BULL** (Gippsland East) (11:54) — (13 838) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. The information I seek is the progress of the air-conditioning upgrade on V/Line's Gippsland line N-class carriages. I first raised this matter via a question on notice last year, and on 21 March I was advised, 'An upgrade to the air conditioning on one N carriage is being trialled in the third quarter of 2016'. Through an adjournment debate later on I asked the minister to reveal the findings of the trial, and on 28 April 2017 was told, 'The upgrade program will commence shortly across the entire classic fleet'. I then sought start and finish dates for this upgrade and was advised, 'Air conditioning upgrades for the carriages are expected to commence in late 2017 and be completed in 2018'. We are now in late 2017, and it should have started. I would like to know how the upgrade on the Bairnsdale carriages is progressing.

### Bentleigh electorate

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (11:55) — (13 839) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. My question is: how have patronage numbers changed on the 823 bus since the recent route change?

### Evelyn electorate

**Mrs FYFFE** (Evelyn) (11:55) — (13 840) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. What plans does the minister have to review bus services in my electorate, in particular along Clegg Road, Wandin North? There is a disconnect between the townships of Wandin North and Mount Evelyn. Residents of each township have to travel into Lilydale and then come out again if they wish to access either of these two townships. Residents along Clegg Road are even more increasingly isolated and are forced to rely on taxis and private cars to reach the shops or services of either township.

### Yuroke electorate

**Ms SPENCE** (Yuroke) (11:55) — (13 841) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health. What information can the minister provide on initiatives the government is undertaking to encourage breast cancer screening for women in the Yuroke electorate? Data from BreastScreen Victoria indicates that 3759 women in the Yuroke electorate were not screened for breast cancer between 2014 and 2016. With a screening average of only 53 per cent during this time, the Yuroke electorate recorded a rate of screening lower than the statewide average.

A statistic that we all know too well is that one in eight Victorian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. However, life-saving breast screening technology can now detect cancers early, before noticeable symptoms occur. I thank the minister for her work in this area, and I look forward to hearing from her about what the government is doing to improve breast cancer detection in my electorate.

### Melbourne electorate

**Ms SANDELL** (Melbourne) (11:56) — (13 842) My question is to the Minister for Planning, and it relates to Campbell Arcade, which is the underpass from Degraes Street to Flinders Street station. As part of the Melbourne Metro project there is a new planned underpass from Town Hall station to Flinders Street station, but this will have an impact on the heritage of the existing Campbell Arcade. My question is: why hasn't this impact been considered in the environment effects statement or subjected to any planning or heritage assessment?

Campbell Arcade was built for the 1956 Olympics. It is a rare example of art deco design, with a distinct 1950s colour scheme. Now it is an art space. The walls are lined with creative work. You can pick up the latest zine from the Sticky Institute or grab some independent Aussie fashion from The Cats Meow. But the current Metro Tunnel plans show the arcade's eastern wall could soon be demolished. Yes, we need an underpass from Town Hall station to Flinders Street station, but the failure to properly consider heritage in its planning must be rectified.

### Macedon electorate

**Ms THOMAS** (Macedon) (11:57) — (13 843) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. My community in Gisborne have been calling for a pedestrian crossing on Aitken Street for some time now. Aitken Street is the main thoroughfare through

town for cars and other vehicles, and it is also a popular strip for pedestrians who want to grab a bite to eat or shop at one of the local retail outlets. I understand that funding for a pedestrian crossing is now available. Can the minister advise when work will commence on this much-needed project?

### Bass electorate

**Mr PAYNTER** (Bass) (11:58) — (13 844) My question is for the Minister for Police. Minister, how do you intend to keep the community of Phillip Island safe over the new year when we do not have an operating police station? The completion of the Cowes police station has been pushed back to mid-2018, which means that over the summer period and including the major upcoming public holidays of Christmas, New Year's Day, Australia Day and Easter there will be no permanent police presence on the island. It is expected that the population on Phillip Island will increase to over 60 000 people. With families, children and locals working, visiting and holidaying on the island, what will you do to ensure their safety at all times?

The San Remo police station was built for a maximum of six officers and is not suitable to house the police from the Cowes station let alone the additional numbers needed to deal with the summer crowds. This situation is one that you alone have caused. The Andrews government is losing the fight on crime, and our communities are feeling vulnerable as a result.

### Yan Yean electorate

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) (11:59) — (13 845) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: when is the relocation of the historic Plenty Methodist Church due to occur, from the corner of Yan Yean Road and River Avenue? I was pleased to join the minister for the sod turn of the Yan Yean Road duplication last Friday. The duplication requires that this historic church be moved. Unfortunately, though, there has not been agreement reached on where this should be. The Plenty Historical Society and the Plenty community hall committee are very willing and want to manage this beautiful old church on the site of the Plenty War Memorial Park. However, VicRoads have advised that Nillumbik Shire Council is dragging its feet on this occurring. It would be a great risk to this church if it had to be relocated to a temporary site before its final site, so I hope the minister can resolve this.

## PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING AND EMPLOYMENT

### Debate resumed.

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (12:00) — Before we were interrupted by question time I was highlighting the very, very clear differences when it comes to public education between this side of the house and that side of the house and highlighting their inaction — indeed their neglect, their cuts — when it comes to public schools, particularly in my electorate of Bentleigh.

Statewide over three budgets \$2.5 billion is currently being spent on building, upgrading and rebuilding schools across the state. In contrast, the last government spent on average around \$200 million a year and did not fund one single new school. That is why last year not one new school opened despite the fact that in some parts of our state — like over in Wyndham — a primary school is born every month. We are the fastest growing capital city in Australia, and of course the former government did absolutely nothing to keep pace with that growth in terms of critical infrastructure — and that includes schools.

Even in an electorate like mine, which is not a new area — it is not considered a growth area; it is certainly not an outer suburb — we are currently talking about building a new secondary school. The tragedy of this is that the site where we are intending to put this new secondary school is within a stone's throw of the old Murrumbeena High School, closed by the Kennett government. That is how short-sighted Liberals are. They close our public schools and they cut to the bone when it comes to education, and then it is always Labor governments that come to pick up the pieces.

But the cuts to our schools were not just in infrastructure. I think one of the most shameful actions of the former Baillieu-Napthine government was when it cut the education maintenance allowance — an allowance that provided funding to the most needy school students in our state. What sort of people would cut funding to the most needy school students, schoolchildren, across the state? Those people opposite — that is exactly what they did. When we came to government we introduced the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund and we boosted funding to State Schools Relief, because we believe that no child should go without.

Then of course we remember that pre-election promise made by Ted Baillieu where he said to our teachers that he would make them not the worst paid in Australia but the best paid in Australia. How did that go? He deceived our teachers, and of course that enterprise

bargaining agreement (EBA) became one of quite a number of acrimonious EBA negotiations that characterised that government of four years. What did we do? We settled the teachers EBA with not one day of industrial action, because we value our teachers whether they are in government schools or non-government schools. When it comes to education I think the people of Victoria absolutely know which side they can trust.

Then we think back to what was happening with health in our state over those four miserable years of the Baillieu-Napthine government. That government over four years cut \$1 billion from our health system — \$1 billion. They waged war on our paramedics. We ended the war with our paramedics. We funded our ambulance service properly, and today we have the best ambulance response times in eight years — because we worked with our paramedics and we respected their work.

Remember what they did to our nurses; I remember that well. My opponent herself was a former nurse, but the truth is that she betrayed nurses. That is why outside the Bentleigh electorate office on several occasions there were a number of demonstrations by our nurses, many of them local nurses. I can tell you that since I have been the member for Bentleigh, not one demonstration has taken place outside that office because this government values our nurses. The former government wanted to cut nurse numbers. What we did was we enshrined nurse-to-patient ratios in law. That is how much we value our nurses and the care that they provide to their patients.

With transport, my opponent in Bentleigh keeps saying let's go back to basics. What does that mean? Before we removed level crossings? Is that what he means? Because certainly I have not seen much support from members opposite for the level crossing removal project in my electorate. What a fantastic project. This project not only provided very important, long overdue infrastructure but also created a lot of jobs.

With all of these government contracts we are making sure that 15 per cent of workers are apprentices, cadets or trainees because we are all about giving people opportunity. They are all about ripping opportunity away; we are all about giving people the dignity of work — not just for apprentices but also for Indigenous workers. I think there are 100 Aboriginal workers currently working on the elevated rail project on the Dandenong line, and that is something that we are very, very proud of.

This has been a government that has been about opportunity, that has been about education and that has been about jobs. We heard today from the Premier that since this government came to office we have created 320 000 jobs — that is a record — and unemployment is at a record low 5.5 per cent. We are proud of all of these achievements, because when this government achieves, it achieves for the people of Victoria. I could probably speak for an hour or two about the cuts of the former government and what Victorians can expect if that miserable lot ever find their way back to the Treasury bench. I commend the motion to the house.

**Mr CARBINES** (Ivanhoe) (12:06) — I am pleased to follow the member for Bentleigh in relation to these matters and in particular the very disturbing commitment that has been made by the Liberal-Nationals coalition that they will undertake a cost audit if they return to the Treasury bench at the next election. We remember the sustainable government initiative under the Baillieu-Napthine governments, which was just a stalking horse and smokescreen for cuts. That is all it was. In particular it was cuts to services in my electorate. When we talk about a cost audit, it is not about just dollars and cents, as is often the case with the Liberal-Nationals when they are in government; it is the cost to families, it is the cost to communities and it is the cost to opportunities for people to be able to make a contribution.

Some of the very significant projects and programs that we have operating right now in the Ivanhoe electorate are providing the most exciting time for public servants to be engaged in government. There are great opportunities that people have been working for many years to deliver — projects that have been talked about for ever but never delivered — and the opportunities for the professional development and engagement of the public service here in Victoria on these projects is significant. The only threat to their opportunities to continue to put their expertise to good use for the people of Victoria is the cuts that have been foreshadowed by those opposite. We have seen that in particular in relation to the projects in my electorate. I just want to touch on a few of those but also to note that I represent an electorate that has a very significant proportion of people who work in the public service and the public sector. We have not only the Austin and Mercy hospitals in my electorate but the Warringal Private Hospital and the Austin repat facility as well. Many people who work in the Ivanhoe electorate are involved in health services, including as paramedics.

We also have a very significant range of public, private and independent schools and a significant number of people who live locally work in that sector. We have a

very high proportion of public sector workers in the Ivanhoe electorate. They have a very big commitment to and stake in who governs Victoria because it affects their commitment and their ability to contribute to the community, to their families and to their livelihoods.

We on this side of the house put people to work and provide amazing opportunities for people who have devoted their working lives to the betterment of Victoria, to the place where they live and to the great opportunities that they have had on several projects. I will touch on some of those because they are also providing opportunities for young people to get into the workforce and retraining opportunities that we have seen with the automotive transition task force. Those programs are overseen by a member in the other place, the minister responsible for TAFE, who has been out to the Rosanna level crossing removal project. It is part of a \$395 million upgrade of the Hurstbridge rail line to remove level crossings at both Grange Road in Alphington and Lower Plenty Road in Rosanna. The duplication of the Hurstbridge line between Heidelberg and Rosanna, another tunnel and another bridge are all part of the project.

We were out there with automotive workers who have transitioned across to the Level Crossing Removal Authority. We stood there with those workers, who were rubbished and belittled and had their careers destroyed by those people opposite when their federal counterparts in Canberra demolished the automotive industry. It is a Labor government, under the Premier, that has provided transitions to work on these projects and ensured those people were treated with respect and dignity and given opportunities to retrain. Now they are out there removing level crossings across Victoria, including at Rosanna. That is a tribute, I think, to the commitment that this side of the house makes to providing in very difficult circumstances — this is complicated work that requires great attention and a great level of purpose — those opportunities to people who could easily fall through the cracks.

It is not only that, but also in relation to our multicultural communities we are making sure they have apprenticeships, job opportunities and training opportunities. We are seeing that happen at both the Level Crossing Removal Authority and the north-east link project where we have had a range of meetings with Melbourne Polytechnic to provide opportunities to engage their people and students.

Right across my electorate we have school projects underway: the \$11.5 million redevelopment at Viewbank College — my old school — which will be concluded next year, and at Rosanna Golf Links

Primary School a nearly \$7 million redevelopment will conclude next year. This is the school my daughter will be attending for prep next year. As a regional deaf facility, as a school that caters for some 550 students, it is the only school, after four long years, that the Baillieu-Napthine governments decided to put any money towards starting a redevelopment of, but of course they did that in the dying days of their term. What happened is we then came into office and had to increase the funding for the project because it had sat there collecting dust for so many years that it was undercosted and undervalued. We had to step in and get that right.

Can I say also that we work in partnership with the Catholic education sector. Just up the road we are contributing \$3.5 million for 10 new classrooms for St Martin of Tours Primary School — another 500-plus students there — along with the Catholic Education Office and the local community. We have also allocated \$2 million to start the project for extra classrooms at Ivanhoe Primary School. We have also completed a million-dollar master plan for Banyule Primary School, where there are over 650 students. The first part of the project to build the new gym is now underway. The master plan has been costed and we will be pursuing further funds for that in the next budget. For Olympic Village Primary School, a half-a-million-dollar master plan has been completed to build a new school at Olympic Village in West Heidelberg.

The only time you see Liberals in West Heidelberg is around election time, when they breeze through the mall and create a bit of a kerfuffle. You see that at about that time. That is what happens every four years. The only other time you see them, of course, is when they are cutting services and when they are selling off public housing to developers. We have seen that right across West Heidelberg during their time in government. What you see under our government at Altona Street, at Kokoda Street and at Tarakan Street is that we are opening new housing for people in my community.

We are committed to continuing that work. The community legal service in West Heidelberg, established in part by John Cain, the former Premier of Victoria and constituent of mine in the Ivanhoe electorate, had \$200 000 allocated to it just last week by the Attorney-General to continue our work to meet demand. Unfortunately that is to represent families, particularly women, suffering from family violence. Continuing those projects is critical.

You put all of this at risk when you use as a stalking horse for cuts a cost audit, as has been announced by

those opposite. But it is not, as I said, about the cost in dollar-and-cent terms; it is the cost to communities and families. It is the costs that are irreparable to generations of people when their government is not in their corner, investing in their livelihoods and investing in their opportunities.

Can I say also that today the Minister for Local Government and member for Kororoit was in Ivanhoe announcing a \$750 000 capital grant for a new Ivanhoe library. The library has been there since the 1960s. There is no disability access. It is over three floors. This is a magnificent project that we need to work together on. These are the opportunities that the Andrews government is providing on the ground to local communities, and I am looking forward to seeing that project delivered, as a past chair of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library service.

For Fairy Hills Kindergarten there is a \$350 000 capital grant to again provide access for people with disabilities. We have students starting there in 2019, but at the moment there is no disability access at Fairy Hills Kindergarten in East Ivanhoe. That \$300 000 grant, announced by my colleague in the other place, Minister Mikakos, will see some further contributions from Banyule City Council, allowing us to provide accessibility for all at Fairy Hills Kindergarten. It is a really critical project.

But these things cannot happen unless there is a commitment from the government and a commitment from everyone in this place to invest in local communities. You do not get that when people are going home worried about their job. You do not get that when people are concerned about their families. You do not get people putting their hand in their pocket or volunteering in their community if they do not feel the government is supporting them as well. That is how you leverage other resourcing and commitments in the community. That is what we are committed to doing on this side of the house.

People need to understand, and I think they do, that if you are not in hi-vis and hard hats out in the Ivanhoe electorate, then you cannot move; you are just not involved. I would say to those opposite that the best they can do is drag someone from Kew to represent them at the next election. They can drive over the Chandler Highway bridge, a \$110 million duplication that we have invested in that is providing jobs for people. I hope that candidate notices that when she drives across from Kew to learn something about the Ivanhoe electorate — the commitment of the people in the Ivanhoe electorate, the volunteers and the public

sector workers and those people who make our place a great place to live. They have our backing.

**Ms WARD** (Eltham) (12:16) — I also rise to support this motion. What members in the house have recognised is that our coalition colleagues are nowhere to be seen, as they were not to be seen during the four years that they were in government. I have to tell you that any working family, anybody in the outer suburbs, anybody who is struggling to make ends meet, anybody living in public housing, anybody who needs a hospital, anybody who needs a school, anybody who wants to use public transport, anyone who relies on roads would shiver to hear that the Liberal-Nationals coalition propose to conduct a cost audit if they are elected in 2018. When you hear words like ‘cost audit’ and ‘the coalition’ together in the same sentence —

**Ms Thomas** — Be very afraid.

**Ms WARD** — Indeed, member for Macedon, be very afraid. It sends shivers up people’s spines, because the very people who rely on government, the very people who need government, are those who cop it in the neck every time the coalition come into government. They are the ones who find their supports and services slashed when those opposite are in government. The fact that that is one of their first policy announcements as we lead into next year, the fact that that is one of the first things they have said they will do — a cost audit — shows you what their priorities are. Their priorities are to again replicate the mistakes of their past which they created throughout 2010 to 2014, when they absolutely decimated services in this state and when they took money away from people and made their lives harder.

One of the interesting things that comes from a lack of investment in community is an increase in crime rates. When you cut TAFE, when you do not create more police roles, when you cut services to hospitals, when you cut mental health services, when you cut hospital services, when you cut education, crime rises. It is great to see today that we are talking about the decrease in crime that is happening in this state, work that this government is doing —

**Ms Thomas** — Well done to the Minister for Police.

**Ms WARD** — Absolutely, member for Macedon. Well done, Minister for Police. But well done to the Andrews government — and well done to the Andrews government because of the incredible investment that is going on. It is investment that is absolutely important. It is investment that matters to people’s lives and it is investment that leads people to a productive life, a

meaningful life, not one that has to rely on crime in order to survive.

I will use the Greensborough TAFE as a case in point. Those opposite closed that TAFE in 2013. They destroyed my TAFE in the outer north-eastern suburbs. I have to say that we hear a lot of babble from those opposite about, 'You don't care about the regions'. Well, we do care about the regions, and we also care about the outer suburbs. I have to say that I see no evidence from those opposite that they support the outer suburbs whatsoever. They tried to destroy Greensborough TAFE and it would have been sold off and there would have been a development. There would have been people living there, and guess what those people would have needed? The same that everyone else in the north-eastern suburbs needed: a TAFE. Because they would have had kids, just like those families in St Helena, those families in Eltham North, those families in Diamond Creek, those families in Eltham, those families in Montmorency, those families in Briar Hill, those families in Greensborough, those families in Watsonia — they needed a TAFE, and they ripped it apart and they sent my people elsewhere.

I find it ironic that those opposite think they have the solutions to our road problems when what they were doing was sending kids from Eltham who were going to Greensborough TAFE to Prahran. Well, that helps with your road problem, doesn't it? How smart was that? What brain surgeon came up with that idea? I have to tell you that closing Greensborough TAFE was one of the many terrible decisions that were made by those opposite because they do not know how to govern. They only know how to slash and burn.

I tell you what, Acting Speaker Dimopoulos, these are the things that help to combat crime. It does help to create opportunities for police. It does help to have more cops on the beat. It does help to build more cop shops, like we are doing in Mernda, for example, but it also helps to create employment. Where did employment go when they were in government? Employment went backwards. Do you know what the worst part of that was? Youth unemployment went backwards. The worst youth unemployment rate in the Australian mainland was under the coalition government. The worst unemployment rate for young people was under those opposite.

That is how you start to combat crime; you create opportunities for young people. Youth unemployment is dropping. We have created over 200 000 jobs in this state since we were elected. Those opposite could only create 40 000 full-time jobs in the four years they were in government — that is 10 000 jobs a year. And what

have we created? We have created more than 50 000 full-time jobs a year each year we have been in government. This is a good record and one that we are proud of. And do you know how we have achieved that? Not through cost cutting, not through cutting and slashing and burning, but by investing.

**Ms Thomson** — By investing.

**Ms WARD** — By investing; exactly, member for Footscray. We have invested in the people of this state because we care about the people of this state. We care about people who need services and who need government. And do you know what? Pretty much everybody in this state needs government. Everybody in this state needs to use a road. They need to access the hospitals, they need to access a school, they need to access a TAFE and they need to access public transport. They need to access all the services that government provides. You only have a functioning society when those services are supported by a government, and the only government that supports all those services is a Labor government, and we saw for four years that it did not happen under a Liberal-National coalition government.

The coalition do not support services; they cut them. They do not respect them. They do not respect public servants, they do not respect nurses and they do not respect paramedics. They do not respect anybody who relies on the public purse, other than themselves. The only people paid out of the public purse that they respect are themselves. That is all they respect and it is all they look after, because they did not look after our paramedics; they were at war with our paramedics. They did not look after our nurses; they were at war with them. They did not look after our teachers; they were at war with them as well. These are people who cannot actually work with anybody. They cannot work with the community.

**Ms Thomson** — They don't want to.

**Ms WARD** — They don't want to, that is right, member for Footscray. We do not want to see a return to this state where we have people who are cutting, cutting and cutting. They cut without care and cut without any consideration for the hurt that their cuts create — and they create deep hurt. They do not care about how much they hurt and damage people. It is disgraceful that you would want to stand for this place and think that another person's life is not important or does not matter, that their need to go to TAFE does not matter, that their need to have a good education at school does not matter, that their need to have good vocational education training does not matter, that the

need to have career changes and support when there is a transition going on in their workspace, like we saw in the auto industry, is not cared about.

Where have the Liberal Party been for auto workers? They have been completely missing in action. The federal Liberal Party were quite happy to throw away the auto industry, to chuck it on the junk pile and not care whatsoever about what that meant for those workers, their families or the broader economy. They did not care. And how have they stepped in? They have stepped in half-heartedly. It has been this government that has stood up for auto workers, it has been this government that has been creating opportunities for auto workers and it is this government that will continue to do so. That those opposite think an audit is the first thing that they need to do when they are elected is an absolute disgrace, and they should hang their —

**Ms Thomson** — To cut.

**Ms WARD** — To cut; exactly, member for Footscray. We know that the word audit is a euphemism for cut when it is said by the Liberals. I would love to know what the National Party thinks about this, because when you are cutting services, you are hurting rural and regional communities. You are ripping out their community health service support, you are ripping out their high school support and you are ripping out their TAFEs. You are creating so much damage that it takes years to repair, which I am pleased to say is exactly what this government has done.

**Ms THOMSON** (Footscray) (12:26) — It is an absolute pleasure to follow on from the member for Eltham, who I think very eloquently spoke about the effect of an audit of public sector workers, which in fact is code for a cut. We are not seeing the members of the opposition participate in this debate, and you have got to ask the question, why? You would think that they would actually defend their arguments and would get up and say, 'No, this is what we mean by audit' or 'No, this is what we mean by cuts'. But they are not even prepared to stand up and participate in this debate because they know what they are going to do when they get in, if they ever get in again with the current leadership — they are going to cut, and they are going to cut where it matters and where it hurts. Do we say this just because we are playing games? No. We say it because their four-year record in government proves it. There is nothing that they did in government that demonstrated anything other than that they were prepared to cut the vital services that Victorians depend upon.

In my own electorate I have Victoria University TAFE, which lost \$290 million thanks to the Liberal state

government. TAFEs lost over a billion dollars over that four-year period thanks to that Liberal government. That is not what Victoria needed at that point in time and it is certainly what Victoria does not need now.

The member for Eltham talked about the transition of workers from automotive industries. Let us be very clear about this: unless we absolutely invest in retraining and unless we actually work with each individual worker who is facing that job loss and give them a future that they can count on, we have let them down. Because they are not responsible for losing their job. They did not create the circumstances that led to the closure of the car industry. We have a responsibility to make sure that they are looked after and that their families are looked after. But did the Liberal government care about that? No, they did not. Certainly the federal government did not care when they taunted the automobile industry and said, 'Get out, we don't care. There's no more handouts coming from this government'. There is no country around the world that does not support their auto industry, except us apparently, under Liberal governments.

We saw the closure of a sector that not only was providing jobs in the auto industry but was allowing some of those small component manufacturers to actually diversify into new industry areas because they had a constant stream of money coming through the auto industry to support them. They now cannot afford to innovate; they are not able to continue. A number of those will be closing, and with that there will be the loss of jobs. But do the Liberal Party and the National Party care about that? No, they do not. Because if they cared about that, they would have made sure that TAFEs were supported. They would have made sure that there was a program in place to support those leaving the auto industry — something that we put in place.

More importantly, the infrastructure programs that we have put in place ensure local content and encourage those who are participating in those projects and winning the contracts to actually employ those who are coming out of the auto industry — and it is happening. People who were actually in the auto industry are getting jobs on those projects, and more importantly other employers in manufacturing are able to match up with those employees coming out and are offering them jobs because of the work that we are doing to support auto workers. But where are the Liberal and National parties? They are absolutely silent. They could not care less about the auto industry and the loss of workers' jobs at all — they could not care less.

Let us have a look at health. What did they do in the health sector? They did nothing. They did not put

money towards the health sector at all. In my area we are going to see the completion of the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital in an area where birth rates are going through the roof. There are stories today about the birth rate in Victoria and the birth rate in the western suburbs. We will have the women's and children's hospital in Sunshine to support those women and those children. It is a much-needed piece of infrastructure that should have happened four years ago, but it just did not happen.

Footscray Hospital, which tends to the needs of thousands of people every year, will now be rebuilt. It has a staff that is second to none, a staff that is dedicated to the people they serve. However, they have been working in facilities that do not meet the standards expected in a First World country. It will be an Andrews Labor government that will rebuild a new Footscray Hospital for the people of the western suburbs. The people of the west know that, when it comes to government, the only people who invest in them and in their community is a Labor government.

You would not even know that there was a Maribyrnong River to cross with the Liberals in power. They certainly showed no interest in the western suburbs whatsoever when they were in government. I get that now. I get people coming up to me, saying, 'I have never seen so much money being spent on us in the west before. This is fantastic. This is great'. They will point to what is going on in one of their schools, and the work that is being done to rebuild or renovate their schools. I have had a number of opportunities to talk to those school communities, hear what they need and know that this government is meeting those needs.

The Melbourne Metro rail tunnel is a crucially important project that could have been started and was ready to go under the Bracks-Brumby government, but the Liberals and The Nationals failed to follow up on it when they were in government. Now we are four years delayed in producing the metro tunnel, which will link the western suburbs, Ballarat and Geelong to the Parkville precinct. This is so important for people of the west. When they have to go for cancer treatment or have to go to university if they are students and do not have cars, it is so difficult to get there and yet it is so close. Why should they have to take two different modes of public transport to get to Parkville when they are probably only 8 kilometres away? It is ridiculous. We will be able to have access to the Parkville precinct by getting on a train. How good will that be for the people of the west.

Then there is the West Gate tunnel, the project that the Liberal-National Party hate. It is a project that will

relieve the transport woes of the inner west. For people in my electorate, that means 9000 trucks off their streets. Did the Liberal Party and The Nationals in the former coalition government care at all about what the people of the inner west faced by way of trucks going through their streets? No, not at all. They could not care less. They are about cutting services. They are not about ensuring those services are where they need to be.

We all remember the ambulance strike. We all remember what was written on those ambulances as they went to pick up patients in need. We remember them very well. We on this side of the house met the ambos. We actually went and talked to them and told them, 'We value what you do. What you do for our community is crucially important. You keep people alive who otherwise would die. You are vital to what we need'. We have made sure that they have been supported, that they have got the budget and the equipment that they need to do their jobs. We have seen the result of that in ambulance times coming down. We have seen the results.

Everywhere that this government has put money into the budget, we have seen the results of that. We have seen better results coming out of our education system. We have seen better results in our health system. We have seen cuts to hospital waiting times or surgery waiting times because money is going in to make sure it happens. This is only possible if you put the money into it. It is only possible to ensure you are getting better results if the money is going where it is needed. We know that if the Liberals and The Nationals get back into government, we will see the turnaround again for the worst. We will see hospital waiting times go up. We will see ambulance response times increase. We will see the outcomes in our educational system worsen. Those opposite are not fit to govern. They are not fit to govern Victorians. They are not certainly not fit to govern the people of my Footscray electorate who deserve better from governments that represent them. They are not fit and are certainly not ready to govern this state.

**Mr EDBROOKE** (Frankston) (12:36) — It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak on the motion referring to the 'cut and burn' strategy of the Liberals. I condemn any notion that a cost audit would be in the best interests of Victoria if the Liberals, heaven forbid, won the next election. All the rhetoric and denials from those opposite will not change the history of the Liberals and The Nationals that we have seen quite recently of their cutting public sector service jobs while making sure they keep their own. It is a certainty that the only job the Liberals care about is their own job.

I would like to focus for a moment on 2014. We were on the eve of a possibly catastrophic fire season. In September we had the Morwell mine fire going on. Now I was at the bottom of that mine with a crew of very dedicated and committed people working extraordinary hours in unique conditions and under quite an amount of duress, I might add. Now what could be the worst thing you would say to your community and firefighters in your community on the eve of possibly one of the worst fire seasons to date? Would it be stupid, insane or crazy, with a growing population, to say we are going to slash 164 staff? That is what the Liberals did on the eve of a fire season. They slashed 164 staff just as we were preparing to go out and battle these fires.

Almost 10 per cent of the firefighting organisations' paid workforce was cut in a massive internal restructure called Creating Our Future Together. It was meant to cut \$16 million a year from the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Before those opposite — there is only one of them here, which really shows their interest in this subject, and they should be more interested in their community — say, 'Oh, we did not cut \$16 million', your own minister, Peter Ryan, confirmed the cuts. We still hear people in this chamber today saying, 'Oh, we didn't cut \$16 million'. I was there. I was on the ground. I saw it.

**Mr Wakeling** interjected.

**Mr EDBROOKE** — Rubbish. You speak rubbish. You are a liar. Those cuts included 71 roles in fire and emergency services management, and 16 positions that have already been axed.

**Mr Wakeling** — Tell us about the volunteers!

**Mr EDBROOKE** — If you would like me to speak about volunteers, I can because I am one. I would give you a very, very damning recommendation. The cuts included 71 roles in fire and emergency services management, and another 59 from the business services, including 20 from operational training and volunteerism.

That was because at that time volunteers and staff were facing training cuts; they could not get training. So when you talk about volunteers, take a look in the mirror. You did nothing but cut from these people. You sit there in your ivory tower, and you need to look at what you actually did in four years. What was your legacy, member for Ferntree Gully? Can you tell me?

**Mr Wakeling** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence)** — Order! The member for Ferntree Gully! The member for Frankston, please direct your comments through the Chair.

**Mr EDBROOKE** — Here we go. You are all alone. We did not see one Liberal at the coalmine fire, because they were hiding. Nothing speaks more to people in Frankston than just looking back over that four years. In education, I could speak about cutting TAFE for the next 20 minutes, but what is worse than making cuts to education, cuts to primary schools and secondary schools in your electorate where you see the damage of these cuts? In the 2014 election campaign the Liberal candidate, although he knew the government were making cuts, did not even know what the education maintenance allowance was; he could not tell the schools what he was actually cutting.

But what is worse than cutting? I would have to say that it would be a shadow education minister who, after the terrible history of the Liberals in the education sector, comes out in his new role as a shadow education minister and proudly states that we have, and I quote, 'a culture of mediocrity ... that must change in state schools around Victoria'. I would say there is a culture of mediocrity on the opposition benches. You should be going to schools and telling teachers that they are not up to scratch. These people work and work to make the lives of kids better as well as getting good statistics and educational outcomes — and yet that is what we hear from the shadow education minister. It is his Marie Antoinette moment: 'Let them eat cake'.

I make the point that the shadow education minister probably should have had his mum or his former teacher edit a recent article published in the *Age*, because the tenses were not right — and that was picked up by the media. I would love the shadow education minister to come to my schools and explain that comment to my teachers who work so hard and are supported so well by this government. In fact we have provided capital funding to more than two-thirds of our primary schools in Frankston, which is a record. Compare that to what the funding was in 2010 to 2014 under a Liberal government: donuts, absolute donuts — nothing.

We can talk about cuts, but we have got to talk about what the Liberals are proposing for the future too. From a local perspective I can say that there must be a bunch of people engineering brain farts in a factory somewhere; it is unbelievable. We have recently heard about the 55 intersections that they are going to remove. The one in Frankston is at the intersection of Frankston Freeway and Cranbourne Road. We are going to stop all the level crossing removals — this is the plan,

apparently, to cut the level crossing removals — and remove this intersection. So we spend \$50 million to \$60 million removing this intersection and yet commuters are stopped at the next level crossing which is 200 metres up the road, then they stop at the set of lights at Hastings Road, then they stop at Golf Links Road at a set of lights, then they stop at Robinsons Road at a set of lights — who makes this rubbish up? This is unbelievable.

I would like to spend a couple of minutes talking about the health sector and our local police in Frankston as well. We know that only the meanest of scrooges would actually cut a whooping cough vaccine. The cuts in this sector caused people to be waiting more than 24 hours on stretchers to see a doctor in emergency departments. I believe the Liberals cut the 24-hour mental health hotline and they cut 200 jobs from the department of health. I do not know if there is a rhythm here or not, but it seems to me that all the Liberals do when they get into government is cut services. I think it is as plain as the nose on your face. When you do not go to war with paramedics you end up with the best quarter one response times on record in Victoria. That happens when you respect the workforce, when you work with that workforce and do not wage war with every single union in Victoria.

We have just heard the latest crime statistics are out, and it is fantastic news. It does seem very basic to a lot of people, I know, that when you invest in police, when you invest in resources for those police and support those police with good legislation, you get good outcomes. We know that from 2010 to 2014 the number of police employed did not go above the rate of attrition, and we are dealing with that issue right now. We know that crime, as a result of that, rose in most areas, and it is fantastic to be able to announce to the Frankston community today that we have a 6.1 per cent decrease in crime. I am not sure, standing here, how many years it would be since we have had a decrease in crime to that extent, but I would be thinking probably a decade. The investment from the Andrews government, unsurprisingly, is working already.

If I can go back to education once more, our schools, our parents, our communities and our teachers know that it is in the Liberals DNA to cut. For their kids and for their community, they know that the outcomes are not good when we have a Liberal government. They do not shy away from telling me this. To be part of the Frankston community you have to look at how you are going to change lives for people in some of the disadvantaged areas, and that is not through making cuts like we have seen.

These people have no vision for the future; they brought no projects to Frankston. Now we have got record funding in Frankston and things are moving along. We cannot afford to go back to the previous government's mandate of cut and burn whenever they can. They devastated many communities in just over their four years in government, and we know that if they got in it would only take four years for them to do it again and we would be playing catch-up when we got back in. The Victorian community realise this, I am sure, and they need no reminding of the east-west case and the secret side letter and the debacle surrounding that. Of course it was taken to an election, it was an election commitment, and the people voted that down. They did it for a reason; it was because they had no confidence in the Liberal government — and neither should they in the future.

**Mr NARDELLA** (Melton) (12:46) — I rise to support the motion before the Chair that the Liberal-Nationals are to establish a cost audit which poses a grave risk to services and jobs. Under the Kennett government, if people remember, Bob Officer put together a commission of audit that did a range of things here in this state. I want to remind honourable members what a Liberal-Nationals government actually does to the state of Victoria when they are in office. Let us have a look at the programs and the services that are cut under a Liberal-Nationals government. What they do is they go through line by line what the budget is and what should be taken out of it, without any regard, no consideration whatsoever, to how that is going to affect people — families, children, members of the community who are sick, and isolated and rural communities. They do not care, because for them it is about the bottom line.

If you look at the four dark, lonely years of the Shaw government and what it did not achieve in those four years, certainly in my electorate one set of traffic lights was provided at Ferris Road — \$150 000, not even out of the budget but out of the growth areas infrastructure contribution money. That was the only thing they did in those four dark years. Then you look at what the government did in education under Kennett: 326 schools were closed here in Victoria. The vast majority of those schools were in country and rural areas. The National Party was quiet; its members would not say a word against the Liberals. They had Pat McNamara as Deputy Premier. He had a white car. They had other ministers both in this house and in the other house who had white cars, while their communities were being devastated.

Bulla Primary School had 35 kids. They closed the school. The member for Tullamarine at the time, Bernie

Finn, would not stand up for his constituents. They closed the school in November 1998. Do you know what happened on 5 January 1999? It reopened as a private school with 15 kids. It was okay to have 15 kids; that was viable, but when you have got 35 state school kids, that is unviable. That is what the Kennett government was all about. They sacked 7000 teachers. They sacked all the school cleaners — every single school cleaner — in 1993, just before Christmas. What a great Christmas present that was for them and their families. They had to try to get contracts back from those schools, but they did not care. That was the Christmas present that these people are on about, and that is what this cost audit is going to do.

Let us talk about public transport: 16 000 people were sacked out of public transport. Rural services —

**Mr T. Bull** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence)** — The member for Gippsland East!

**Mr NARDELLA** — The honourable member for Ovens Valley is here. Ovens Valley —

**Mr T. Bull** — Gippsland East, you fool.

**Mr NARDELLA** — Gippsland East. Let us talk about Bairnsdale, the train line that was closed under the Liberal-Nationals Kennett government. He never stood up for his community and never will as a National Party member. They closed Bairnsdale — why? Because they said that the bridge could not handle the trains. We came in in 1999 and we had to reopen Bairnsdale — not because the National Party was there, not because they put pressure on us, but because it was the right thing to do to look after these communities. We repaired that bridge, and guess what? The trains went back to Bairnsdale. They closed eight country rail lines all in National Party and Liberal Party constituencies. That is why they lost Mildura. I remember Bilstein; he was there. He supported the Liberal Kennett government that said, ‘Yes, we’ll close the Mildura line’. That is all they know to do — close rail lines and cut services.

They cut conductors from trams. They cut the 300 transit officers who were protecting people on public transport. I remember when they were out the front protesting in their uniforms, and yet the Kennett government — the Liberals and The Nationals — did not want safety on public transport. It was all about cutting services.

They went out just before the 1999 election and Robin Cooper as Minister for Transport signed a letter — they

are good at signing letters just before an election — to sell off the V/Line tracks, and what did we have to do after 1999? Because they had been run down and because they were getting dangerous we had to buy them back and re-invest in the V/Line tracks, yet the National Party, which is supposed to represent country Victoria, stood silent —

**Mr T. Bull** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, it is very, very difficult listening to the member talk about morals and ethics.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence)** — There is no point of order. Take your seat.

**Mr NARDELLA** — Then you talk about the eight country hospitals under the National Party’s watch, under Kennett, that they closed. There was not a crocodile tear amongst them because they had the white cars. They had the drivers and they were happy being ministers and being toadies to Jeff Kennett at the time. All those communities ever wanted was their country hospitals to remain open so that those services could be used locally.

Then we come to police. I remember when they promised 1000 police officers. They said, ‘We’re about law and order. We’re about protecting the community. We’re about making the streets safe’. They promised 1000 police in 1996. Do you know what they did? They cut 800 police from our streets and out in the divvy vans. They took away their divvy vans. They cut 800 police from our streets, and that is what a committee of audit is all about.

Remember local government? My good friend the late Pat Power was the shadow Minister for Local Government. What did they do? They amalgamated all the councils, from 211 down to 77, and they sacked every single councillor and put in their mates. They put in their mates as commissioners on \$80 000 a year, and then they put deputy commissioners into \$60 000-a-year jobs to look after their own mates, their Liberal Party and National Party mates.

Some of them came in here after that. The Honourable Jeanette Powell was a commissioner. The Honourable Hugh Delahunty, the member for Lowan, was a commissioner. All they ever did was look after their own. They never looked after their communities. They never cared about their communities. When these cost audits are put in place it will be about affecting the people with the least voice, the people in our community who have not got the opportunity to have their say. Because that is all they do. They just look

after themselves. Once they have got the white cars, once they have got their ministerial offices —

**Mr Wakeling** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I do appreciate that this is an opportunity for all members to speak, but I think the time has come for this member to sit down. He is a thief and he is a crook, and the last thing he should be doing is standing up in this house and lecturing this side of the house —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Spence)** — Order! No, member for Ferntree Gully, you have no point of order.

**Mr NARDELLA** — I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr Wakeling** — I withdraw.

**Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (12:57)** — I am delighted to join the debate in relation to the very disturbing news that if in the event that the coalition win the next election they will conduct a cost audit. There have been two coalition governments elected at a state level in my lifetime. There was the Kennett government elected in 1992, and there was the Baillieu government elected in 2010. What is interesting is that in both cases commissions of audit were commissioned. Bob Officer did the original report back in 1992. One should bear in mind that in the course of the 1992 election campaign, Jeff Kennett, who was then opposition leader, said that no Victorian would be worse off. We saw something similar in 2010, which led to the almost Orwellian term the ‘sustainable government initiative’. If the member for Box Hill were here, I am sure he would appreciate, given the fact that he loves quoting George Orwell in this place, the term ‘sustainable government initiative’. It resulted in 3600 public service job cuts, and was backed up by a further 600 job cuts in the 2012–13 budget.

What is concerning when you have these levels of cuts occurring is that the state government represents about 25 per cent of the state economy. Of course there are instances where you do not want the public sector going in and overheating an economy, resulting in the private sector being gouged, but equally you do want the state government and the public sector to make investments so that the private sector can itself have the confidence to invest. What you saw particularly over the four years of the Baillieu-Napthine governments was a retreat, a withdrawal, from making those sorts of investments in this state, and as a consequence of that the economy stagnated — it just did not go anywhere. That is why you had such a low level of economic growth and activity.

I remember talking with people in the business community during that time and saying to them, ‘How is the state government going?’, and ‘What is going on?’, and the response invariably was, ‘We are not hearing anything. Nothing is going on’. They used to say that *Seinfeld* was a show about nothing, well, the Baillieu-Napthine governments were like governments about nothing. They did nothing.

I find this quite extraordinary, because I understand Ted Baillieu was going to be the minister for sport and recreation under the Kennett government if they had been elected in 1999. He spent 11 years in opposition and he finally won an election —

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

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Williams)** — We will continue with the motion, and I believe the member for Essendon has the call.

**Mr PEARSON (Essendon) (14:02)** — Thank you, Acting Speaker, and what a delight it is to see you in the chair this sunny summer afternoon, the very last sitting day of the year. I would like to take this opportunity now to put on the record my heartfelt thanks, having worked with you over the course of the last 12 months — it has been a joy — as I have with my other colleagues here on this side of the house.

As I was indicating before the break, in my lifetime there have been two coalition governments elected at a state level here in Victoria, and in both cases one of the very first acts that the incoming administration did was to commence a commission of audit. We saw Bob Officer do a report after the Kennett government was sworn in in 1992 —

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr PEARSON** — And there was obviously the more recent Michael Vertigan report as well. The minister does make a good point. I think that Bob Officer was merely responding to the instructions given by his client. He has been an efficient and effective consultant when acting on the directions of his client. As we know, Acting Speaker Williams — and you are a lawyer by trade — the instructions you get from a client can make a very big difference in terms of the advice you provide or the actions that you take. In both cases we have had instances where an incoming conservative administration has been elected and they have sought to cut.

When you have got a state public sector worth around 25 per cent of gross state product, the impact of those cuts or the decision not to spend money, not to give the

private sector some level of confidence, is a sluggish economy. That is what we saw over the course of the 57th Parliament when the economy basically stagnated. I remember speaking with people in the business community in that period of time, and they were all at sea. They had no idea what the government was doing, what plans to work on. There was no pipeline of activity.

There was not that confidence. Confidence is a really important component of consumer behaviour, because if people feel there is a steady stream of work before them, they might take on a second mortgage to start a business, they might extend their home, they might go out to the pub on a Friday night with their family. But if you are not sure if there is going to be a job for you in six or 12 months time, if you do not have the confidence that there will be that level of economic activity that would justify your expenditure, then you are more likely not to spend. You withhold money because you are just not certain of the future. That is what we saw happen under the former government, and the economy stagnated.

Instead what we have been seeing over the last three years under this government is a level of confidence and a significant level of investment, and the economy is growing. Between 2007 and 2014 the average annual capital expenditure by the state government of Victoria was around \$4.7 billion; that was the average. In the current financial year we are looking at around \$9.6 billion, more than double the long-term average. It is really important that you make those sorts of investments because we have got a population growth coming here. Melbourne grew by 147 000 people last year, and we are continuing to see those high rates of population growth. We need to respond. We need to invest, because you still want to make sure that people can come to live here.

It is also about recognising that efficient and effective transport linkages are a great instrument of social justice and wage equality, because if you have got good transport linkages, then people can turn around and live on the urban fringe, have a modest mortgage on a modest home but participate in secure, long-term, well-paying jobs in the CBD. I think PricewaterhouseCoopers did a study last year where they looked at the postcodes of Victoria. What you see is most of the really well-paid, attractive jobs are within the four inner postcodes of Melbourne and then they start to dissipate. You will see pockets where you have got a bit of economic growth. You also have instances where wealth is repatriated from those postcodes to the fringe or to the regions where people live. You have got to have that level of confidence to be able to invest so

people can feel like they can look to their future with a degree of confidence.

When you have got a government coming in and basically saying, 'We're going to indiscriminately cut just because we have got this ideological aversion to the public sector', then that sends a really bad signal to the rest of the market, because if you start feeling like your job is under threat, you stop spending money, if you are worrying about the future and you are worrying about your capacity to continue to work, then you will cease spending money.

I note that before the global financial crisis hit our savings rates were remarkably low, yet after the global financial crisis saving rates went up quite considerably. That was in part because people were basically trying to save money because they were worried and frightened about the future. The government doing what it has done over the last three years has sent a really powerful signal to the community that we are here and we have got a long-term pipeline of projects. We are not reaching our debt limit. I think debt is going to stay at around about 4.5 or probably 5 per cent of gross state product, which is entirely reasonable, because you do not want to have a lazy balance sheet. You want to put your balance sheet to work to grow the economy, and as a consequence of that you are then in a position to make sure that people continue to seek to invest and to have a degree of confidence in the future.

It is interesting that apart from the member for Hawthorn no member opposite has chosen to rise to speak on this motion. I think that speaks volumes. If those opposite did not believe that they would have a commission of audit in the event that they won the next election, they would be up here saying, 'We're not going to do that. That was the old way. We're not like that. We don't do that these days', but they are not doing that. They are absent. Why are they absent? Why have they vacated the field? Why have they made the choice today that they do not want to make a contribution on this?

**Mr Richardson** interjected.

**Mr PEARSON** — As the member for Mordialloc says, why is the member for Kew not here talking about these sorts of issues? I think it is clear that those opposite do not want to be on the public record about a commission of audit, because that is exactly what they will do. As soon as you put those opposite under a level of scrutiny, they run, because they do not want to be scrutinised when it comes to slashing and burning the public sector, because we know that they do not believe

in the public sector and they have no interest in growing the state.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** (Oakleigh) (14:09) — It is with a heavy heart to some extent but also with pleasure that I speak on the motion moved by the Minister for Industry and Employment. I speak with a heavy heart because I know that if those on the other side ever got in again, their cost audit would wreak devastation, as others have said, on the Victorian community but also on the Victorian economy, because what they do not see is the link between what we are doing and economic growth and the strength of this state's economy. Where the pleasure comes in, as I said at the outset, is in speaking on a motion that is so important.

**Mr Richardson** interjected.

**Mr DIMOPOULOS** — Thank you, member for Mordialloc. I think the member for Eltham said that when we talk about cost audits — which is a decent phrase in accounting parlance — when it comes to the other side it is a stalking horse for significant things that are detrimental. It is almost like a Trojan Horse for effectively stripping back the public service and stripping back services, and I want to apply that test to their character in terms of what they did when they were last in power and in fact even to what they are doing in opposition now, because when someone says to you, 'It's just a cost audit. We just want to do the right thing in accounting terms and go through the public sector and see where there are efficiencies to be gained', then that is reasonable. That is fair enough, but not when it comes to that side, because their character has proven time and time again that they are absolutely hell-bent on stripping back the public service.

I want to start with taxis, because that is exactly the area where they started the decline of the taxi industry through the Fels inquiry. They started it and then completely, as we saw today, washed their hands of any responsibility for the fall of the taxi industry. I use 'fall' as a qualified term, but their character was found wanting today. Their character was found wanting back when the Fels review commenced under the previous government. Then they came into the chamber today and paraded victims, effectively, of the taxi industry and asked us to look them in the eye and apologise, when they, the opposition, were the government that commenced the Fels inquiry and therefore commenced the decline of the value of the licences.

My understanding is that the licence values declined from \$500 000 under the Baillieu government to \$250 000. So half the value of the licences was slashed in their term of government because of the uncertainty

created by their mismanagement of the review of the industry and the Fels inquiry. This is not me making these figures up. This is based on a study of the figures from the last sales of the licences, as traced by the Taxi Services Commission. We are talking about \$500 000 down to \$250 000. They presided over that demise. To add insult to injury they come in here and parade the victims of the taxi industry and ask us to apologise to the victims, when as the Premier said, those who oppose compensation are no friends of those seeking it. That is exactly what they did. It was put on the public record countless times by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the then shadow Minister for Public Transport, as well as the Leader of the Opposition. Both of them are on the record countless times saying that they oppose the levy that this government introduced through the Parliament in order to provide the funding mechanism for the compensation package. They have opposed that on the record — no disputing it — but not one of them had the honesty or the integrity to come out and say, 'Yes, we did'. They did not say that at all today, and they looked at us.

The second injustice and deception that goes to their character today and over the last three years in opposition was that they supported this bill. They supported the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017 in both houses. The obnoxious spokesperson in the other place, Mr Davis, went around protesting outside Mr Dalidakis's office, outside my office, with dozens of taxi licence holders. He used the anger and the emotion of those people and said, 'What they're doing to you' — in other words, us — 'is unfair. You deserve more compensation'.

Then of course we see the Leader of the Opposition in a double-page spread in the biggest Greek newspaper in the country, *Neos Kosmos*. We know many of these licence-holders are of Greek heritage. He had a double-page spread and he got asked a question by the journalist about eight months ago, 'What do you think a reasonable compensation package is, Mr Guy, for the taxi industry?'. He said, 'I think about \$250 000'. So I have a question for the Leader of the Opposition. This government, as proud as I am of it, does not have a majority in the upper house. Why didn't his people in the upper house, including Mr Davis, move a motion when the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill was debated in the chamber? Why didn't they move an amendment to the compensation scheme? They didn't, and in fact they do not agree with it — they agree with zero, as the Premier said today. So my question is not necessarily about a different policy position. My question is about a lack of integrity — to go out there, organise rallies of the taxi industry, tell them they are not getting enough, then when it comes to the crunch in this

chamber, in the Parliament of Victoria where you can actually effect change — in actually not doing it. We do not have the majority; they could have done it. They could have got the Greens and the others and done it.

That is a test of their character. So when they start talking about cost audits that is a very, very serious reminder to Victorians about their real intentions. It is about stripping back the public service. It is absolutely about stripping back the public service, and it is also the lack of consistency in what they say and what they deliver.

Moving on to the public service, when those opposite were last in government I was working in the then Department of Justice. I remember I had to make recommendations to people more senior than I was about which staff in my team should be supported to be let go. That was the kind of terminology. It was called the sustainable government initiative. I remember countless tearoom conversations between good, hardworking public servants delivering frontline services in the courts of Victoria, laughing about the Orwellian language of the sustainable government initiative. There was nothing sustainable about it. It was another example of the inauthentic language and the lack of the integrity of the other side.

We had to let go of 10 per cent of our staff. I remember the then government was saying, 'It's not going to affect frontline service delivery'. Yes, it absolutely did. Where I worked in the courts we were frontline service delivery, and it did absolutely impact us. It compromised the frank and fearless advice of the public service. People were worried about losing their jobs. It actually led to a gross loss of experience.

I remember an article, I think it was in the *Age*, during the Baillieu period, where the headline was, 'Cost blowout of almost \$1 billion on consultants and contractors'. So where is the cost audit there? You sack 4200 public servants, and then you ramp up the bill to taxpayers for contractors and consultants. They could not even get the economics right.

And then of course what does cost audit mean? As I think the member for Bentleigh and others have said, what would cost audit mean in my community? Would it mean that we would not proceed with the level crossings? We expect to complete all nine on the Cranbourne and Pakenham line by the election, thankfully, but what about the other 25 that are still in progress after 2018? What does a cost audit actually mean? It means a lack of service, a lack of investment in combating congestion, a lack of investment in combating elective surgery waiting lists, a lack of investment in combating blown-out ambulance

response times and a lack of investment in the public and the civic domain. This is exactly where governments should invest — in health, in education, in transport and in law and order. We have invested enormously in law and order.

For the other side to be calling for a cost audit of a government that has invested so proudly but has also done so with the backdrop of budget surpluses over the forward estimates of four years, growing employment and the fastest growing economy in the country is absolute theatrics. It is actually an opposition looking for relevance in an area that they think they know best, which is cutting. So I am proudly supporting this motion by Minister Allan.

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) (14:19) — It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the motion put by Minister Allan. If there was ever a more appropriate quote to describe those opposite, the Liberal-Nationals coalition, whenever they are in government, whether it be Bolte, Hamer, Kennett, Baillieu or Napthine — I can recall them all and they were all the same with the same old story and same old characters — it is, 'You know the price of everything but the value of nothing'. History shows us that when Liberal conservatives in Victoria are on this side of the chamber, when they are in government and have got hold of that Treasury bench, the first thing they just love to do is cut. They just love it. They get excited about it, actually. I have seen those old state accountants over there, those people who brag about what small businessmen they have been and how they are in there at the coalface employing people and balancing the books, but the thing that gets them really excited is cuts. They just love running that line through Victoria's financials, and they just love cutting and cutting and cutting.

We know for sure — just from the roll call that I did before of previous governments — that they will do it again, because they always do. I heard from the member for Hawthorn earlier, 'This cost audit really wasn't what we were saying. The shadow minister in the other place wasn't really referring to cutting costs. He was referring to something else'. It was such a pathetic attempt to camouflage what they are really up to. Because you know when they start talking with the words they just love to use — efficiency, productivity and all those go-to phrases — they just mean cutting services, slashing public service jobs and making other people work much harder for less money.

The ripple effect of when that happens under a Victorian government is that it not only affects the person who loses the job and does not get services but it

also affects everybody around the family table that night, because that person comes home without a job and without the money to send their kid off to sport or have that family holiday at the end of the year. These cuts will come if they are elected and come over to this side of the chamber, where the purse strings are. They just cannot resist cutting. And do you know what? I have seen so many examples of the fact that all this talk about productivity, efficiency, managing the books and balancing the budget is all a lot of hogwash.

When we were in opposition I had this fantastic example in my own electorate. Before we left government we promised to upgrade Hallam Road, and we actually promised and funded, in the previous Brumby budget, the upgrade of the Hallam railway station to premium. I have got to say that is a really busy railway station. Nearly 1000 people go through that every morning to get to work and school. What they effectively did is they spread the building of this major thoroughfare, this big road which is surrounded by shopping centres, residences and businesses — it is a major thoroughfare; it is a really busy road — over a number of budget cycles so that after four years of being in government, that dithering do-nothing very slow government, it was not finished.

In fact when we were elected in 2014 the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the member for Narre Warren North, and myself, the minister for Narre Warren South, went down and opened that road. So these people opposite are the last people who should lecture us on how to deliver anything. They did not deliver one road from start to finish in four years in one term of government.

Then what happened to the upgrade of the railway station? Well, that was fully funded and plans were being made and people were excited. I put out a few flyers about it; we were all very thrilled. Money disappeared — just disappeared — only to find that —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms GRALEY** — And do you know what the excuse was? That the money was needed somewhere else. I will tell you where that money turned up. It was taken away from the people of Hampton Park and Hallam, and I will tell you where it ended up — it ended up down in New Street, Brighton. Its number in priority was 253 on the level crossing removal list, but no, that was a bigger priority for the Baillieu-Napthine government than assisting good, hardworking people to get to work every day instead of them standing in the rain without a toilet and in really uncomfortable circumstances for many of them. I had many pregnant

women contact my office saying that they were waiting to go to work and there was no toilet at that station and they were holding on for all life, actually.

This was the way that good, hardworking people were treated by that government. We saw it over and over again, that people that were in better, well-off areas, in more salubrious suburbs, were favoured by the previous government. In fact money taken away from electorates like mine was used for the pet projects of those opposite.

I have only got a short while to go but I do want to mention education in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Education. I have got to say I know that when we are in government we invest in education, and it makes an enormous difference to children's and families' lives. I have seen it happen. Down at the Hampton Park Primary School — which was also supposed to be funded while we were in opposition, but no, that did not happen either — they actually have brand new buildings which are just about to be opened now. Not only that, that Gonski funding that they did not fully fund last time the Libs-Nats were in power — they did not fully fund the Gonski funding; they left a big, black hole for us to fill when we came into power — is making an enormous difference to the achievements of those students. We are seeing an improvement in their results. They are improving in their reading, their writing and their arithmetic.

I saw only yesterday, I think it was an opinion piece in the *Herald Sun*, that said, 'If the system fails, then kids will fail too'. Well, I will tell you when the system fails: it fails when you take \$1 billion out of the education budget, because that is what happened last time. It fails when you fail to build a new school, despite Melbourne's population increasing by 100 000 people a year — 100 babies are being born every week in the City of Casey in my electorate. It fails when you take away those extra supports like in that sneaky, nasty little way that the education maintenance allowance was withdrawn from Victorian families. That means that kids cannot get uniforms, cannot go on camps, cannot go on excursions — all those things that make school such a valuable experience. It was an unconscionable withdrawal of money from families that so needed it and set their kids up for failure. That is what it set these kids up for: failure.

So if the government — to the member for Kew if you were here — fails kids, then kids will fail. But if the government has an agenda where it invests in building an education state, it invests in school infrastructure, it invests in school programs and it makes sure that our teachers are well paid and get the professional development they need, our kids will succeed. This call

for a cost audit, even though you are backtracking on it — I can hear it coming — is exactly what you have done before and it is exactly what you will do again if you are in government. You will cut, you will cut and you will cut. I commend the motion put by the Minister for Public Transport, and I say to all Victorians, especially Victorians who have got children in our public school system, and in our private school system: beware of those opposite.

**Ms GREEN** (Yan Yean) (14:29) — I take great pleasure in joining the motion proposed by the Minister for Public Transport, the manager of government business in this place. She knows full well, being the Minister for Public Transport, what a legacy was left from those before.

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

#### **Quorum formed.**

**Ms GREEN** — I am not surprised that those opposite do not want to hear about our concerns if they were to get back into office, about the cuts that they would make. The greatest predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. What occurred under the leadership of Ted Baillieu — of Tedward Scissorhands — was he cut ribbons on Labor's projects with one hand and cut budgets with the other. What they were left with when they got in in 2010 — and I respect that the community had made a decision and they put them into office — we left them quite a pipeline of things to cut ribbons on: the South Morang rail extension, and the Plenty Road duplication up to The Parkway on the boundary of Mernda and South Morang. But once that pipeline of projects had concluded, what we saw — well, concurrently with that pipeline of projects that they were able to cut ribbons on — was they cut budgets to ribbons.

As the member for Narre Warren South has said, they cut the education budget to ribbons. They cut the Doreen secondary college. We had funded land in the 2010 budget to buy land for a standalone secondary college in Doreen, which was much needed in the 3754 postcode. The community of Mernda and Doreen, the population there, doubled on the watch of those opposite and on the watch of the Leader of the Opposition, who was then the Minister for Planning — and he actually represented the Yan Yean electorate in the other place as a member for Northern Metropolitan Region. As the planning minister and as the local member he could not say for 1 minute that he did not understand what was happening on the ground in the Yan Yean electorate. From 2011 to 2014 the population

of Mernda and Doreen doubled. It went from 17 786 in 2011 to 37 757, with a 152 per cent increase in Mernda.

What we saw was not any proportional increase in spending and support for projects in my electorate. When my opponent — I cannot remember which one it was then — they put up fresh meat —

**Mr Richardson** — The Leader of the Opposition?

**Ms GREEN** — No, it was not the Leader of the Opposition, it was Jack Gange, actually — Jack Gange of the Silver Top taxi family — who wanted to develop his land, the family's land, and get it out of the green wedge between Diamond Creek and Eltham. We know that the taxi industry had put some money in there. They knew what they wanted out of the Leader of the Opposition. But what they promised at the 2010 election, they actually kept. They kept their promises in the Yan Yean electorate. They made zero promises in a growing electorate — zero promises — and they delivered in spades.

Then they gave my community a bit of an extra slap: over \$60 million was cut from bus services and over 1000 bus services per week were cut. They closed the Greensborough TAFE campus. With a growing population we lost a TAFE campus. Just at a time when new communities needed local jobs and local training, those mean-spirited people on the other side of the chamber cut that TAFE campus. They put not one dollar into any arterial road or any VicRoads road. They cut the roads budget and not one new road came into the electorate.

I mentioned the doubling of the population in Mernda and Doreen, and it remains one of the youngest postcodes in the state. It beggars belief that you would cancel a standalone secondary college, but the only reason we had any expenditure on schools at all was the collapse of a private college, Acacia College. The former government said, 'Gee, we had better do something', and miraculously they found the money that they had taken away from Doreen secondary college and said, 'Let's make it into a primary school'. So they put a primary school on that site when what was needed was a secondary college. Then when Acacia College collapsed they said, 'Oh, whoops', so they pinched some capital from another growing, adjacent suburb. They pinched money from stage 2 of a school in the member for Yuroke's area and said, 'We are now going to build a P-12 in Cookes Road, Doreen'. The only reason the former government did that — stole from another community — was a concerted campaign from mothers and fathers in the 3754 postcode. They and their children

will never forget that they had to fight for a local secondary college.

I am pleased that we have funded and completed Hazel Glen College. It is a P-12 but only up to year 9 now and it already has over 2000 students and is heading towards 3000. I do not believe that is an optimum size for a school. That is the legacy you leave when you do not fund education in a growing suburb. We have also funded Mernda Central P-12 College, which includes a swimming pool, it include stadiums and it includes outdoor playing fields for community youths, and it is the same with Mernda Park Primary School. We have built several new children's centres and we are building more schools, like Yarrambat Park Primary School in Doreen and Beveridge Primary School.

We know that the former government made cuts across the board: cuts to public transport, cuts to roads, and cuts to the health budget. There was nothing substantially done to deal with the growing need for hospital beds, and I am really pleased that we have funded almost 100 additional beds and additional operating theatres at the Northern Hospital. We know that if those opposite were to be on the government benches, that is what would happen.

I recall I would raise matters on behalf of my community. Time and again I pleaded with them for public transport, for roads and for schools. The then member for Polwarth, Terry Mulder, would sneer and laugh and giggle, as would the then Minister for Education, the member for Nepean. They would sneer and say, 'Well, it is our turn now. You had your turn'. It is never about the individual MP, it is about communities, and governments should govern for the whole of the state.

I commend this motion from the Minister for Public Transport, who knows this full well. She inherited a portfolio that had not ordered any trains, trams or buses and had only proposed cuts. They had not done anything to deal with the increase in demand on V/Line or on our metropolitan services. I am really proud that we have put in additional bus services and we are building the Mernda rail extension, which is going like the clappers. We are upgrading the Hurstbridge rail line, removing level crossings and looking at an expansion of services. We have introduced route 343 and a whole new bus network around Mernda, Doreen and Whittlesea.

I just really hope that the community will not be hoodwinked by those opposite. We are only a year away from the election and we know that leopards do not change their spots. They will cut again and they will

not deliver what the community needs. I am in full support of this motion and I commend it to the house.

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (14:39) — It is a pleasure to rise on the motion before the house and to talk about the seriousness of it as we head into what is 344 days until the next state election. This is a serious moment for our state when we look towards the make-up of the 59th Parliament. We have recently had an election two states to the north of us in Queensland. The now former leader of the Liberal National Party, despite not forming government, was honest enough with the Queensland people to talk about the cuts that their previous government had made and the damaging effects that this had on the Queensland people. He put that forward and was honest. He looked down the barrel of the camera and said that as the then Treasurer, 'I was part of a government that made mistakes and we did not get it right'.

If we contrast that with the Victorian coalition and their approach, we have not had one word about the damaging effects of cuts to education that put our state back and put our kids further behind. That undermined the vision of allowing every child the best opportunity to succeed. We had a government that made such substantial cuts to health that the record they boasted was more prison beds being created than hospital beds. It shows the priorities that the previous government had, and it would show a lot of ticker for those opposite to come out, maybe do a full-page expose in the *Age* or the *Herald Sun* — you know, an opinion piece — and ask for forgiveness from the Victorian people for the damaging cuts that they made which put our state back.

One of the most frustrating decisions and one of the most frustrating cuts was the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. The Brumby government left \$50 million of planning money in the forward estimates in the budget to get that planning work underway. It was not until I had been a candidate for five or six months, having been preselected in November 2013, that members opposite started to talk about that vital tunnel for our state. The level of detail and approach to that was to completely change the structure of the project, to completely undermine Infrastructure Australia's priority listing for the project and to set us further behind. We could be talking about a completion date in the early 2021-22 cycle. We could now be talking about metro 2, but metro 2 has been pushed well beyond 2026, even to 2030. The rail link to the airport is further behind. When partisan politics and a lack of continuity and future vision for our state gets in the way, we see the undermining of our state's interest.

It should be the case that an infrastructure agenda is rolled out and continues on. A few years ago Infrastructure Australia estimated that the backlog of projects in Victoria could be worth as much as \$100 billion and that it could be close to \$400 billion across our nation. With over \$50 billion worth of infrastructure priorities underway now, we are dealing with the population growth and the challenges that come with our success and people looking for work. We get a lot of people coming to our state for work and opportunity. We are also seeing jobs growth in the CBD and in the inner 10-kilometre ring — about 60 per cent of the jobs are created in the CBD. People are moving out, 20 kilometres and beyond, even out to the outer stretches of the south-eastern suburbs beyond Pakenham, because of affordability, because of housing challenges and stress, and they are travelling further to get to jobs. To get them home safer and sooner to their families, that infrastructure agenda is absolutely critical. We did not have a pipeline of works during the 57th Parliament — that was the hallmark of the 57th Parliament where everything was under review — but we have put that back into our state. Population growth does not stop and that opportunity does not stop. That was been a lost opportunity.

Think also about the little things, like the cutting of Free Fruit Fridays — taking fruit from kids. That is a wonderful line to put on a DL. Why would anyone out of the then Premier's unit have thought that that was a smart thing to do? But what are the ethics behind thinking that was the right policy? Other decisions included cuts to health. With our growing health budget and ageing population, undermining our ambulance system and sending it into crisis, how could anyone acting in the state's interest think that that was a good equation for Victorians?

In isolation you might think, 'What does a commission of audit mean?'. Context is important and past behaviour is generally a sign of future behaviours and undertakings. We heard the same rhetoric come out of the Baillieu government when it was elected, and we saw substantial cuts to vital services. We had an undertaking from the then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, that there would be no cuts to the ABC and no cuts to education or health, and then he committed the same sort of stuff — a commission of audit. We have heard this term 'commission of audit'. It is not a 'commission of opportunity' and not an assessment of how far we have come as a state and how we can do better. No, the language is very important. The ethics of that approach, a commission of audit, are very critical and underpin their intentions. A commission of audit is nothing more than a slash and burn.

When the shadow Treasurer comes in here, you do not hear him talking about missed opportunity. For all the sledges he might use against the government when he gets stuck in from time to time, he does not talk about lost opportunity, he does not talk about what the coalition, the opposition, would do for some of those things that he prosecutes. What else would he use the surplus for? It is about tax revenue and it is about big spending. That is it. That is the window into the shadow Treasurer's mind, the person who would hold the purse strings again if the coalition is elected on 24 November next year. That tells you a great story about their intentions going forward.

My community has seen investments in schools like Yarrabah School, which had not seen any funding for many years, and its growth has been substantial recently. What does that mean for their \$20 million rebuild? With the funding forecast over the forward estimates, what does that mean for the second and third years? Will that be undermined? Will money be taken away? That is not all funded in one year; it is spread over four years. What does it mean for other projects, like the Beaumaris Secondary College campus that the Liberals turned their back on? They walked away from that project. They were not going to put a school on that site. It took the election of a Labor government. What does it mean for the increase to our police service, with 3000 more additional officers? What does it mean for the more than 450 paramedics, and the 282 that have been delivered as part of that 450 allocation? What does it mean for the extra firefighters that we are allocating to keep our state safe in the most critical of times? What does it mean? We have seen that cut agenda before, and we have seen the effect on the public service.

If you just scrape back the people who underpin our state and you make those cuts, all you are doing is cutting corners. What we saw under the previous government as well were cuts to the public service, that sugar hit of extra revenue or lowering of the amount of money on the budget papers, and then we saw an absolute surge in consultants a few years later. There is not the intellectual know-how and there is not that fearless and frank advice from public service. They are gutted. All that intellectual property that you built up over years is lost and your state is undermined. What do you see? We saw the previous government hit absolute paralysis. There was nothing in the drawer, no projects for them to come out with. In a very quick fix, a last-minute quick fix, with the change of Premier from Baillieu to Napthine, they saw the need to do one big project, to put forward one big project in one go. The months were running out; an election was dawning on us. We saw what was then the east-west link committed to. That is a failure of a system where

long-running infrastructure priorities are missed and opportunities are missed for our state, and it ends up costing more.

If the Leader of the Opposition was fair dinkum, he would pick up the phone to Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister, and put forward the dud deal that Victorians are getting on infrastructure. When he was talking about the locked box of east–west funding, when he said he would take his car up to Canberra and go and tell Tony to put it in a locked box for the east–west link, not once has he gone back and prosecuted on behalf of Victorians. This could be a bipartisan moment for the Leader of the Opposition to stand with our Premier and say to Malcolm Turnbull, ‘Enough is enough. Nine per cent is not good enough’. We should not accept that. We are the fastest growing state, we have 25 per cent of the population, and 9 per cent is not good enough. Be it at a state or federal election, I will be prosecuting that in my community. I will be telling my community that when the Liberal-Nationals had the opportunity to say anything when Tony Abbott came in in 2014, they squibbed it, and the Leader of the Opposition has not done anything since.

You can go through your commission of audits, you can go through a pursuit of a reckless ideological base that looks towards small government, but we use government for the betterment of the Victorian people, and we will always do that.

**Ms BLANDTHORN** (Pascoe Vale) (14:50) — I will not say it is a pleasure to rise to speak to this motion, because this motion brings up the inaction and adequacy of the four years of the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw shambles that purported to be a government. The motion:

That this house notes:

- (1) the Liberal-Nationals coalition have confirmed they will undertake a cost audit if they win the 2018 election;
- (2) the devastating cuts and job losses in the public service when the Liberal-Nationals were last in government;
- (3) the grave risk to services and jobs following a Liberal-Nationals cost audit —

is an important discussion for us to be having today. We really should ask ourselves what the first part of that motion means:

the Liberal-Nationals coalition have confirmed they will undertake a cost audit if they win the 2018 election.

It is quite clear to those of us on this side of the house what that means because those opposite have form. We have seen them previously rip apart the social fabric of our community. We know that what they mean when they say ‘cost audit’ after the 2018 election is that they will cut, cut, cut and that they will slash and burn. We know this because we have seen it all before. We have seen it over generations, but most recently we saw it in the 57th Parliament, when we saw the chaos that was the Baillieu-Napthine-Shaw government unfolding.

We also know it because today, while speaker after speaker on this side of the house has stood up and challenged those opposite to defend themselves, none of them — except perhaps the member for Hawthorn — have attempted to defend themselves. If we are wrong, and if what we are saying here, that this is cut, slash and burn, is wrong and they genuinely mean an audit with a transparent process and perhaps are looking for better efficiencies, if that is what they really mean, then they would stand up and say so. But we know that that is not what they really mean. We know that they have failed to take the opportunity to stand up and say that. They are silent because they know that what those of us on this side of the house are saying is the truth.

If we go to the second part of the motion, that the house notes ‘the devastating cuts and job losses in the public service when the Liberals ... were last in government’, I think this again speaks to the first part of the motion. It tells us what we know: that what this audit is really about is slashing and burning. I would like to particularly talk about the chaotic situation that arose under the previous government, the self-indulgent mess of the government, if you can even call what it was a government at all. In particular it is in relation to education, in relation to health and in relation to jobs, because those three things are bread and butter. They are the things that are most important to people. We know that people in our communities want to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, and that to do so they require an education, they require good health and they require the dignity of work for themselves and their families.

If we turn to education first, this is perhaps the area that I have been most passionate about in this term of government. The reason for that has been the mess that I inherited in relation to local schools in my electorate. If you look at the schools across my local area, they were certainly amongst the most disadvantaged. Most of them were graded at a red or orange standard by the education department, despite the fact that \$1 billion was cut from education over that four years. There were

so many red and orange schools and so many of them fall within the geographic area that I represent.

Westbreen Primary School had been earmarked by the previous Labor government for a rebuild. The school had been promised money for a rebuild, but the incoming government denied them that rebuild. The coalition government gave them \$1 million for a patch-up, which was literally a patch-up. It was a few panels put on the outside of the buildings to make them look pretty, but the actual facilities themselves were literally falling down. The school was bursting at the seams. Westbreen Primary School is one of the most disadvantaged and multicultural schools. On virtually every socio-economic indicator you could list, they were certainly facing difficulties, and yet the previous government did nothing to assist them.

With Pascoe Vale Primary School, the previous government had commissioned at least two reports and found significant problems with the original building of Pascoe Vale Primary School, which is well over 100 years old. The drought had meant that its foundations were moving one way and the roof was moving another; it was close to falling down. There was old-style concrete plaster literally falling from the roof onto the desks of the children. Luckily no-one was hurt. The previous government commissioned two reports that told them this, and yet they ignored them. Pascoe Vale South Primary School had leaks throughout its buildings and rotten panels of wood on the outside of the building. It also was falling down.

Coburg North Primary School was bursting at the seams. The local area had experienced an absolutely rapid population growth. There were not enough classrooms. There were not enough spaces for the number of students that had come to that school. Newlands Primary School also had urgent maintenance issues. The list goes on. For schools across my area, despite the investments of this government, there are some that are still marked red and orange, and this is simply not good enough.

If you contrast that to what this government has done in education, even with just those four or five schools for the moment, we have already put \$5 million into Westbreen Primary School. We have fixed the maintenance issues that Pascoe Vale Primary School had in relation to the foundations of the building. Pascoe Vale South Primary School has had over \$3 million for its rebuild. Coburg North Primary School has been allocated nearly \$7 million for a rebuild and Newlands Primary School has been allocated nearly \$1 million to deal with those urgent maintenance issues.

If we look at the state overall, there has already been \$2.5 billion invested in new schools, upgrades and early childhood projects, which means 56 new schools, 275 school upgrades and modernisation projects, 23 new early childhood centres and 34 early childhood centre upgrades. In the last budget there was \$1.3 billion allocated: \$270 million for new schools, \$240 million for school upgrades, \$44 million for special schools and \$58.4 million to support additional students with disabilities. There is simply no comparison between what those opposite mean when they say that they invest in education and what this government means when it says it invests in education. It is quite clear that under the previous government there were cuts — they slashed and burned, schools were left red and orange — and that under this government we are slowly, school by school, turning them into the types of facilities that our students are deserving of.

In the education space, just briefly as I am running out of time, I think there are a couple of other areas that the previous government cut that need to be identified, that need to be called out. One in particular was the dumping of the education maintenance allowance. This was a program that absolutely supported those students across my community who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. This program assisted those families in supporting those children to get the education that they deserve. Yet those opposite had so little regard for this program that they simply cut it. This government, again in contrast, has put \$15.5 million into the State Schools Relief program to assist more families through our affordable school uniforms program, and 150 000 items of clothing, books and stationery have already been delivered to those families that are in need.

Another example, and I think the member for Mordialloc touched on this one, was the scrapping of Free Fruit Friday — literally stealing the food out of the lunchboxes of the children —

**Mr Edbrooke** — Who does that?

**Ms BLANDTHORN** — That is right, member for Frankston, who does that? Many of my school communities have absolutely benefited from school breakfast clubs, which serve 50 000 meals each week across 500 of Victoria's most disadvantaged schools. I personally have witnessed that program unfolding, again at Westbreen Primary School and at Glenroy Central Primary School, with families absolutely dependent on these types of programs.

Other members have also touched on the area of health, and it is clear that the previous government again made

cuts, with more than \$1 billion in cuts to health during their four years in office. Labor has increased health investment, and it will spend \$3.4 billion more in 2017–18 than the Liberals did in their last year in office — an increase of over 20 per cent.

In particular I would like to call out, as others have before me, the dispute that went on with our hardworking paramedics under the previous government, and we particularly remember them at this time of year as they are particularly busy servicing our communities. They too were left without the conditions and wages that they were entitled to. This government has done a lot of work to address those matters and also to upgrade their facilities, as they so deserve. Certainly the Broadmeadows ambulance station in Oak Park is one of the busiest in Melbourne, and it is most deserving of that support.

**Ms COUZENS** (Geelong) (15:00) — I rise to speak on this motion to highlight the do-nothing opposition and what they did while they were in government, which was to not only cut services right across the state but in particular in Geelong. Of course the lazy MP for South Barwon delivered absolutely nothing to the Geelong region — and when I say ‘region’ I am talking about the seat of Lara, the seat of Bellarine, the seat of Geelong and of course the seat that is currently held by the member for South Barwon. It is really concerning that the opposition has now confirmed a cost audit. It would take me hours and hours to talk about all the cuts and the impacts of that in the Geelong region, but there are a number of key areas that I want to focus on in this contribution today.

I will start with the \$70 million cut to V/Line, which had a major impact on communities in Geelong. Labor has put new services in, and of course it is building new trains which are creating jobs. But those opposite in their four-year term in government did absolutely nothing, except cut jobs and cut the services that people rely on to get to work every day. Where was the member for South Barwon when those cuts were happening? He was nowhere in sight.

We saw major cuts to education, and for Geelong and the Geelong region that was really significant. We had schools that were experiencing flooding whenever it rained. The principals and teachers were there on weekends sweeping out stormwater because those opposite while in government had refused to do any maintenance, and those schools greatly suffered for it. We have heard today from many in this place about the experiences that their electorates had with their schools, with buildings that were falling down, and Geelong was no different.

In fact I am fairly confident that the current Minister for Education has indicated that Geelong was one of the worst in the state. I think the member for South Barwon has got a lot to answer for, particularly given that we have now funded schools in his own electorate — Roslyn Primary School and of course Armstrong Creek, the new primary school that was required given the huge growth in areas like Armstrong Creek and the new estates there. There was no commitment by the previous government to build schools. We are about to open the primary school in the new school year. We have significant plans already underway for the secondary school and of course the second primary school as it is required, so that planning has all been done. However, under the previous government and those opposite, nothing was done around schools — absolutely nothing. I know when the Minister for Education and I went out to Roslyn Primary School, the parents out there were absolutely delighted with what we had to offer. Roslyn Primary School has had a major redevelopment, replacing a lot of the old buildings that were there, and the people are very happy.

We also have to look at what happened with the first home buyers grant, which we have reintroduced and in fact in regional areas increased it to \$20 000, plus some improvements in stamp duty. The previous government axed the first home buyers grant, which had a significant effect on young families who were trying to get into the market. I know the member for Lara experienced the same in his electorate, where young families were really scratching to pull together enough money to get into their first home. I am really proud of the fact that we have reintroduced the grant and have doubled it so that families can get their first home.

The other significant matter for Geelong was the cuts to police numbers. That was very significant for Geelong. The police numbers there declined fairly rapidly. The crime rate went up, as we all know, and the police were really struggling to keep up with demand and to keep things ticking over. However, we increased the police numbers, and as we see in today’s figures, Geelong’s crime rate has gone down by 10 per cent, which is very significant.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms COUZENS** — Yes, 10 per cent — which we are very happy to report. A lot of that is because of not only the work of our valuable police officers but the work of our police minister, who has made a significant commitment to increasing the number of police officers on our streets, on the front line, and has done significant work since getting into government. The recent announcement of just over 3000 police

officers to go through the police academy over the next couple of years is really significant and will have a big impact for Geelong.

We also saw the war on paramedics in Geelong, particularly paramedics who were union members. There was the union thuggery argument that those opposite put forward, in particular the member for South Barwon, who was an absolute disgrace in his approach to those paramedics. These are people who keep us safe, save our lives and do all those things — many of us would not even contemplate what they have got to face. What did the member for South Barwon do? He rang headquarters every time they had a banner up on their ambulance to report them for having these signs on their ambulances. It was pretty pathetic.

**Mr Pearson** — He was a snitch.

**Ms COUZENS** — Yes, he was a snitch. That union bashing did not serve the opposition well in the seat of Geelong — or Lara or Bellarine for that matter. One of the first things we did was to deal with that war on paramedics and show them the respect they deserve.

We also saw the \$60 million cut from the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade — significant cuts that impacted on community safety. Those firefighters were under extreme pressure to work towards making the community safe under extreme conditions. Those opposite also denied them the presumptive legislation. Although they had indicated they would not do that, they then reneged on it.

We also saw unemployment under those opposite rise from 5.8 per cent to 6.6 per cent. Job losses grew across the Geelong region. They ignored the workers at Alcoa who lost their jobs at the closure of Alcoa, but they also did nothing to support the Ford workers after the closure announcement was made. Workers in Geelong have suffered greatly under those opposite, but what we did was to put together a very comprehensive package to ensure that those Ford workers when they were made redundant last year were looked after and directed to other employment, skills and training. There was a whole range of things put in place to protect those workers from potential unemployment, and that has been very successful. The Automotive Transition Taskforce, which was initially set up prior to the Ford redundancies, continues today because we want to monitor what is happening with those workers. But those opposite did not care at all about unemployment or about workers losing their jobs. Where was the member for South Barwon when those Ford workers were given the terrible news that in a couple of years time they would not have a

job? He was not around, he did not care and he still does not care, as far as I can see.

The only things that the member for South Barwon opened were commitments made by the previous Labor government. They opened nothing in Geelong during their term.

**Mr Richardson** — Not even the front door.

**Ms COUZENS** — That's right. We saw nothing in health. People who relied on our public health system were experiencing long waiting lists because those opposite did absolutely nothing in health while they were in government. They have made no commitments to health and still have not, as far as I can see, particularly in Geelong. What they did was enter a dodgy contract with private hospitals in Geelong, which stitched up our public hospital.

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (15:10) — I am pleased to rise and speak on this motion. I think it is fair to say that over the years I have often heard it said that Labor governments spend all the money — overspend — and that Liberal coalitions have to come in and balance the budget. But it seems to me that in more recent years we have been in a situation where we have had a budget surplus and indeed there has been very significant investment across many areas.

The Shepparton district I think suffered for many years from neglect, and it has been pleasing over the last three years to see a level of investment that we have not seen for a very long time in our district. When I stood for Parliament it was very apparent to me that the community were not being listened to and that the people representing us had lost touch with what the issues were and what we needed. They were really very clear: the community were asking for the redevelopment of our hospital — better health services and closer to home. They wanted better passenger rail services, the bypass had been on the agenda for many years, we could see high youth unemployment at that time and there was a real mismatch between young people coming out of school and being ready for employment, and that has continued.

I am pleased to have been able to advocate strongly in this place on all of those issues, and to see that we have been granted funding for the first stage of the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health is really very gratifying, at \$170 million. We have been funded up to probably, when you count all the bits and pieces for rail, close to \$50 million for things to happen. The bypass got \$10 million in this year's budget to start planning works and maybe get some initial works done,

and we have been working very hard all this year on a Shepparton education plan, which is really designed to address the poor outcomes that we have been seeing and the very significant falling enrolments in our secondary schools across particularly Shepparton and Mooroopna. So a lot of work has been done over the last three years, and that has been terrific.

The thing that I have noticed really strongly — and so have the broader community — is that when the government invests in your community other people develop a confidence to invest. Not only are we seeing the spin-off of investment in our region — and we will see a lot more of that; we have not even got the crane in the sky yet for the hospital — but we have also had the benefit of the courthouse which the last government funded. The evidence of what that sort of activity in a country town produces is really important, right down to the coffee shops. You have got 100 or 200 workers working on a very big building, the biggest building Shepparton has ever seen — it is unfortunate in some ways that it is a courthouse, but that will be overtaken by the hospital when we get that up — and the flow-on benefit to accommodation, food, coffee, you name it, really stimulates the economy of a country town.

It is very often that I am stopped in the street and people say to me, 'Shepparton is doing really well; things are really looking up'. I feel really pleased about that, and I hope that we will see a lot more happen. In the *Shepparton News* just recently there was an article headed 'Have we got a housing boom?', and while local government does not claim that it is one, there is no doubt that there has been a lot more housing being built in Shepparton and, similarly, there have been more commercial properties being built. All of that shows a confidence that we previously had not seen.

However, I have to say there are some things that do not change. It does not really give me much pleasure to raise the same issue in this place time and time again, but the state of our passenger rail services is really appalling. I see that the minister is in the house while I raise this issue. I want to read an email that I received just this morning from a constituent of mine. It is probably a bit difficult to follow, but it is important that I get this on the record:

Well, today I travelled on the Shepparton train, 6.30 a.m. It was hot and smelly and no food or drinks.

Tonight, 4.30 train (remembering it was a very hot day), no food or drinks — 2½ hours, no drinks. The train was hot and overloaded, people having to stand. One carriage was locked; it was a better class carriage than what we got to travel on. They had it locked. I asked why they locked it — 'Aircon not working. It may start up when we get going. Then we will move people in there'. They never did — just another lie from

V/Line. I watched one lady who was on the verge of collapsing as her body was overheating. It's time the government did something before we have a death on our train this summer.

They say a child in a locked car is death and parents can be charged. I wonder if V/Line will be charged if there is a death if they overheat and die. Shepparton trains are so old. It's okay to board; the carriages feel cool. Then put 60-odd people in the carriage, then all the bodies change the temp and it's like being locked in a car. Many people travel on the train to attend doctors in Melbourne for heart et cetera. Hot trains don't mix with people that have heart problems.

Please do something before we have a death, and please have the law changed for overheated and crowded trains so V/Line can be charged if there is a death. I am sick of these trains. They are hot in summer, cold in winter. They only have drinks and food when they want, and half the time the toilets don't work and they smell.

My God — what an indictment of Shepparton train services. Unfortunately that is true. I wrote a letter to the *Shepparton News* about six years ago myself complaining about the lack of air conditioning on a really hot day. The windows could not even be opened. We have got trains that were built in the late 1950s and 1960s running on our line, and they are not fit for purpose.

What is being done about it? We have had funding put our way for planning, there has been the regional network development plan and the current budget has allocated funding for stabling of trains at the Shepparton station and for a passing loop, all envisaging that more trains may go backwards and forwards, but really we have not seen a sod turned or a shovel in the ground on any of that yet. Even the waiting rooms that were predicted and funded a year before we have not seen any sign of happening.

I really worry about how we are going when it comes to advocacy on trains. Will we see something happen, or is it just going to drag on interminably? It is really very worrying from the point of view of my constituents. My office gets emails like this so often, probably weekly. You just have to look at the social media on our All Aboard campaign, our Facebook page or our Shep Rail page to see that people are really struggling with what they have to put up with.

Talking about decentralisation as a way to deal with Melbourne's overpopulation and the stress on all the services here is one thing, but people are not going to go and live in regional towns where there are not adequate services and where there is not adequate connectivity. All the time I talk about Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and the Latrobe Valley. Those four regions were selected, developed and invested in and regional rail took off. Who was advocating for Shepparton for all those years? I am at a loss to

understand how for so long we were left off the agenda. We are the fifth major regional city in Victoria and yet we still struggle to get anything like decent services.

If you get on a train at any time, will there be a buffet car or will there not be? Who knows? It seems to be a totally random decision. It is considered to be a long-haul trip, and trains absolutely should be provided with buffet cars with drinks and a capacity to move through the carriages, and that is not happening. If you get on a train, you do not know what you are going to get. You cannot even prepare for a trip like that.

For months I have been telling constituents that we are heading in the right direction, that there is movement in this space, that we are getting things done, that there is a lot more happening now than was happening before and that we are being listened to in a lot of areas. But I have to say that when it comes to seeing real change in relation to rail, and even small change just in relation to the provision of basic needs on a train service, we cannot be guaranteed that we will get that.

These are the sorts of issues that require funding. We have not got it over the last 20 years. We are in a four-year term where we are getting some, but I really fear that if we do not see a major investment in rail for our region in the forthcoming state budget, then it may never happen.

**Mr HOWARD** (Buninyong) (15:20) — I am pleased to add my comments to the motion before the house, which recognises that if the Liberal-Nationals come to power again, we will see another period of cuts, as has been indicated by comments that have been made in recent times. The reason I am so pleased to speak on this is it reminds me of why I am in this house.

In the 1990s when the Kennett government was in power I was a secondary school teacher, and for the most part early on I was very happy in the service. But during the period of the Kennett government we saw cuts taking place to important services. I saw so many teachers who were teaching with me being made redundant because Jeff Kennett decided that he did not want to spend so much on teachers so they were not required any more. This is something that I never thought would happen, but on the third round of Kennett government cuts and redundancies in education I determined that I had seen enough and I agreed to take a package because of my frustrations with what was happening. I thought I could do something different to stand up to these cuts and that I would put myself forward to stand for the Labor Party at the next election, which I did, and of course we saw the Kennett government defeated.

It seems the standard practice of conservative governments — of Liberal-Nationals governments — is that when they come to power they want to make cuts. They do not like to spend on those things that the community sees as important. They do not like to see spending on education, on health and in so many other areas that are important to our community, and they just make cuts. Of course we saw that when the Baillieu government was elected in 2010. The first thing they did when they came to office was to say, 'No, we can't be spending so much on education. We can't be spending so much in a range of other areas' — in ambulance services and so on. In terms of some of the projects that Labor had proposed, they cut those too.

I remember, for example, the Eureka Stadium in Ballarat that the Labor government had proposed ahead of the 2010 election. We said, 'Wouldn't it be fantastic if you could get AFL football to Ballarat, upgrade the stadium and commit some money to make it a great facility, not just for AFL football but for a range of other uses?'. When the Baillieu government was elected that plan was axed, and the people of Ballarat were disappointed by that.

We saw nothing happen on that project until Labor was re-elected in 2014 and, in line with promises we had made ahead of that election, we got on and built the Eureka Stadium, which opened last year. We saw the Western Bulldogs football club play on Ballarat soil last year. The Minister for Sport was there. So many people from Ballarat and across the state were there too, including some from Adelaide who came to see Port Adelaide facing up to the Bulldogs in that game. This is a great thing for Ballarat because Labor committed to a project that provides not only great sporting facilities but great facilities to improve economic development and improve so many opportunities for people in Ballarat.

In this term I have been delighted to see the Labor government commit to education and to see schools like Ballarat Secondary College gain substantial funding: \$6 million on what is now the Woodmans Hill site and \$9 million on the site where I taught at Wendouree, which has changed its name. There are so many other projects. It has been great to go to Phoenix P-12 Community College to see that the government continues to fund its upgrades and to see that education is looking great.

At the other end of the spectrum, only last week I was out at another kindergarten in my electorate, the Mount Pleasant Kindergarten, where I was able to turn the first sod on an upgrade to the facilities. The week before that I was out at a kindergarten across the other side of town where the government is building the new Bonshaw

kindergarten. The prefabricated kindergarten had just arrived on site to replace the Sebastopol West Kindergarten. It is great to see new kindergartens being built and upgraded as needed across my electorate and so many other facilities.

If we look at fire services, we know that although the former government said it supported fire services, it could not commit the funding that was necessary and still made cuts wherever it could. I have been pleased to see that we have been upgrading fire stations and we are committing to the Buninyong fire station, which will get underway next year. I was pleased this week to open the Lucas temporary fire station ahead of the formal Lucas fire station opening very soon and to see so many projects getting underway in my electorate. Only last month I was with the Minister for Health at the opening of the cath lab at Ballarat Base Hospital. We are committing funding to open the new centre that will enable so much heart work to be done.

We have done a fantastic job as a government. What I want to see highlighted is that people do not forget what happened under the Baillieu government, that they do not forget what happened under the Kennett government and that we do not go away from a situation where communities like mine have gained so much over the period of Labor governments, whether that be in schools, health or public transport.

Just briefly I want to say that it is sensational to see that we have great trains on our Ballarat line, with the new trains operating along the line, along with the upgraded tracks that only Labor could do. We know that they were so badly funded under the Kennett government, whereas over the years under Labor we have seen the challenges of public transport being met. New challenges have been created though by making it so popular, and of course a new challenge is meeting the growing demand for services, including on the Ballarat line. We certainly do not want to go back to having a coalition government that will see those good projects put at risk, particularly the advances in education, health, public transport, fire and ambulance services and so many other things that we are reminded about and that other members on this side of the house have spoken about, including things in their electorates.

I want to see the people of the Buninyong electorate and the broader Ballarat region continue to move ahead, and that can only happen under Labor. We know that under a coalition government, with the proposed cuts that we have already talked about, this simply will not happen.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## STATE TAXATION ACTS FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2017

### *Council's amendments*

**Returned from Council with message relating to following amendments:**

1. Clause 37, after line 7 insert—
  - (a) **insert** the following definition—
 

*“business day* means a day other than—

    - (a) a Saturday or a Sunday; or
    - (b) a day appointed under the **Public Holidays Act 1993** as a public holiday or public half-holiday;”.
2. Clause 61, line 26, omit ‘Guidelines.’ and insert ‘Guidelines.’.
3. Clause 61, after line 26 insert—
  - (3) If a council requests a supplementary valuation to be caused by the valuer-general under subsection (1), the valuer-general must give the supplementary valuation to the council within 10 business days after the supplementary valuation is returned to the valuer-general.”.
4. Clause 71, lines 17 to 18, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—
  - (3) For section 13N(3) of the **Valuation of Land Act 1960** substitute—
 

“(3) If a collection agency requests a supplementary valuation to be caused by the valuer-general under subsection (1), the valuer-general must give the supplementary valuation to the collection agency within 10 business days after the supplementary valuation is returned to the valuer-general.”.

**Mr EREN** (Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (15:29) — I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

**Mr M. O'BRIEN** (Malvern) (15:30) — This is the third opportunity I have had to debate matters relating to this state taxation bill. It is a bill in which we consider yet another new tax from this Labor government, notwithstanding the clear promise made by the member for Mulgrave, the now Premier, the night before the state election. He was interviewed on the steps of Parliament House for Channel 7 nightly

news by Peter Mitchell, who said — and I will not quote exactly, but I will paraphrase accurately because I have used this so many times — to the now Premier words to the effect of ‘Mr Andrews, the polls suggest that tomorrow you will become Premier. If you are Premier, do you promise Victorians that you will not introduce any new taxes or increase any taxes?’. The member for Mulgrave straightened his shoulders, looked down the barrel of the camera with all the sincerity he could muster, and said, ‘I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian. No new taxes and no increase in taxes’.

What does this State Taxation Acts Further Amendment Bill 2017 do? It increases land tax by \$200 million in 2019–20. This is a big tax hike from the Premier, his Treasurer and this Labor government. It is another broken promise from a government that has broken tax promises time and time again. We are now up to 12 new or increased taxes in defiance of the commitment and the promise made by the Premier to the people of Victoria — the ‘dirty dozen’ of new taxes under Labor.

There was another one this week — the city access tax. Woe betide those people who live in the western suburbs, Geelong or western Victoria who dare to want to come to Melbourne between 7.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. Under this Premier they will pay a city access tax in addition to a toll. What a disgrace.

This bill is opposed by the coalition. We set out very clearly why we oppose it. We oppose it because it is not fair to local councils to take away their power to value property in their municipalities. It is not fair to those experienced and hardworking professional council valuation staff who are all now facing the sack because Labor and the Greens have voted to put them out of a job. I spare a thought for those valuers who are now facing Christmas knowing that with the passage of this bill — thanks to Labor and the Greens — that they are facing the loss of their jobs.

We are talking about jobs on a day when the latest unemployment figures show that Victoria, for the 15th consecutive month, has an unemployment rate that is higher than the national average. Victoria has an unemployment rate that is 1.1 per cent higher than New South Wales. There is nothing to be proud of in this government’s employment record, and there is nothing to be proud of in this bill.

The amendments before the house that were moved in the other place relate to some requirements around supplementary valuations. It is an attempt to put in a

regime where supplementary valuations are required to be undertaken within 10 business days.

This is — I would not even call it 30 pieces of silver — the one piece of silver that the Greens are hiding behind for selling out councils and selling out Victorians. Remember, the Greens opposed this bill in the Assembly —

**Mr Hodgett** — Backflip.

**Mr M. O’BRIEN** — Then they did a backflip. They did a backflip with a pike. They rolled over and the Treasurer tickled their tummy, and the Greens have now jumped into bed with the Labor Party to do over councils, council valuers and those who pay land tax in this state. This minor trinket of a set of amendments delivers absolutely nothing. What is apparent now is that the new guard of the Greens have decided that they want to cuddle up to Labor. They do not want to oppose Labor; they want to be with Labor. That is why under the new leadership of the Greens political party we now see the Greens supporting the Labor Party, because of course when it comes to the crunch Labor and the Greens agree on one thing: they have never seen a tax they did not want to hike. When it comes to putting new taxes on Victorians — Victorian households and Victorian businesses — Labor and the Greens are as one, because they love taxes. They love spending other people’s money.

We have just seen the Auditor-General identify a 38 per cent cost blowout in Labor’s level crossing removal program — a cost blowout of over \$3 billion. It is no wonder the government wants more tax money, because they have got to pay for their own incompetence. Here is a quote from the Treasurer when he was asked about this outrageous blowout on level crossing removal costs. He said level crossing removals were an illustration ‘of why governments should never about the cost of a project until they sign the contracts’ — what an admission of incompetence; what an admission of deceit. What the Treasurer is now inviting every Victorian to say is that whenever the Treasurer talks about numbers in the future, if the contract has not been signed, do not believe him, because we have seen incompetence on every major project. Letting a Labor government be in charge of infrastructure is like giving scissors to a child with running shoes on; it is dumb, it is dangerous and it is only going to end with somebody being hurt. We know that when it comes to infrastructure projects and this Labor government, it is the Victorian taxpayer who ends up getting hurt more than anyone else.

While this trinket of a set of amendments is not even worthy of opposition from the coalition, this bill is worthy of opposition. The coalition opposes this bill. We oppose Labor's broken promise. We oppose Labor's \$200 million tax grab on land tax in 2019–20. We oppose the fact that everyone who pays land tax in this state will now be paying a higher land tax every year on a less accurate basis. This is a disgraceful bill, because this is another broken promise from a government that cannot be trusted to keep any promise and is more interested in ripping money from hardworking Victorians than treating them with any respect in the way in which they are spending that money.

It is a sad way to finish off this parliamentary sitting and this parliamentary year to have to see the passage of another Labor tax grab — another Labor broken promise. We have had three years of it. We should not be surprised if we get 12 more months of it. But then, thank goodness, Victorians will have the chance to wipe the slate clean and get a decent government back in charge.

#### **Motion agreed to.**

### **LABOUR HIRE LICENSING BILL 2017**

#### *Statement of compatibility*

#### **Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:**

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (charter), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017.

In my opinion, the Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 (bill), as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with human rights protected by the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

#### **Overview of the bill**

The bill establishes a licensing system for labour hire service providers in order to improve the transparency and integrity of the labour hire industry. It also introduces various other measures aimed at holding providers of labour hire services to account for their conduct, as well as protecting vulnerable workers from being exploited.

Pursuant to the licensing scheme established by the bill, in order to lawfully provide labour hire services a person will need to be licensed by the Labour Hire Licensing Authority. Only applicants considered to be compliant with certain workplace laws and 'fit and proper' according to prescribed statutory criteria will be eligible to be licensed by the authority, and it will be an offence to provide labour hire services without a licence or to enter into an arrangement for labour hire services with an unlicensed provider.

The bill also establishes a register of licensed labour hire providers with certain information to be made publicly available and establishes the office of labour hire licensing commissioner to administer and enforce compliance with the scheme. The bill provides for the appointment of inspectors and their powers, including powers to inspect premises and obtain evidence.

#### **Human rights issues**

##### *Right to privacy and reputation*

Section 13(a) of the charter provides that a person has the right not to have their privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. An interference will be lawful if it is permitted by a law which is precise and appropriately circumscribed, and will be arbitrary only if it is capricious, unpredictable, unjust or unreasonable, in the sense of being disproportionate to the legitimate aim sought. Section 13(b) provides that a person has the right not to have their reputation unlawfully attacked.

##### *Obtaining, using and sharing the personal information of applicants*

Division 1 of part 3 of the bill sets out the process for applying for a licence to provide labour hire services. An application for a licence must include prescribed particulars, such as the full name, address and date of birth of relevant persons, as well as the consent of each relevant person for the authority to obtain information from third parties for the purpose of verifying information about that person. A 'relevant person' in relation to an application will be the applicant, each proposed nominated officer for the licence, each officer of the body corporate (if the applicant is a body corporate) and each person who makes decisions affecting the business providing labour hire services (if the applicant is a natural person). Under clause 47 of the bill, in considering an application for a licence, or a variation or renewal of a licence, the authority has the power to conduct inquiries and require a relevant person to provide further information or consent to the disclosure of information. The authority may also have regard to other information, including information provided by another regulator, for the purposes of being satisfied of any matter in relation to the application.

Although the right to privacy is relevant to the provisions governing licence applications, applicants who are seeking to participate in a regulated industry have a diminished expectation of privacy. The information that will initially be sought by the authority is only information that is necessary for, or relevant to, the determination of the application. Following the establishment of the licensing regime, persons who involve themselves in a business providing labour hire services should be aware of the regulations that will now apply to the industry. Further, each relevant person is required to provide consent for the authority to obtain information from, or disclose information to, third parties for the purpose of verifying information about the person. As such, relevant persons are likely to have a relatively limited expectation of privacy regarding the information obtained and reviewed by the authority in assessing applications.

Given that there is a reduced expectation of privacy in this context, and that the relevant persons will have given their consent for their information to be checked or verified, in my opinion there will be no interference with the right to privacy

where the relevant information is obtained, reviewed and shared within the confines of the relevant provisions.

Once a licence has been granted, clauses 43 and 44 of the bill require a licence-holder to notify the authority within 30 days of any change in the information that was provided to the authority under part 3 or any change prescribed by the regulations. A change prescribed by the regulations must be a change of such significance that notification of the change to the authority would constitute grounds for the cancellation of a licence (such as a contravention of the act or a relevant person no longer being a fit and proper person). Failure to comply with either of these notification obligations may result in a civil penalty being applied under part 6.

Licence-holders also have a number of ongoing reporting obligations. Clause 34 states that licence-holders must provide certain information to the authority annually, such as the number of workers supplied to hosts during the reporting period and prescribed information in relation to those workers, the kinds of temporary work visas held by workers, as well as other prescribed information, such as notifiable incidents under a workplace law and workers' compensation applications made by workers.

The circumstances in which the mandatory reporting obligations apply are clearly set out in the bill and are aimed at ensuring the licensing scheme operates in a responsive and protective manner. The information required will be confined to information relevant to a person's fitness to hold a licence and will enable the authority to assess whether a licence should be suspended or cancelled in light of the most current information. For the reasons set out above, to the extent that these provisions could be considered to interfere with a person's privacy, the interference would not constitute an unlawful or arbitrary interference.

A secrecy provision in clause 103 makes it an offence for the commissioner, acting commissioner and persons employed or engaged by the authority to disclose information acquired under the act concerning the affairs of any person to anyone, except in certain, confined circumstances. Such information may be disclosed to particular persons (such as VCAT, police officers and relevant regulators) in any legal proceedings under the bill or a prescribed law, in connection with the performance of a duty or the exercise of a function under this bill or a labour hire industry law, or where the information is relevant to a complaint, investigation or inquiry under a relevant law. The provision therefore balances the right to privacy of individuals with the effective enforcement of this bill and relevant workplace laws.

#### *Publishing personal information*

Clause 48 requires the authority to establish and keep a register of licensed labour hire providers that will record information about licence-holders, licences and decisions of the authority. The register will be accessible by the public to search and take copies from, and will include prescribed particulars such as the name and contact details of licence-holders and each nominated officer, and details of any condition to which the licence is subject.

The authority must also publish certain information on the authority's internet site upon receiving an application for a licence or for renewal of a licence. Further, pursuant to clause 49, the authority may publish on an internet site the names and business names of applicants, licence-holders and

former licence-holders in respect of licences that are cancelled, suspended, refused, that the authority refuses to renew or that the applicant has withdrawn.

The publication of information on the register and the authority's internet site will allow potential recipients of labour hire services to access information about labour hire providers in order to make informed decisions about appropriate providers and to comply with their obligation under clause 15 to use only licensed providers. This serves the important purpose of promoting transparency and ensuring compliance with the licensing scheme, which in turn protects workers.

Not all of the information disclosed in the register and on the authority's internet site will be of a private nature. However, the publication of information about applicants will involve identifying individuals and may negatively affect the reputation of those individuals. Nevertheless, I consider that any interference with the right to privacy and reputation resulting from these provisions will be neither lawful nor arbitrary. The particulars which are to be published are clearly set out in clauses 48 and 49 and their listing is therefore a known condition of any person seeking to be licensed as a labour hire provider. The collection and publication of information on the register and authority's internet site is necessary for and tailored to ensuring compliance with the licensing scheme and promoting transparency, and accordingly does not constitute an arbitrary interference with privacy.

#### *Compliance and enforcement powers of inspectors*

Part 5 of the bill provides for the powers of inspectors to monitor compliance and investigate potential contraventions of the bill. Clause 67 requires a licence-holder to keep all documents relating to the business available for inspection at all reasonable times. Licence-holders whose licences cease to be in force must, for six years after the licence ceases to be in force, make all documents relating to the business of providing labour hire services available for inspection in a form and at a place where they can be readily inspected. An inspector may require a person to produce documents relating to the business of providing labour hire services. Such a requirement must be made by written notice, giving the person at least 14 days to comply. Failure to comply with this notice is an offence.

Clause 70 permits an inspector, with the written approval of the authority, to apply to the Magistrates Court for an order requiring a person to answer questions or supply information relating to a licence-holder's business of providing labour hire services. Following consideration of evidence, if a magistrate is satisfied that such an order is necessary for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the regime, the magistrate may grant an order requiring supply of information and answers. Inspectors have a similar power in relation to embargo notices, which they may issue to secure against interference evidence that cannot readily be removed. Clause 80 enables an inspector, with the written approval of the authority and for the purpose of monitoring compliance with an embargo notice, to apply to the Magistrates Court for an order requiring the owner of the thing, or the occupier of the premises where it is kept, to answer questions or produce documents, or any other order incidental to or necessary for monitoring compliance with the embargo notice or with clause 79.

The bill also provides for the entry, search and seizure powers of inspectors. Inspectors may exercise powers of entry to any

premises with the consent of the occupier, or where entry to the premises is open to the public. Prior to obtaining consent, the inspector must show their identity card to the occupier, inform the occupier of the purpose of the search and that the occupier may refuse to give consent and ask the occupier to sign an acknowledgement that the inspector has complied with these requirements.

In the case of certain premises connected with the business of providing labour hire services, inspectors may, for the purpose of monitoring compliance and only during normal business hours, enter and search those premises without consent, inspect documents, require a person at the premises to produce documents or answer questions, and make any still or moving image or recording. However, this power does not extend to places of residence or any premises where the licence-holder or person with information is not present at the proposed time of entry.

For premises that are not those at which the business of providing labour hire services is being conducted, where an inspector believes on reasonable grounds that there is evidence on those premises of a contravention of the bill or regulations, inspectors may apply to a magistrate for a search warrant. Where an embargo notice has been issued, clause 81 permits inspectors to, with the written approval of the authority, apply to a magistrate for the issuing of a search warrant permitting entry to where the embargoed thing is kept, for the purposes of monitoring compliance with an embargo notice.

Pursuant to clause 84, an inspector exercising a power of entry under a search warrant may require the occupier of the premises, or an agent or employee of the occupier, to provide information, documents or reasonable assistance to the inspector. Failing to comply with such a requirement without reasonable excuse is an offence.

In my view, while the exercise of these compliance and enforcement powers may interfere with the privacy of an individual in some cases, any such interference will be lawful and not arbitrary. As noted above, the purpose of the inspection powers is to enforce compliance with the bill and relevant licence conditions, to ensure that labour hire services are provided in a safe and transparent manner, and the rights of vulnerable workers are protected. Licence-holders and others involved in the business of providing labour hire services will have a diminished expectation of privacy in the regulatory context, and it is reasonable that they can be required to produce information and permit entry to business premises for compliance purposes.

In the case of persons who are not involved in the provision of labour hire services, inspectors' powers to require third parties to answer questions or provide information are limited to those individuals who have control over relevant documents and information, or bodies that are likely to hold relevant information, and only for the purpose of monitoring compliance. If it becomes necessary for enforcement purposes to require any other third party to answer questions or produce information, the bill only provides inspectors with these powers where a magistrate has first made an order. Further, clause 89 protects the confidentiality of information provided to the inspector by making it an offence for an inspector to give such information to any other person unless authorised, and clause 91 preserves the privilege against self-incrimination in relation to the provision of information to inspectors.

I note that the provisions above may also engage the right to freedom of expression under section 15 of the charter, which may include a right not to impart information. However, in my view, these provisions enable appropriate oversight and monitoring of compliance with the bill, and are reasonably necessary to protect labour hire workers. Therefore, to the extent that the freedom of expression is engaged, these provisions fall within the exception to the right in section 15(3) of the charter, as reasonably necessary to respect the rights of other persons.

#### *Right to protection against self-incrimination*

Section 25(2)(k) of the charter provides that a person charged with a criminal offence is entitled not to be compelled to testify against themselves or to confess guilt. This right is at least as broad as the common law privilege against self-incrimination. It applies to protect a charged person against the admission in subsequent criminal proceedings of incriminatory material obtained under compulsion, regardless of whether the information was obtained prior to or subsequent to the charge being laid.

The right in section 25(2)(k) of the charter is relevant to clause 91, which applies to the enforcement powers of inspectors provided by part 5 of the bill. Clause 91 provides that it is a reasonable excuse for a person to refuse or fail to give information or do any other thing that the person is required to do under part 5, if the giving of the information or the doing of the thing would tend to incriminate the person. However, this protection does not apply to the production of a document that the person is required to produce under part 5. This is therefore a limited abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination because a document required to be produced may contain evidence that would tend to incriminate the person with respect to certain offences under the bill. However, where evidence or documents are produced in proceedings for a pecuniary penalty order against a person for a contravention of a civil penalty provision, clause 100 provides that such evidence is not admissible in subsequent criminal proceedings against that person on the basis of the same conduct (except in respect of the falsity of the evidence).

The privilege against self-incrimination generally covers the compulsion of documents or things which might incriminate a person. However, the application of the privilege to pre-existing documents is considerably weaker than that accorded to oral testimony or documents that are required to be brought into existence to comply with a request for information. I note that some jurisdictions have regarded an order to hand over existing documents as not engaging the privilege against self-incrimination.

The primary purpose of the abrogation of the privilege in relation to documents is to facilitate compliance with the scheme by assisting inspectors to access information and evidence that is difficult or impossible to ascertain by alternative evidentiary means. Taking into account the protective purpose of the bill, there is significant public interest in ensuring that labour hire providers are operating in compliance with the provisions of the bill and the regulations.

Any limitation on the right in section 25(2)(k) that is occasioned by the limited abrogation of the privilege in respect of produced documents is directly related to its purpose. The documents that an inspector can require to be produced are those connected with a licence-holder's business of providing labour hire services, and for the purpose of

monitoring compliance with the bill or regulations. Importantly, the requirement to produce a document to an inspector does not extend to having to explain or account for the information contained in that document. If such an explanation would tend to incriminate, the privilege would still be available.

Further, clause 67 of the bill creates an obligation for licence-holders to keep all documents relating to the business for compliance with the scheme and to produce them to an inspector upon request. The duty to provide those documents is consistent with the reasonable expectations of persons who operate a business within a regulated scheme. Moreover, it is necessary for the regulator to have access to documents to ensure the effective administration of the regulatory scheme.

There are no less restrictive means available to achieve the purpose of enabling inspectors to have access to relevant documents. To excuse the production of such documents where a contravention is suspected would allow persons to circumvent the record-keeping obligations in the bill and significantly impede investigators' ability to investigate and enforce compliance with the scheme. Any limitation on the right to protection against self-incrimination is therefore appropriately tailored and the least restrictive means to achieve the regulatory purpose.

For the above reasons, I consider that to the extent that clause 91 may impose a limitation on the right against self-incrimination, that limitation is reasonable and justified under section 7(2) of the charter.

#### ***Right to property***

A number of provisions in the bill provide for the seizure of documents and things and may therefore interfere with the right to property. Section 20 of the charter provides that a person must not be deprived of their property other than in accordance with law. This right requires that powers which authorise the deprivation of property are conferred by legislation or common law, are confined and structured rather than unclear, are accessible to the public, and are formulated precisely.

#### ***Seizure powers of inspectors***

Where a licence-holder or former licence-holder produces for inspection documents relating to a labour hire business, the inspector may seize and retain possession of the documents if they are considered necessary evidence for any proceedings under the bill, or if doing so is necessary to prevent their concealment, loss or destruction, or their use in contravention of the bill. The bill also provides that inspectors may, for the purpose of monitoring compliance, enter any premises with consent and examine and seize any thing found on the premises believed to be connected with a contravention of the bill or regulations, provided the occupier consents to the seizure. In the case of certain premises, the bill provides that an inspector may enter and seize or secure against interference any thing believed to be connected with a contravention of the bill or regulations. Further, seizure of items may occur in accordance with a search warrant issued by a magistrate where there are reasonable grounds to believe that on the premises there is a thing connected with the contravention of the bill or regulations.

In each provision that permits inspectors to seize or take items or documents, the powers of inspectors are strictly confined.

For instance, before items are seized with consent, inspectors must first produce their identity card for inspection and inform the occupier that they may refuse to give consent and that anything that is seized may be used in evidence. Where a magistrate issues a search warrant, only things named or described in the warrant, or things that are of a kind which could have been included in the search warrant are permitted to be seized, and the rules in the Magistrates' Court Act 1989 that govern the use of search warrants will apply. Entry and seizure without consent or warrant is only permitted in the case of premises at which the business of providing labour hire services is being conducted, a relevant worker is or has been performing work, and where information relevant to the conduct of a labour hire provider is located. In addition, the powers of inspectors are appropriately circumscribed to only permit seizure of material necessary to investigate breaches of the bill.

If an inspector retains possession of a document or item seized from a person, they must comply with a number of requirements set out in clause 82 of the bill. These requirements ensure that a person is provided with a certified copy of any documents seized from them, and that inspectors take reasonable steps to return the document or thing to the person from whom it was seized, if the reason for its seizure no longer exists, or within three months unless the relevant proceedings have not been completed or an extension is granted by a magistrate.

I therefore consider these provisions to be compatible with the right to property under s 20 of the charter.

#### ***Embargo notices***

Where a search warrant authorises the seizure of a thing that cannot, or cannot readily, be physically removed, clause 79 of the bill provides for an inspector to issue an embargo notice prohibiting a person from selling, leasing, transferring, moving, disposing of or otherwise dealing with the thing or any part of the thing. Performing a prohibited act in relation to a thing, where the person knows that an embargo notice relates to the thing, is an offence. Further, the bill renders any sale, lease, transfer or other dealing with a thing in contravention of clause 79 void.

To the extent that the restriction on selling, leasing, transferring, moving, disposing of or otherwise dealing with the thing that is subject to an embargo notice constitutes a deprivation of property, any such deprivation is for the purposes of ensuring that enforcement action under the bill is not frustrated due to disposal of evidence. These restrictions can only occur in clearly circumscribed circumstances, and monitoring of compliance with embargo notices is subject to the supervision of the Magistrates Court. Any such deprivation will therefore be lawful and will not limit section 20 of the charter.

In my opinion, for the reasons outlined above, any interference with property occasioned by the bill is in accordance with law and is therefore compatible with the charter.

#### ***Presumption of innocence***

Section 25(1) of the charter provides that a person charged with a criminal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law. The right in section 25(1) is relevant where a statutory provision shifts the burden of proof onto an accused in a criminal proceeding, so that the accused is

required to prove matters to establish, or raise evidence to suggest, that they are not guilty of an offence.

Clause 67 of the bill makes it an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to refuse or fail to comply with a requirement to produce documents relating to the business of providing labour hire services. Clause 74 of the bill makes it an offence for a person at a premises where an inspector is exercising a right of entry for compliance enforcement purposes to, without reasonable excuse, refuse or fail to comply with a requirement of an inspector. This includes a requirement to produce a document located at the premises or to answer any questions put by the inspector. Further, clause 84 of the bill makes it an offence for the occupier of a premises, or an agent or employee of the occupier, to, without reasonable excuse, fail to comply with a requirement of an inspector exercising a power of entry under a search warrant. These requirements include giving the inspector oral or written information, documents, and reasonable assistance.

By creating a 'reasonable excuse' exception, the offences in clauses 67, 74 and 84 may be viewed as placing an evidential burden on the accused, in that they require the accused to raise evidence as a reasonable excuse. However, in doing so, this offence does not transfer the legal burden of proof. Once the accused is pointed to evidence of a reasonable excuse, which will ordinarily be peculiarly within their knowledge, the burden shifts back to the prosecution who must prove the essential elements of the offence. I do not consider that an evidential onus such as these provisions limits the right to be presumed innocent, and courts in other jurisdictions have taken this approach.

For these reasons, in my opinion, clauses 67, 74 and 84 do not limit the right to be presumed innocent.

Hon. Luke Donnellan, MP  
Acting Minister for Industrial Relations

### *Second reading*

**Mr DONNELLAN (Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (15:40) — I move:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

One of the responsibilities of any government is to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

The Victorian inquiry into labour hire and insecure work demonstrated clearly that our existing laws are failing to allow us to do so.

That is why I am introducing a bill to establish a licensing system for providers of labour hire services.

The Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 is the culmination of more than two years work that began in October 2015 with the appointment of Professor Anthony Forsyth to examine the practices of labour hire companies, insecure work, sham contracting and the abuse of visas to avoid workplace laws and undermine minimum employment standards.

Professor Forsyth's inquiry received almost 700 submissions and held 17 days of public hearings across Victoria, speaking

to 221 individual witnesses. The Inquiry report was tabled in Parliament in October 2017.

The Forsyth inquiry found that the labour hire industry is a significant employer of Victorian workers and a major contributor to the Victorian economy. There are various legitimate and sound commercial reasons for Victorian businesses to utilise labour hire arrangements.

However, as Members will be aware there have been a number of high-profile cases demonstrating that lack of proper regulation in the labour hire industry means that vulnerable workers have little protection from exploitative behaviour.

In addition to these well-publicised cases, the inquiry established that many situations of exploitation go unreported. This is often because the victims are too scared to come forward, they don't know where to go for help, or they worked on a temporary visa, and have returned home.

The inquiry found considerable evidence of exploitation of workers associated with the labour hire industry. It identified a problem with 'invisible' labour hire agencies and arrangements, operating almost entirely outside existing regulatory frameworks. It found that labour hire workers are treated less favourably than direct-hire workers, ranging from differential treatment in respect of rostering and health and safety to outright exploitation.

The inquiry also found that some operators exploit loopholes in current laws that allow them to avoid their legal obligations with impunity.

Current federal workplace relations laws have not been effective in stamping out exploitation, because so many labour hire providers operate in the black economy, out of the view of regulators.

Licensing labour hire providers will bring much-needed transparency to the labour hire industry. Importantly, businesses and undertakings that use labour hire must ensure that their labour hire provider is licensed. This will result in a direct and significant drop in available business for unlicensed providers. These providers will be forced to either clean up their act and transition into the regulated economy, or leave the industry.

### **The bill in detail**

The labour hire licensing system that we are introducing will apply across all industries. Whilst much attention has been given to unscrupulous operators in the horticultural, cleaning and meat sectors, it is apparent that there are problems across many other industries as well. It would be remiss of the government to protect the workers that pick the fruit, but not the workers who transport those fruit to market.

The government is all too aware of the behaviour of some labour hire operators in avoiding their legal obligations. A sector-based scheme would inevitably create loopholes due to difficulties in defining where the sectors start and finish, and the activities they encompass.

A universal scheme will better facilitate co-operation with Queensland and South Australia, the two states which have recently passed similar licensing schemes.

A person will be a provider of labour hire services if in the course of conducting a business, they supply a worker to perform work in and as part of a host's business or undertaking. This covers the 'triangular' labour hire relationship, where there is no direct contractual relationship between the host and the labour hire worker. Instead, the worker is engaged by the provider, either as an employee or as an independent contractor.

The bill provides for two additional scenarios in which a person will be a provider of labour hire services and require a licence, even though there may be a direct contractual relationship between the worker and the host.

These are where accommodation providers procure or provide accommodation to workers and also recruit workers for third parties, and contractor management services, which are akin to labour hire.

The regulations may deem certain activities to be working in and as part of a business or undertaking. They may also exclude classes of persons or activities from the operation of the scheme. We are consulting with stakeholders as to these regulations, to ensure that the boundaries of the scheme's application are clear.

The scheme will be administered by an independent Labour Hire Licensing Authority. It will be headed up by a Commissioner, appointed by the Governor in Council.

A person or body corporate will be able to apply to the Labour Hire Licensing Authority for a licence. To obtain a licence, providers will be required to: provide information about their business and key personnel; demonstrate compliance with a fit and proper person test, workplace laws, labour hire laws, and (where relevant) minimum accommodation standards; and declare that they will comply with laws relating to taxation, superannuation, occupational health and safety, workplace laws, and migration laws.

Importantly, the bill does not impose any additional workplace laws, tax, superannuation or health and safety obligations on labour hire businesses. It merely requires an applicant or licensee to comply with existing legal obligations.

Persons with an interest in the protection of workers or the integrity of the labour hire industry will be permitted to object to a licence application. If a licence is granted despite an objection, the objector may request a review of that decision in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

A licence will be valid for up to three years, and the authority may impose conditions on the licence. Licences may be varied, suspended or terminated.

If an application for a licence or licence renewal is refused by the authority, the applicant can seek a review of the decision by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

There will be a public register of licensed providers so that hosts will know whether a provider is licensed or not.

An inspectorate, housed within the authority, will investigate compliance with the Act. Inspectors will have powers to enter premises and require production of documents.

Penalties will apply where a person provides labour hire services, or advertises such services, without holding a licence.

Penalties will also apply where a person (a host) enters into an arrangement for the provision of labour hire services with an unlicensed provider. This means that hosts must ensure that they use only licensed labour hire providers.

These two contraventions of the Act are civil penalty provisions. They attract financial penalties of up to 800 penalty units for an individual, and 3200 penalty units for a corporation. On current penalty levels, that equates to \$126,856 and \$507,424 respectively. Most contraventions of the requirements of the scheme constitute civil penalty provisions. However, these are supplemented by a number of criminal offences relating to conduct directed at the commissioner, authority and the inspectorate.

The authority will also be empowered to develop a voluntary code of practice for the labour hire industry. This was one of the recommendations of the Forsyth inquiry.

Licence fees, application fees and renewal fees will be set in the regulations to the act. It is anticipated that the fees will be scaled according to the business turnover of the applicant.

The bill provides for a transition period of six months, in which businesses who provide labour hire services must apply for a licence. Persons who apply for a licence within the transition period are able to continue providing labour hire services until their application is finally determined.

Members may question why Victoria is establishing its own labour hire licensing system, given that we have referred most of our workplace laws to the commonwealth. The Victorian inquiry recommended that Victoria advocate for a national approach to labour hire licensing, and we have done so. But it has become clear that the current federal government has no intention of protecting workers and developing a national labour hire licensing scheme. On 22 May this year, the then federal Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce, dismissed calls for a national labour hire licensing scheme, stating that state governments should be able to regulate the labour hire industry because, and I quote, 'states have got to have a purpose to exist'.

The Queensland and South Australian governments have also moved to establish their own systems of labour hire licensing.

There are many similarities between Victoria's licensing system and the systems in the other states, in order to provide for a harmonised licensing model. For example, all three models have universal coverage, and require that host employers only use a licensed provider. All three systems facilitate recognition of each other, and work will be undertaken in coming months to facilitate this.

The Victorian Labour Hire Licensing Bill 2017 is an important step towards providing protection for vulnerable workers. It will also provide a more even playing field for the legitimate labour hire operators who now cannot compete against the fly-by-nighters who plague the industry. Under our model, those businesses who only survive by operating illegally, or on the fringes of the law, will lose their customers, as hosts will have no option but to use legitimate, licensed, labour hire providers.

There is still much more work to be done. The labour hire inquiry made 35 recommendations in total and we are methodically working through the implementation of other important measures. And the Victorian government will continue to advocate for national laws to address the shame that is the exploitation of vulnerable workers.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East).**

**Debate adjourned until Thursday, 28 December.**

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT (DISTINCTIVE AREAS AND LANDSCAPES) BILL 2017**

*Statement of compatibility*

**Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:**

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the charter), I make this Statement of Compatibility with respect to the Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017.

In my opinion, the Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

**Overview**

The Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017 (the bill) will enable the declaration of distinctive areas and landscapes, and implement a stronger planning framework to protect areas that contain a concentration of unique features of state and/or national significance. This includes, for example, environmental, landscape, natural resource, cultural and heritage, and state significant infrastructure values that are under threat or pressure of continuing urban development. The bill, amongst other things, requires the development of a statement of planning policy for a declared area and amendment of a declared area planning scheme to incorporate the Statement. Revocation of declarations and certain specified amendments to planning schemes will require ratification by Parliament.

The bill enables the declaration of distinctive areas and landscapes of significance to the people of Victoria. A declaration together with the associated statement of planning policy and planning scheme amendment to incorporate that statement will ensure that the unique features and special characteristics of a declared area are protected and conserved for future generations. More specifically, a declaration will enhance the conservation of environmental values including habitat, ecosystems and biological diversity, and recognise the connection and stewardship of traditional owners in relation to land in a declared area. The bill also ensures integrated decision-making by requiring that a statement of planning

policy for a declared area include a long-term vision and framework plan.

**Human rights issues**

*Freedom of movement*

Section 12 of the charter provides for the right for every person to have the freedom to choose where to live, to enter and leave and move freely within Victoria. Clause 4 of the bill allows for the declaration of distinctive areas and landscapes and the establishment in statements of planning policy of protected settlement boundaries for townships designated for future growth. A protected settlement boundary and associated framework plan will identify preferred locations for different land uses including areas for urban development and other land uses such as open space or commercial development.

To the extent that a protected settlement boundary could be perceived as limiting the freedom to ‘choose where to live’ any such limitation is reasonable and justified because this is consistent with Victoria’s planning system that includes planning schemes for the control of land use and development. Planning schemes ensure the protection and conservation of land in Victoria in the present and the long-term interests of all Victorians. Planning schemes also contain planning policies, zones, overlays and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed. Any such limitation, therefore, is considered to be proportionate since there is no other less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that a protected settlement boundary seeks to achieve. The other aspects of the charter right including ‘to move freely’ and ‘to enter and leave’ are not limited on the basis that the bill itself does not restrict or prohibit access to areas that have been declared distinctive.

As a result, I am of the opinion that any limitation of the rights under section 12 of the charter is reasonable and justified in accordance with section 7(2) of the charter given the importance of the role of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 as the primary planning legislation that provides the legal framework for Victoria’s planning system and ensures the protection and conservation of land in the interests of all Victorians.

*Cultural rights*

Section 19(2) of the charter provides that an Aboriginal person must not be denied the right, with other members of their community, to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

The bill does not limit any of these cultural rights. The bill supports the protection of these rights by requiring consideration of state significant historic and cultural features in determining whether to declare an area as a distinctive area and landscape. Specifically, the declaration criteria proposed to be used by the minister when considering a declaration refer to the following cultural features:

iconic places, precincts or landscapes of cultural heritage significance that are exemplars of Victoria’s past;

places or objects that have particularly strong relationships to important historical events that have significance for the broader Victorian community; and

features (both tangible and intangible) that are associated with Aboriginal living tradition, sites of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity, and cultural traditions in the form of story or unique testimony.

**Property rights**

Section 20 of the charter provides that a person must not be deprived of their property other than in accordance with law. To the extent that ‘deprivation’ includes any substantial restriction on a person’s control, use or enjoyment of their property, section 20 of the charter might be relevant to the provisions of the bill in clause 4 which provide for the declaration of an area as distinctive. Such a declaration will be supported through a statement of planning policy that will be incorporated into the relevant planning scheme which may ultimately impact on how a person may use or develop their land.

The circumstances and procedures by which a person’s control, use or enjoyment of their property may be restricted are clearly set out in clause 4 of the bill. I am satisfied that, to the extent that this could be said to amount to an effective deprivation of property under the charter, such deprivation will occur both in accordance with law and for a legitimate purpose, namely the protection of distinctive areas and landscapes and prevention of inappropriate development that may be detrimental to environmental, landscape, cultural, heritage and amenity values.

As such, this clause will not amount to a limitation of the property rights referred to in section 20 of the charter.

The Hon. Richard Wynne, MP  
Minister for Planning

*Second reading*

**Mr WYNNE (Minister for Planning) (15:43) — I move:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Bill is a landmark in the management of the peri-urban areas around metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria’s regional cities.

The bill provides for the protection of state significant valued assets located in the peri-urban region of Victoria’s major regional cities. This will ensure greater certainty about the long-term sustainability of areas that contain distinctive values.

The bill is a landmark because it will protect the iconic and historic Macedon Ranges region. It will protect the natural beauty of the ranges and preserve cultural, environmental and rural values.

The bill enables the declaration of distinctive areas and landscape and the development of a tailored statement of planning policy for that area.

The bill protects the environmental values and character of the growing Macedon Ranges region. This is essential for a number of reasons.

First, the region’s proximity to Melbourne and its popularity for tourists and new residents means that we must put in place stronger protections for the natural environment, state significant water catchments, agricultural land and heritage townscapes.

Second, the level of growth anticipated in the region presents a unique set of challenges that warrant stronger state-led planning policy.

Third, the bill provides protection for townships that contribute so much to regional Victoria’s economy through tourism and associated industries. In particular, the bill will secure the sustainability of each township in the Macedon Ranges in the long term, taking into careful account the projected needs for employment and population growth.

The bill paves the way for other important, distinctive areas and landscapes across Victoria to have access to the highest level of planning protection. As an enabling tool, the bill means we can protect other state significant assets and areas of outstanding natural beauty in other areas of Victoria that are also under threat from development.

The bill strengthens existing planning controls and ensures that the significance of these distinctive areas is elevated in state policy.

It is instructive to remember the example of the urban growth boundary and the green wedges that were introduced 15 years ago. The UGB provides a permanent, long-term, strategic limit to Melbourne’s outward expansion. The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Bill will allow settlement boundaries to be applied to specified townships where a growing population threatens to encroach into valued natural and rural landscapes.

In effect, the bill brings the UGB mechanism to the Macedon Ranges to protect state significant assets from growth on all ‘fronts’. This means we can ensure that peri-urban growth doesn’t compromise the valuable landscape.

Settlement boundaries around townships will provide long-term certainty. The boundaries can be applied to direct development to preferred locations in high-value heritage townships.

It is important to note that the bill is not intended to lock down the Macedon Ranges region or other regions. Rather, the bill elevates the economic role of these areas by safeguarding their values and facilitating appropriate growth and investment opportunities.

Under this legislation, any future proposed amendment to long-term settlement boundaries must be ratified by Parliament. This is what occurs with the UGB and the green wedges. In addition, a statement of planning policy must be finalised within two years after a distinctive area and landscape is declared. This timeline provides certainty to communities.

The bill has been developed in collaboration with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the region’s Registered Aboriginal Parties including the Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung, and Taungurung Elders who have strongly

supported the protection of their cultural and heritage values in the Macedon Ranges region.

The bill, as proposed, will allow the government to better recognise those iconic, distinctive landscapes that communities value, creating a legacy for future generations of Victorians.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr T. BULL (Gippsland East).**

**Debate adjourned until Thursday, 28 December.**

## **GAMBLING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 13 December; motion of Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation).**

**Ms THOMAS** (Macedon) (15:44) — It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on the Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This bill amends the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 to prohibit static betting advertising within 150 metres of a school, on public transport infrastructure, and on public roads and road infrastructure. This is an important step to reduce gambling-related harm in the Victorian community by addressing the normalisation of gambling in sport and exposure to betting advertising, particularly for young and vulnerable Victorians.

Normalisation of gambling in sport increases the likelihood of people gambling at risky levels. Children, adolescents and existing problem gamblers are most at risk. Research shows that three-quarters of children aged between eight and 16 think gambling is a normal part of sport, and two-thirds can recall at least one sports betting brand. Betting advertising on roads, public transport and near schools increases the exposure of vulnerable groups to this advertising. The amendment complements the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's many campaigns and initiatives to counter the growing culture of betting advertising.

In August 2016 the Andrews government announced a proposal to ban betting advertisements on public transport and around schools. These places were chosen as they are difficult to avoid as part of day-to-day activities, particularly for children. The proposal was subject to extensive consultation with industry and community stakeholders about the level of betting. When the government consulted publicly on this proposal we received resounding community and stakeholder support. The ban on public transport infrastructure includes trains,

train stations, buses, bus shelters, trams, tram stops, taxis and ferries, so while a prohibition on betting advertising rates was not proposed in the public consultation, the decision to include rates was a result of the consultation process and concerns that had been relayed to the ministry and government by the general community and Victorian members of Parliament. It was clear through the consultation that the ban should be extended to include roads.

Roads were also considered as a priority due to the significant proportion of static betting advertising that occurs on roads; indeed it is about 35 per cent static advertising. The extension of the ban to include roads is consistent with targeting places that are difficult to avoid as part of day-to-day activities. The prohibition on roads will apply to arterial roads, freeways and tollways, as well as traffic control signs, embankments and noise walls. The ban will not apply to advertising on cars and trucks travelling on a public road.

In addition to a number of corporate bookmakers, the Outdoor Media Association (OMA), a peak body for out-of-home advertisers, opposes the prohibition on betting advertising; however, one of the OMA's significant concerns about the impact of the prohibition on existing contracts has been resolved through transitional arrangements that are included in this bill. Those transitional arrangements mean that any contracts signed prior to the announcement of the ban, which was on 17 September 2017, will be permitted to run up to a maximum of two years following the announcement. The major exemptions to the prohibition include racecourses, sporting stadiums and grounds, and a building occupied by a wagering service provider or a building where their products or services are sold.

I did want to stop and use this opportunity to talk about an issue that was of great importance in my local community. I want to acknowledge Paul and Mary Reid of Kyneton. Both are long-time, very active Labor Party members but also have always held very strong opinions when it comes to gambling and gambling advertising. Mary led a community protest in Kyneton to get a sign taken down at Kyneton racecourse. I am discussing this in the context of the bill because, whilst racecourses are exempt, the example in Kyneton demonstrates that if communities feel strongly enough about an issue and if communities are powerful in and of themselves, they do not always need legislation to achieve what they want to achieve.

Residents in Kyneton decided that they wanted the Bet365 sign removed from the prominent position it held at the entrance to our racecourse. Whilst Kyneton racecourse is used for race meetings, it is also a very

popular place for recreation for people of all ages. So what happened at Kyneton is a successful community campaign was waged. More than 300 people signed a petition. Others were involved in an online campaign, and as a consequence of this members of the committee met with the Kyneton and Hanging Rock Racing Club and the racing club agreed to withdraw the 5 metre by 2 metre betting advertisement from the river walk.

This was a really great outcome, notwithstanding that racecourses as I mentioned are exempt under this legislation. This just goes to show that there are still real opportunities if communities are aggrieved about a certain decision that has been taken by an organisation, there is always the opportunity to sit down and negotiate an outcome that everyone can live with. So I do commend Paul and Mary for their work on that. I know that they, along with other members of my community, will really welcome this bill, and I commend the minister for bringing it to the house.

A number of people have used the opportunity of this bill to talk about the significance of horseracing to our community. In particular I wanted to point to how important it is in my community in the electorate of Macedon. The Kyneton and Hanging Rock Racing Club is a very successful and very old racing club that continues to attract really great crowds to some of its signature events that are held both in Kyneton and at the historic Hanging Rock racecourse. It has been a great pleasure to be able to welcome the Minister for Racing on a number of occasions to my electorate and to join with me to announce some of the fantastic commitments that this government has made to country racing clubs. I do not think you could find a person who, one, is more passionate about racing but, two, and of particular concern to me, is more passionate about country racing.

Country racing is an excellent day out. It was really such a pleasure to attend the Kyneton Cup race day this year. The Kyneton Cup, I might say, is conveniently located on the Wednesday between the Melbourne Cup and Oaks Day, so there is no excuse for anyone in this chamber not to attend the Kyneton Cup in 2018 and really cap off a fantastic week of spring racing.

The thing about the Kyneton Cup that I enjoyed the most is not just how much the locals enjoyed it but also how many people travelled from far and wide to watch some really first-class class racing, to enjoy wonderful hospitality and of course to participate in fashions on the field. I do have to say I used to attend the races quite a lot, and for some time I was a member of the Victoria Racing Club in order to accompany my mother, who was a great lover of horseracing, to the races. But I have

not been for a number of years; it sort of dropped off. I also grew up going to the races in Wodonga. I have got to tell you that fashions on the field at country racing has changed a lot since I was at the Wodonga racecourse as a schoolchild, and I am glad to say that. It is a good thing. Indeed at Kyneton racecourse on the day it was amazing to see the fabulous fashion and millinery that was on display.

I did want to end very quickly by also commending the Minister for Racing. As people in this place know, I did grow up in Wodonga. The member for Benambra hardly makes a peep in this place, so I thought I might point out that it was fantastic to see our minister deliver a \$271 000 boost for key race day attractions and infrastructure at the Wodonga racecourse, a racecourse that I have attended on many, many occasions. It is brilliant to see that the Andrews Labor government is not only getting right behind country racing but also taking real action to control and minimise the harm that can be done by gambling. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms VICTORIA** (Bayswater) (15:54) — I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

What we can clearly hear in the house is, I would like to say, debate around a government bill that we have spent an awful lot of time on over the last day or so. There are many on this side of the house who have not had the opportunity to speak on bills that have not yet concluded their debate — for example, the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017, the scalping bill that will apply not only to sporting but also major events. There are further speakers on our side, and of course having the minister at the table would be a great opportunity, if we were to go into consideration in detail, to be able to ask the minister some very poignant questions. There was of course an understanding between the Leader of the House and the manager of the opposition business. Of course the manager of opposition business is not in the house today due to personal reasons, so he is not here to speak on that himself. But I believe a commitment was given that we could take the bill into consideration in detail and, as I have said, there are other speakers on our side who wish to speak on this bill.

There are so many questions that we have. We have questions that people like the Ticket Brokers Association of Australia have put to us. I have had submissions from several theatres about consumer protection, which is very important. But we also have questions about the procedures around the seizure and return of the tickets and the rights of the buyer, not the scalper, and whether or not they have to supply, for

example, their name and address. The bill, I believe, in several clauses actually disagrees with itself and is not clear on that. I would be very keen for the minister to be able to have the opportunity to clarify that for the sake of the consumer. If they are approached by an authorised ticketing officer or a police officer and are asked to provide their name and address, one part of the bill says that it is a requirement and another part of the bill says it is not. Of course we would like clarification around that, because these are the sorts of things that do end up in court. We could actually mitigate a lot of those sorts of legal circumstances if we had clarification.

There is also the disposal of seized tickets. That is not entirely clear either, and we have questions around that. There is no exact time frame around the declaration of an event or a series of events, so we would very much like those sorts of things to be clarified. There are things around, for example, authorised ticketing officers not having the authority to commence proceedings when offences have been made against part 9A. We want to know why they were specifically excluded from a very specific group of people who have been noted as being authorised to commence proceedings, but there is one distinctive group who have been left out.

We also want to have a look, as I said, at things the Ticket Brokers Association of Australia want clarification around. They are legitimate and legal brokers. They are not Viagogo; they are not these dodgy international companies that nobody can track down and nobody can hold to account. These are small businesses going about their business, and they want some clarification around a lot of these issues. By stifling debate on this and not allowing us to go into consideration in detail, which I believe an agreement was reached about, we are not giving them the opportunity to continue on in their small business in a fair way. They have traded in a certain way for a long time. They are not prices gougers. They are not out to rip anybody off. They provide a legitimate and worthwhile business. This is something that we would like clarification on.

I got some answers back from the department on certain things that I asked about, for example, on section 182J, but I do not believe the answers that they sent back are totally satisfactory. So again consideration in detail would be important to be able to help clarify that further. I am sure the minister would have been delighted, although he has disappeared from the chamber, to be able to clarify those sorts of things. It is his bill, and I am sure he would have liked the opportunity to be able to do that, as he would have also been happy to talk about the destruction of tickets that

have been forfeited to the Crown. The bill says they can be disposed of in any way that the minister sees fit, including destruction. I want to know what the alternatives are. As I said, we have other speakers, and I think consideration in detail is certainly something this house should consider.

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (15:59) — I just want to make a couple of points on this procedural motion around the adjournment of the Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. My first point on this adjournment is that we have the member for Eltham, who I understand is very keen to make her contribution on the legislation.

**Ms Ward** interjected.

**Ms ALLAN** — I want to hear what she has got to say, and I reckon the chamber wants to hear what she has got to say. Do you know what I reckon? I reckon it will be a good contribution too. So I am looking forward to the contribution from the member for Eltham on this piece of legislation, and it is very disappointing that the member for Bayswater is trying to gag the member for Eltham from making her contribution to this debate. It is very, very disappointing that the member for Bayswater is wanting to address this. It is very disappointing.

The other point I would like to make is I hear that the member for Bayswater is very keen to go back to the bill around the ticketing of major events, the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017, and I am very happy to inform the house that we have got a few more speakers on that too. I think the member for Bayswater was indicating that there are people on her side who are wanting to make a contribution to that bill as well, and you know what? So do we. We have a few more people who would like to talk in greater detail about this bill. So I hope the member for Bayswater is not going to pre-emptively try and gag that debate as well.

The final point I wish to make is about the observations that the member for Bayswater incorrectly made around arrangements on the consideration in detail stage. I indicated on the record my position on this. It was put to me that the opposition was keen to see this bill go into consideration in detail, and during the government business program debate on Tuesday afternoon I indicated to the house, and it is on the record for all to see, that if time permits towards the end of the week, we would look at how we can accommodate that.

**Ms Victoria** interjected.

**Ms ALLAN** — It's your motion. You moved this motion.

**Ms Victoria** — Absolutely. Let's consider it in detail.

**Ms ALLAN** — Are you trying to gag me too now? Goodness me, it is the gagging member for Bayswater. She is trying to gag all of us.

**Ms Victoria** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, really, are you going to let her get away with that? I am not gagging a motion. What I am saying is let us consider it in detail.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny)** — What is the point of order? Is there no point of order?

**Ms Victoria** — No, the point of order is the minister is not being relevant.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny)** — Thank you. The minister on a point of order?

**Ms ALLAN** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the motion moved by the member for Bayswater is to adjourn debate. The impact of adjourning debate is to stop the member for Eltham from speaking. That is a gag. I think if you look up the definition, that is a gag. So the member for Bayswater can try and re prosecute all she likes, but she is definitely trying to gag debate. I am simply indicating she is also misrepresenting my position, and it would be a terrible thing for the record not to be corrected on the incorrect statements that the member for Bayswater has said.

I was referring to *Hansard* from Tuesday's sitting where I indicated to the house for all to see and for the record to stand that if time permitted we would look at taking this bill into the consideration-in-detail stage. Unfortunately, as it is turning out — sadly, because the member has moved this procedural motion — we could have had all this time. But no, the member for Bayswater has tried to get in a bit early and move this gag motion.

It may not be that time permits us an opportunity to go into consideration in detail, so I would like to absolutely —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Ms ALLAN** — And I would hope that if the member for Bayswater has an opportunity at some future point in time she might correct the record; she might apologise for misrepresenting the position of the

government in the house. I can only hope. I can only hope that she might do that.

**Ms Victoria** interjected.

**Ms ALLAN** — But as we are hearing, she is saying she would never apologise to me. She is happy to let misinformation and wrong information stand on the record. She can have that. I am very happy for the member for Bayswater to be incorrect on the record if she chooses to. I would certainly hope that the member for Bayswater is also not trying to engage in some intimidatory behaviour across the chamber. We know she does not like that at all. I am keen to hear the member for Eltham speak, and let her speak, I say.

**Mr BURGESS (Hastings) (16:05)** — On the motion, it is always interesting to follow the Leader of the House and listen to her try and rewrite history. It is a regular occurrence. To say on one hand that she was going to get to this debate, that if we had time we were going to get to consideration in detail, but that it was the member for Bayswater that was standing up and taking up time is so disingenuous that certainly anyone reading *Hansard* really needs to read it in detail to understand exactly what the Leader of the House gets up to. She does it regularly. She will get up and she will verbal people and she will make an argument that really does not exist. Hopefully she is coming back — good — because she does this on a regular basis. She has already contradicted herself by saying that there was no agreement but then, harking back to Tuesday, that clearly there was an agreement and that she was making the point that we would do it if we had time.

Now, there was plenty of time. It is just a matter that certainly the government is trying to filibuster so that we do not have time to do this. There are all sorts of reasons why we should be going into consideration in detail on this bill. There was an agreement that has been renegeed on, which is not unusual for the Leader of the House and not unusual for the government.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BURGESS** — Absolutely; it is standard play for these people. The minister was sitting at the table. We were all ready to go into consideration in detail, but of course they backflipped and renegeed again — but that is exactly what we expect from this government. There was a commitment from them that they would go into consideration in detail — part of the democratic process. They promised to do this as part of their movement into government, but of course they have done almost anything but that while they have been in government.

We have got people that want to speak on this. We have got people that need to understand this bill. We have got ticket brokers, we have got theatres and we have got consumers that need to understand this legislation. This is a piece of legislation that is there to protect the consumer in some ways, but in other ways it can be quite tricky. If we do not get the opportunity to — do what it really amounts to — cross-examine the minister to see, firstly, if he even understands what the bill is about, and I am sure that is why it is being hidden; the minister has run off like he normally does when it is time to answer any questions —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BURGESS** — He would not have a clue what is going on in this bill, and now when it is time for him to come and answer some questions, he has the Leader of the House standing up there and taking cover for him. That is the situation we are in. There is no intent by this government to ever go into consideration in detail, even when it is a bill that changes the circumstances in relation to entertainment for our consumers, where they should understand what is going on, what their rights are, what they can do, whether they can be ripped off by somebody or whether this bill means anything at all and how it has changed the law. What does it really mean when a police officer or an authorised officer comes up to you and asks you for your tickets? Do you have to hand them over? If you put them in your pocket, is there search and seizure? What is it? We do not understand. I do not believe the minister understands. This government does not understand the legislation.

We have seen that so many times from this government. They do not understand the legislation they put through. So many times there is a problem with it, and they just do not recognise that, and they are too arrogant to even listen to the opposition when we are telling them there is a mistake. We are asking them to go into consideration in detail so we can thrash out some of these concerns and perhaps improve what is a faulty bill and put something on the table so that the consumers can understand it, because in the end, as the government is trying to argue, this is supposed to be for the protection of the consumer. Well, if it is for the protection of the consumer, Minister, come and sit down here; come and answer the questions that we ask on behalf of the consumer, and show that you know something about the law that you are trying to thrust upon Victorians.

**Mr Wakeling** interjected.

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (16:09) — Member for Ferntree Gully, give me a bit of time, mate. I have only just gotten up. Give me a go. I rise to speak on the adjournment motion and really the perplexing decision by the member for Bayswater to try to adjourn debate knowing that that would involve a procedural debate that would take —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr RICHARDSON** — Now it has taken 15 minutes. This is general procedure, and it has actually had the consequence of stretching out debate further. For the member for Bayswater it would have been a wise choice to let the member for Eltham have a say on behalf of her community and speak on the Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. It is generally known who is on the speaking lists. It is generally known what is going on in the house, and if anyone does their due diligence, walks around to the other side and checks the speaking lists, they will see. The member for Bayswater would have seen that we would probably be done in 10 minutes and be onto something else, but now we have a procedure motion that we are talking about and we are again missing the opportunity to go to consideration in detail.

I reiterate that the Leader of the House clearly stated into *Hansard*, at the onset of the Parliament on Tuesday, 12 December 2017, when talking about the business of the house, that the intention was that if time permitted we would go to consideration in detail. Time has gotten away from us. We have had a lot on this week, a number of bills. Let us be honest: those opposite have tapped the mat. It is Thursday, the last day of the sitting week, and they want to call stumps. They want to knock the bails off and probably go back home. They might get the last session of the cricket on the way home, and that is it. It is all done.

This legislative program has been chock-a-block in the third year of the 58th Parliament. I tell you what, though: if you look at those speaking lists, they get smaller and smaller. You have a lead speaker on the opposition side who has a go. If it is the member for Hawthorn or the member for Malvern, they will give their 30 minutes. They will give it all they have got. They want to show that they have got a bit of oomph and they want to get out in front of the camera, but for everyone else it is sparse. There are some on that side for whom the last bill they saw was when they paid their power bill. They have not seen any bills, and some have not spoken all year on any legislation — nothing at all. They have not done anything at all, so how are they representing the needs of their constituents?

How can you genuinely say that you are invested in consideration in detail when most of your side do not come in and speak on the bills? Suddenly you have an epiphany that you want to ask questions on the bill, but you do not put forward 2 minutes or 3 minutes. Half of your side cannot even get to 10 minutes on a bill. I mean, give me a break. You want to go into consideration-in-detail stage and ask questions on clauses, but you cannot even be bothered to come in here. Let us be honest: you checked out last night. You have had enough and you want to adjourn off. Effectively Christmas started for the coalition on Wednesday night, and it is a slow day over there. That is right: bring the sunscreen and get home for the last session of the cricket. You checked out at the start of the morning, and that was it.

In all seriousness, those members who are invested in the outcome of the Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 have the opportunity to speak on this bill. This is an important bill. The member for Mildura has checked out. He has had enough as well. The member for Eltham is entitled, on behalf of her community, to offer her contribution.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr RICHARDSON** — Well, we have got 12 minutes on a procedure. The member for Eltham could have been finished by now, but the unintended consequence of the grandstanding by the member for Bayswater has led us to a procedural debate about adjourning the debate.

I want to speak on the scalping bill as well. We have got speakers ready to go, and it is an important issue for my local community. That 10 per cent threshold is very important, so I want to talk about that and the impact that has. It is about fairness, opportunity and looking after the people in our community to be able get to those major events. I want to have a chance to talk on that and go into detail about some of those issues and concerns on behalf of my community.

Simply adjourning off the debate is a waste of our time, so let us get on with it. I know it is a bit fast on a Thursday afternoon, but we will get there — do not worry. The adjournment will be quick, those opposite — you will have your cars running and you will be able to get on the highway by 5.25 p.m. We will have you safely on the way and out of here, and you will get the last session of the Perth test.

**Mr McCURDY** (Ovens Valley) (16:13) — I am delighted to rise and make a contribution on the motion, but after that verbal diarrhoea from the member for

Mordialloc I just cannot believe that he has wasted so much time talking about an ‘epiphany’ that we just decided we want to bring this on. This was an agreement that is a standard practice. This was agreed to on Tuesday, and now all of a sudden you have withdrawn. You have reneged, and you have moved on because you tell us that we want to move on and get home. We are certainly happy to stay as long as it takes so we can get the scrutiny of this government that it so deserves. I have only got a 3-hour drive, so that is still fine by me. I am used to long hours and driving up the road, so we will stay as long as we like.

On the motion, I do not know why they are not prepared to go into consideration in detail. When I came in here I heard the member for Macedon going on with some complete and utter rubbish on the bill that she was speaking about. I think it was fashions on the field on ladies day. Now, that is not showing any disrespect to fashions on the field on ladies day, but in terms of a gambling bill I would have thought there was more benefit in putting scrutiny on this government on a bill that is really important — on scalping and protecting consumer rights. The member for Macedon, as I say, spoke about all that sort of rubbish when the time could have been better spent looking into scalping.

If they want to gag this debate, well, I get that. Is the minister scared to sit at the table, understand and go through it point by point? Some of the points I want to talk about are the AFL finals. For example, will a ticketing decision be made on all of the AFL finals? When a blockbuster comes up because a certain team wins on a Saturday and one on the Friday, all of a sudden the minister might be too late to make the decision on that blockbuster next week. There are questions around that. There are questions around the Rugby League State of Origin that is going to come to Melbourne — those sorts of issues and many soccer matches as well — that we need to get some detail about in relation to how this will pan out.

There are also concerns I have. I want to get to the bottom of about the obligations of the promoter or the company that is running the event to inform the minister about the event before the tickets go on sale. I do know that once the tickets go on sale it is too late to declare the event. Is there an obligation for the promoter to mention it or talk to the minister before this happens? We could find that event tickets go on sale and it is too late to declare the event.

Again, I say the agreement we had in place has been withdrawn, and that is quite disappointing — but it is not disappointing from this government. They will do anything they can to try and hide from the facts and not

get the truth out. All we are trying to do is get to the bottom of a bill that they have written. We want to improve the bill. We want answers. We just want to know some of the extra detail in this bill that they are not prepared to sit here and talk to us about, but instead they go on with rubbish in previous bills. The Leader of the House again wants to gag this opportunity, whereas we want the opportunity to get a better understanding of the bill. I believe we should be going into consideration in detail.

**Ms THOMAS** (Macedon) (16:17) — Twice this week I have had the good fortune to follow the member for Ovens Valley. It is rather amusing to sit here and listen to this new-found interest in the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017, a bill for which, as I understand it, the opposition could scarcely muster up five speakers whereas we have at least 15 or more.

I think the Leader of the House was very, very clear. You only have to look at *Hansard*. She made it very clear that if indeed time were available on Thursday afternoon, she would consider whether or not there was the opportunity to take the bill into consideration-in-detail stage. As you have heard, we have plenty of speakers who want to continue to speak on our Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. We have plenty of speakers who want to continue to speak on the ticket scalping bill.

We have seen a few stunts from those on the other side this week. Anything they can do to avoid actual, real work, anything they can do to actually avoid doing the hard work, reading the legislation, preparing a debate, coming in here and making a considered contribution — anything they can do to avoid that, they will do. That is what this stunt is from the member for Bayswater, as has been made clear already.

We have speakers on this side of the house. They want to make a contribution; they are ready to do that. If you are that interested in the ticket scalping bill, then get up on your feet, make a contribution, do the hard work, do the reading, do the thinking, ask some questions and just make a contribution.

**Mr Richardson** — Just speak on the bill.

**Ms THOMAS** — The member for Mordialloc makes a really good observation. Sometime over the summer holidays I will be looking to see — I might even do it myself if I am bored enough — who has risen to their feet in this place to make contributions, because I can tell you that there are some on that side of the house who sit there and take the salary but they kick

back. They are never seen in their electorates. They do not make a contribution in this place. They are, frankly, lazy. That is the reason they sit on that side of the house, and that is the reason we sit here. We are ready. We have speakers at the ready. They want to make a contribution. They want to speak on behalf of their communities —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms THOMAS** — I am going to take up the interjection. I do not know what it is about those on the other side. They want to attack me for making a contribution in relation to the significance of country racing to the economies of regional Victoria. Now, if they do not care about boosting the economy in regional Victoria and if they do not have the wit or intelligence to be able to make the link between horseracing and gambling, then there is not much I can do to help them, I am afraid.

As I said, the Leader of the House was very clear in her negotiations with those on the other side — she said it in *Hansard* — that if time was available, it would go into consideration in detail. But no, those on the other side would rather drag us through this rather tedious procedural debate. You are forcing us to do that and we will talk out our time, because if you really wanted to consider this bill in any detail at all, then I would say to you: demonstrate your interest in the bill, stand up on your feet, make a contribution during the debate —

**Mr Watt** — We're trying to do that. You won't let us.

**Ms THOMAS** — You had plenty of time. As I said earlier, on the ticket scalping bill I think there were about five members on that side of the house who could be bothered to stand up and make a contribution. We have 15 and counting. So again it points to the contrast between the Andrews Labor government and those on the other side, the pretenders over there who would seek to form government late next year. Well, really, you are going to have to work a little bit harder than that. If you want to persuade the people of Victoria to give you their vote, then you are going to have to demonstrate both in this chamber and outside that you are worthy of that vote.

The laziness that is the hallmark of the Liberal-Nationals coalition is on display once again. If you were that interested, why did you not get up and speak on the bill in the first place? The member for Eltham is here, and she wants to speak on this bill.

**House divided on motion:**

*Ayes, 38*

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

*Noes, 42*

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

**Motion defeated.**

**Ms WARD** (Eltham) (16:29) — I have to say that I am very grateful to the house for the opportunity to speak on this very important bill. It is always important that voices are heard in this chamber and it is also important that people do get the opportunity to say what they need to, especially when it is a bill as important as this one. I doubt that there is anyone in this place who would think that gambling is not an important issue for this place to (a) debate but also (b) act on. That is exactly what this government has done because, as I am sure those opposite are probably tired of hearing, on this side of the house we are getting it done and we are getting it done consistently. We know we are getting it done, and we will keep on telling you we are getting it done.

The Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 amends the Gambling Regulation Act 2003. There are a number of things that are interesting about this bill, but the one I want to particularly focus on is the display of static betting advertising by wagering service providers within 150 metres of a school, on public transport infrastructure, and on roads and road infrastructure. That advertising will be banned from occurring. I find this part of the bill incredibly important. It actually relates to something that I am very passionate about, which is the prevalence of gambling advertising. Gambling advertising, especially when it is directed at children, is something that I find incredibly frustrating. I am sure that there are many people in this house —

**Mr Watt** interjected.

**Ms WARD** — I hear the interjections from the member for Burwood, who just cannot help himself. Especially when a woman is getting up on her feet and talking, he cannot help himself but interject and interject repeatedly. I am glad that the member for Burwood has actually interjected in this instance, because it reminds me of his ridiculous arguments yesterday, when he was trying to compare this bill —

**Mr Watt** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I am deeply offended by what the member is saying. I interject with males and females alike. I ask the member to withdraw.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny)** — Will the member withdraw?

**Ms WARD** — I withdraw.

What the member for Burwood argued about yesterday was the fact that this government was doing the wrong thing by providing a safe space for people to inject drugs. The member for Burwood refused to acknowledge that what the safe injecting rooms in Richmond will do is actually stop people from shooting up on school grounds and near schools. Why he thinks that this legislation is contradictory to that legislation is beyond me because both pieces of legislation protect children, and that is exactly what we want to do. I think the member for Burwood should stop trying to score cheap political points and actually think deeply about legislation and what legislation means to people's lives rather than ranting and raving about things that actually do not make a lot of sense.

A recent report from Deakin University's Associate Professor Thomas and colleague Hannah Pitt, who are both researchers at the school of health and social development, shows that many children are keen to gamble because of attractive advertising and its link to

their favourite sport. I note that the federal government has got in place an analysis at the moment, where they are seeking feedback on their proposition to stop gambling advertising during sporting games up until 8.30 at night. To my mind I do not believe the federal government is going far enough because I know, as I am sure everybody here knows that, if you are watching the footy, you are watching the cricket, you are watching the netball, those games go on beyond 8.30 p.m. and often our kids — our 10, our 12, our 14, our 15-year-olds — are watching those games with us.

Acting Speaker, I am sure you are like me. You sit on the couch on a Saturday night and watch a game with your kids. I am watching netball. You might be watching footy; you might be watching both. When you are watching a sport and you have got this incessant display of advertising on the TV — of gambling odds, of what you can bet on which player — essentially it is ticker-tape advertising going on through the game. Then you might get on your Twitter feed to see what else the Vixens are saying on your game and what is going on. And guess what? More online ads come up on your Twitter feed. They come up everywhere; it is incessant. The federal government and this government should be working together to make sure that we have controls on gambling advertising so that it does not suck our kids in.

What really disturbs me are the parallels between gambling advertising and tobacco advertising. The incessant creep of gambling advertising is very similar to the way that tobacco advertising used to strike: at every opportunity that it could. It captures kids, gets kids interested in a product from an early age. It normalises a product, having kids think that participating in this, whether it is smoking or gambling, is a cool, fun thing to do.

Australians spend more money per capita on gambling than any other country in the world, with 2014–15 figures estimating that Australian adults spend on average \$1241 per person on gambling each year — this is what this Deakin report found. It says:

Similarly to adults, a broad range of harms are associated with children's gambling behaviours, including mental health problems, issues associated with self-esteem and self-confidence, truancy, a reduction in academic performance and other risk-taking behaviours.

We need to make sure that the gambling industry does understand the challenges that are posed by their advertising, that they respect the needs of our kids and that they taper their advertising accordingly. I overwhelmingly support the idea that there is no advertising within 150 metres of schools, within trains,

at bus stops and the like. This is absolutely the right policy and it is absolutely the right way forward.

In 2012 in the UK the industry spent \$1.4 billion on advertising. This is a huge budget, and I know that in this country they also spend an amazing amount of money advertising for gambling. We want to protect our kids and we want to make sure that our kids make good, informed choices. I want to quote from Easton Wood, a Bulldogs defender, who said:

The obvious issue here is the effect this advertising has on children every time they watch us pull on our boots.

The big question is, do we think the normalisation of gambling — particularly to kids — is acceptable in this day and age?

And it is not. And I do have to tell the federal government that Tim Costello actually thinks that it is a half-baked idea to allow ads on gambling to happen after 8.30 p.m. He, like me, recognises and accepts that kids are at home watching TV, watching their game, watching their favourite players shine. They do not want to continually see this TV advertising. I would really like members of the federal government to sit down with me on my couch and tell my kids, 'Well, it might be a really crucial point in the game, but it's 8.30 p.m., you've got to go to bed. You can't watch that goal being shot. You can't watch that goal. You've got to go to bed because the gambling is coming on'.

**Mr Richardson** — It is outrageous.

**Ms WARD** — It is outrageous, member for Mordialloc.

The things that particularly bother me are things like the newest online bookmaker Neds. They are now going to stop running ads that they have had on TV lately — a couple of months or so ago — because they breached advertising codes and encouraged excessive gambling. Acting Speaker, you might remember this ad: it had a bloke come down, sit down at the table, pick up his phone and say, 'Hang on, I can't stay for dinner. I've got to go out the back, pretend I've got an important phone call so I can gamble'. That is the most irresponsible gambling ad I have ever seen. It was absolutely disgraceful. They were a series of ads which showed males particularly deceiving their families and their friends so that they could go off and gamble. This is terrible. This is why gambling regulation and advertising regulation for gambling is absolutely necessary. It is absolutely vital because our gambling industry members cannot show that they always understand the effects of their advertising — the negative effects and the challenges that their advertising poses.

I commend the minister for putting this bill together and for the work that she has done. I commend the thought that has gone into this legislation. We need to make sure that we are being proactive in this space. Things are changing constantly in terms of gambling. People's access to gambling is becoming easier and easier and easier. Online gambling is now becoming more of a challenge than pokies gambling. It is the responsibility of government at both a federal and a state level to step up to the plate, to actually be engaged in this and to make sure that we are creating legislation that does the right thing, legislation that is responsible and legislation which helps people make informed decisions and not get sucked into the addiction that is the curse of online gambling or gambling overall. This is a great amendment bill. I am very glad the minister has put this together, and I commend it to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## MAJOR EVENTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (TICKET SCALPING AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2017

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 12 December; motion of Mr EREN (Minister for Tourism and Major Events).**

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (16:39) — It is a great pleasure to rise and speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. It is a very important bill in the context of supporting working Victorians and our access to recreational activities, respite and time that we spend enjoying what is great about our state. We truly are the events capital of Australia, if not the world, and we are a showcase for the rest of the world with our major sporting events. It is why people come to Melbourne. It is why our visitor economy is so strong. We are a destination that has the best of everything. We are the world's most liveable city.

Can you blame people for travelling across seas to get to our great state and enjoy our hospitality and our major events? I think of the incredible Boxing Day Test match that will begin on 26 December. It is a great spectacle. We will have the English over again for what will be a fantastic occasion, and hopefully we will get 70 000 or 80 000 to the G on Boxing Day and that will flow over to the following days.

Then we have the Australian Open, which is always an incredible spectacle. It is a great start to the year, and as you head towards Australia Day the tennis is on. You cannot feel any more part of summer than at some of those major events.

But that demand brings challenges. Unfortunately in an environment where there is such demand there are unscrupulous people who will try to make a quick buck and exploit those people who want that opportunity. Some of the prices that are asked by scalpers are locking out people from being able to go to these events and to take their kids along. Everyone who has spoken on this bill or looked through its contents has probably reflected on the first big major event they went to whether it was sporting or whether it was entertainment and on the joy that they had going in. That anticipation of the event, the excitement and the buzz as they travelled in on the highway, the freeway or the train, or the excitement they had if they travelled interstate or internationally. Then when they are at that major event, they have enjoyed that time with their families and the respite they need from their working week.

What happens if you are locked out from that opportunity? It is the \$100 ticket that then becomes marked up to \$250 or \$300. That is locking out people from having that opportunity. We see it so many times. If you are fortunate enough to be able to afford pay-TV, that is maybe the lens through which you are watching an event — through sporting channels or through a digital set-top box. But people are being locked out. It is already costly, and then they cannot go along to those sporting events. This bill looks at strengthening those protections for working people. I think the member for Broadmeadows in his contribution touched on and summed it up perfectly. It is about fairness. It is about giving people a fair go and giving people access to those opportunities.

When we think about the visitor economy as a whole it is absolutely substantial for our state and the revenue that is generated is a significant income flow. I think of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix coming up in March. It is an extraordinary event that is an international showpiece for our state. Getting those tickets comes at an absolute premium, as does some of the AFL events and soccer events that will come up as well, and even some of the cultural events.

I note the Premier recently acknowledged the theatre production of Harry Potter, which is in two parts. You have to invest in the first part and then have a crack at the second as well. If there are not those protections, scalping becomes even more prominent and can be more of a risk. That is a big event — London, New

York and Melbourne are the only world cities that have that production. That is a big boon for our state. That showpiece could be running for months, if not longer. All the franchises that have accompanied Harry Potter have been absolutely extraordinary, so that will be a massive excitement buzz for our state. It is another significant cultural and artistic event, and I think it will be absolutely exciting.

The bill looks to expand the act to cover non-sporting major events in relation to ticket scalping provisions such as cultural events, theatre, concerts, gallery exhibitions and festivals. I think of the Van Gogh exhibition as well. What an extraordinary presentation that was. The numbers of people that got along were absolutely extraordinary. These were absolutely timeless pieces that generations of Victorians were able to go along and witness and appreciate in different forms. Art takes various forms and it is in the eye of the beholder, but generations of people — going along with their parents, grandparents and the like, or on excursions — really enjoyed those incredible pieces that stand the test of time. It was just extraordinary.

The bill empowers the Minister for Tourism and Major Events to make a major event ticketing declaration, which will apply new ticket scalping offences to both major sporting events and other major events. It will put greater power in the arm of the minister to be really hands-on in those day-to-day or week-to-week major events, so if there is a big cultural event or a significant event coming up, we can ensure that people are not being exploited and people are not trying to make a quick buck. Tickets will not be allowed to be resold or advertised for sale for more than 10 per cent above the ticket face value.

I do have a declaration to make on this bill. Recently I attended the Paul McCartney concert at AAMI Park, an extraordinary event. The bloke is 75 years young and what an extraordinary event. My beautiful better half, Lauren, got onto Ticketek to buy us a couple of tickets and hit the buy button twice and so bought two sets of tickets, so we had four tickets. We had to resell two of them and luckily the member for Dandenong — the member for Dandenong might throw me under a bus here, but there was definitely not a 10 per cent mark-up — paid cost price.

**Mr Pesutto** interjected.

**Mr RICHARDSON** — There was no mark-up on those tickets. I still swear that I could hear the member for Dandenong belting out a Beatles tune from the back of the stadium. There is genuine need sometimes to onsell — if you have got family commitments,

sometimes the kids get sick and you might need to onsell — and that is totally legitimate, but the 10 per cent is appropriate for any movements or the like. Ten per cent is a good threshold to set above the face value of the ticket. Penalties for scalping can range from \$790 to a whopping \$475 000 depending on the nature of the offence. That is a fantastic deterrent against people profiting off those wanting to go to these major events.

Outside of a Melbourne context, my wife, Lauren, and I went to New York in 2012 and went to an incredible concert, the 12–12–12 Hurricane Sandy relief concert, and it was megastars throughout. We could not get tickets originally, we were in New York at the time and the mark-up on those tickets — I said to my wife, ‘No, the price is so substantial’ — was a mark-up of hundreds of per cent. She said to me, ‘This is a once in a lifetime. Once in a lifetime you will be able to see people like Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, The Who and others all in the one spot’. We saw Paul McCartney again, I did remind her, but the mark-up was substantial. That is going on all over the place. If you have followed a band, if you have followed a sporting club — you think of the Liverpool Football Club coming out to the MCG and how major that was. We had 99 000 mad Liverpool fans all —

**Ms Green** — I have seen them at Anfield.

**Mr RICHARDSON** — The member for Yan Yean has had the good fortune of seeing them at Anfield with 40 000 or 50 000 people singing along.

**Ms Green** — It was better at the G.

**Mr RICHARDSON** — It was incredible — goosebumps stuff — the singing of their anthem by 99 000 —

**Mr Burgess** interjected.

**Mr RICHARDSON** — I cannot give you a rendition, member for Hastings; singing is not my forte. Just the goosebumps you get! If you are from the north-west of England and you are living in Australia now, you want to get to that event. That is a once-in-a-lifetime event. To think that people might profit off that joy, off that enjoyment of following the Reds all the way through — that is the kind of thing that this bill protects against. Those people who are trying to make ends meet, trying to get a ticket, trying to get some recreation and respite from a hard working week — we are ensuring that they are not profited off, that money is kept in their pockets and that resell is fair, and if you are moving tickets on because you cannot get to an event, that that is fair. I think that is an appropriate measure to take. It shows our record of being fair and transparent

with the Victorian people and supporting working people in both their working lives and their recreational lives. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr BURGESS** (Hastings) (16:49) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on the Major Events Legislation Amendment (Ticket Scalping and Other Matters) Bill 2017. Just following on from the member for Mordialloc, it is always interesting that they are claiming to be open and accountable. Certainly with this particular responsible minister it is interesting to note that under proposed section 182N(3) to be inserted into the Major Sporting Events Act 2009 by clause 16 of the bill there is a discretion for the minister to dispose of forfeited tickets or tickets that have been taken in any way he sees fit. I would have thought, and I am sure all members on this side of the house would have thought, that the Minister for Sport already had about as many tickets as he could possibly handle. Certainly he has got a bit of a record for having sports events tickets and receiving them from all over the place. So his having the discretion to dispose of these tickets in any way he sees fit I think is anything but open and accountable.

There are a range of concerns that the opposition has with this particular piece of legislation. The background to this is that Victoria was one of the first jurisdictions to have a Major Sporting Events Act which protected events in such ways, particularly from scalping. I think that has worked quite well for Victorians. Certainly I think that there is a particular shadow cast over that now with the uncertainty over this bill. One of the many reasons the opposition was so intent on going into consideration in detail on this is that there are so many areas of this legislation that are just unclear. It is difficult to understand who has actually written this. A clause will say, 'The authorised officer must' and then 'The authorised officer may' and then the authorised officer seems to be able to 'maybe' do something, and if there are other circumstances that make them impractical, then the authorised officer does not have to do anything.

There is also great uncertainty about timing. The minister is able to declare an event so that it comes within this legislation, but the bill does not say anything about the timing or anything about the number of events that might be involved in that process. You might have a situation where there are five or six concerts in a series, and the minister may not declare them until partway through. There is just so much uncertainty involved with the minister declaring an event under the bill. There may have been all sorts of scalping going on prior, say, to concert three in a series. So concerts one and two have been fine, and then they are not allowed to do it for concert three. There does

not appear to be any way of making that known, other than the minister declaring it. It is likely to create great confusion, not only for consumers but also for those who up until now have had an honest business.

We believe there have been seven authorised ticket resellers up to now. They are genuine businesses reselling tickets, and their future is uncertain. That is a recurrent theme with this government. Every piece of legislation that passes leaves businesses with uncertainty. That is probably the number one thing that businesses are complaining about. They do not want uncertainty, and this government seems to be making a great art of it.

Prior to this bill there was already legislation that deals with scalping, and which seemed to be dealing with it reasonably well. This legislation will tend to confuse the matter. The bill gets more confusing every time you open it. For a declared event scalping was already banned and five tickets was the maximum; now it is six. There does not seem to be any reason why it has gone to six. There does not seem to be any definition of when a declaration can be made. There does not seem to be any indication of why a particular event would be classified as a declared event, but nevertheless the minister is able to do.

There is a whole range of things that make this legislation confusing, that indicate in one circumstance that an authorised officer 'may' do things and then in another that they 'must' do things:

New subsection (1) provides that a person referred to in section 182J(1) or (2) from whom any ticket has been seized under section 182J may apply to the Magistrates Court for return of that ticket.

If the minister has declared an event close to the time of the event, it is difficult to understand why anyone would apply to get the tickets back.

New subsection (2) provides that an application may be made at any time after the seizure, but must not be made if any proceedings for an offence against section 182F(1) or (2) or 182G(1) or (2) have been commenced ...

You can imagine the difficulty for the average consumer in trying to understand what their rights are under this legislation — not only the rights of the consumer but obviously the person who is reselling tickets. They may in fact think that they are doing something that is within the law and find all of a sudden that they are outside the law. If they have been selling tickets for two of the events and then when they are selling tickets for the third event, which is a declared event, they can find themselves falling foul of this legislation.

An authorised officer can approach somebody who is selling tickets and ask for the tickets, or can ask the purchaser for the tickets. It is not clear in the legislation whether the consumer will be forced to hand over the tickets or whether the authorised officer can do anything about that. So while there seems to be an indication that there is a seizure power in the legislation, if the purchaser has not done anything wrong, and there is no indication that a purchaser has done anything wrong according to the bill, then what is the authorised officer going to do to obtain those tickets? If the authorised officer is in fact unable to obtain those tickets, then they are unable to prove that there has been an offence.

There might have been some inkling of sense behind this legislation, but with the way it has been put to paper and with the way it has now been presented, it does not make any sense at all. It will make it very difficult for an authorised officer and it will make it impossible for somebody who is trying to resell tickets but stay within the law, whether they have got five tickets or six tickets, and how they prove that and whether they are within 10 per cent of the purchase price or not. There are all these difficulties that are going to be presented for each person in this chain of events.

The purchaser of tickets may think they have done nothing wrong, and then be approached by an authorised officer or a police officer and asked for the tickets. The legislation says that they can be asked for them but it does not appear to give any requirement for the purchaser to hand them over. Certainly being an innocent third party you would not expect that an officer would be authorised to search or seize or in some way to compel a person to hand over the tickets.

In summary, the legislation may have some benefit; it may in fact have some good cause that it is trying to apply. The Leader of the House has chosen to renege on a deal for us to have a consideration-in-detail stage. Also the minister has chosen not to make himself available and is not in the house while this bill is being debated to answer questions and clear things up so we can understand how this legislation is going to operate and what it is going to mean to promoters of major events.

I have listened to members detail how important major events are to Victoria and to Melbourne, and they are, absolutely. They are part of the culture of our town and our state. But to introduce legislation which makes things so unclear to everybody who participates, from the promoter all the way down to the person who has purchased the tickets, is certainly a retrograde step. While it is not surprising that this government would become involved in something like this, it is regrettable.

We need clarification of the matters that I have raised, and that other speakers have raised. We need to understand what the intent of this legislation is — what the minister intends it to do. The minister has refused to turn up and answer questions. He has been supported by the Leader of the House, who has reneged on a deal to have a consideration-in-detail stage. This is entirely disappointing, and certainly the industry will be very disappointed with this as well.

**Mr NOONAN** (Williamstown) (16:59) — This might just be my best contribution of the year. I am a little troubled by the time I have left actually, but you might be able to help me out with that, Deputy Speaker, in time. The major events amendment —

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

### PRIMARY INDUSTRIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 13 December; motion of Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport).**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

### OFFSHORE PETROLEUM AND GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE AMENDMENT BILL 2017

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 12 December; motion of Mr PALLAS (Minister for Resources).**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The question is:

That this bill be now read a second and a third time.

**House divided on question:**

*Ayes, 76*

Allan, Ms	McLeish, Ms
Andrews, Mr	Merlino, Mr
Angus, Mr	Morris, Mr
Asher, Ms	Nardella, Mr
Battin, Mr	Neville, Ms
Blandthorn, Ms	Noonan, Mr
Britnell, Ms	O'Brien, Mr D.
Bull, Mr J.	O'Brien, Mr M.
Bull, Mr T.	Pakula, Mr
Burgess, Mr	Pallas, Mr
Carbines, Mr	Paynter, Mr
Carroll, Mr	Pearson, Mr
Couzens, Ms	Perera, Mr
Crisp, Mr	Pesutto, Mr
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Richardson, Mr
Dimopoulos, Mr	Riordan, Mr
Dixon, Mr	Ryall, Ms
Donnellan, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Edbrooke, Mr	Scott, Mr
Eren, Mr	Sheed, Ms
Foley, Mr	Smith, Mr R.
Garrett, Ms	Smith, Mr T.
Gidley, Mr	Southwick, Mr
Graley, Ms	Spence, Ms
Green, Ms	Staikos, Mr
Guy, Mr	Staley, Ms
Halfpenny, Ms	Suleyman, Ms
Hennessy, Ms	Thompson, Mr
Hodgett, Mr	Thomson, Ms
Howard, Mr	Tilley, Mr
Kairouz, Ms	Victoria, Ms
Katos, Mr	Wakeling, Mr
Kealy, Ms	Walsh, Mr
Kilkenny, Ms	Ward, Ms
Knight, Ms	Watt, Mr
Languiller, Mr	Wells, Mr
McCurdy, Mr	Williams, Ms
McGuire, Mr	Wynne, Mr

*Noes, 3*

Hibbins, Mr	Thorpe, Ms
Sandell, Ms	

**Question agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

**GAMBLING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL 2017**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of  
Ms KAIROUZ (Minister for Consumer Affairs,  
Gaming and Liquor Regulation).**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read third time.**

**CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (17:07)** — Before we commence the adjournment debate I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members to acknowledge and thank those who work so hard for all members every day. Thanks to our parliamentary heads, Peter Lochert, Bridget Noonan and Andrew Young. Thanks to all staff in the clerks' office, the procedure office, the Speaker's office and the office of the Serjeant-at-Arms. Thanks to the tours and customer service unit staff, the parliamentary committee staff and the community education and engagement staff. I would also like to thank the building and grounds staff, the catering staff, the security and electorate properties staff, our wonderful Hansard staff, the library staff, the information technology staff, the budget and risks staff, the accounting staff and administration staff and the organisation development unit staff.

Thanks to the President, the clerks and the staff of the Legislative Council. Thanks to all our electorate officers and of course the staff of the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Thanks to our protective services officers and contract security providers and to the parliamentary press gallery. Can I wish all members and staff a safe and happy summer break, and I trust that you will enjoy some time with your families and friends. All the best for the new year.

**Business interrupted under sessional orders.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

### Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre

**Mr SOUTHWICK** (Caulfield) (17:09) — (13 846)

If I could also just wish a very merry Christmas and a happy new year to all of the members of Parliament, the staff of the Parliament and everybody associated with this great house.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children, and the action that I seek is that the minister deliver on the 2014 funding promise to all neighbourhood houses, and in particular my house, the Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre. Philippa Caris, who is the executive officer there, does a fantastic job. The Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre has been excluded from applying for recurrent funding under the neighbourhood coordination program. This exclusion has occurred due to the three-year funding rounds being rolled over, which has blocked the Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre's ability to apply for neighbourhood funding.

Since 2009 the Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre has expanded rapidly, and it now delivers three to four times the service volume as comparable neighbourhood houses that receive recurrent funding, including delivering 72 000 student contact hours in 2016, up almost 20 per cent since 2014, and having 446 enrolled students in 2016, up 30 per cent from 2014 — and it has not received any funding at all. In fact the previous Liberal-Nationals government increased funding to neighbourhood houses in 2014, and that was the last time funding for neighbourhood houses was increased in Victoria despite Labor promising to do so in the 2014 election campaign.

I conclude by asking the Minister for Families and Children to give the Glen Eira neighbourhood centre their justly deserved funding and the Christmas present that they deserve.

### African-Australian community

**Mr PEARSON** (Essendon) (17:10) — (13 847) I direct my adjournment matter to Minister for Industry and Employment and the action I seek is for the minister to attend a forum with the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Jesuit Social Services, the City of Moonee Valley, the Huddle and Wingate Avenue Community Centre to discuss the progress being made to date in finding employment opportunities for African-Australians.

### Gippsland South electorate chemical contamination

**Mr D. O'BRIEN** (Gippsland South) (17:11) — (13 848) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I seek that urgent action be undertaken for more testing on ducks at the Heart Morass near Sale for the presence of the PFAS group of chemicals. As the minister will be aware, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) announced a couple of months ago that it was recommending that ducks, eels and fish from the Heart Morass not be consumed due to PFAS contamination emanating from the East Sale RAAF base.

Defence and EPA say that more testing needs to be done, and the final report will not be released until the first quarter of 2018. This is a great concern for Field and Game Australia, and particularly its Sale branch, with respect to the use of the Heart Morass, which is owned by Field and Game Australia and managed as a conservation reserve. This is quite a unique conservation project where Field and Game Australia volunteers have significantly rehabilitated a degraded area of the wetland, and that is entirely funded by hunters. Field and Game Australia actually sells keys to access the Heart Morass for duck season, and that is its main source of revenue for the year. Without that revenue it would be very difficult for them to maintain the conservation project that they undertake at the Heart Morass.

The uncertainty over use really does need to be addressed as soon as possible with the preparation for duck season well and truly upon us. Field and Game Australia is willing to help with providing 50, 60 or however many ducks are needed in addition to the 10 that have so far been tested to get better samples. It is also seeking that the government test outside the morass, because very obviously ducks move around, and there are wetlands literally across the river and right around the Gippsland Lakes. So it is a bit silly of the government to be saying that you should not eat ducks from the Heart Morass when they may have just flown in from Dowds Morass or any number of places. That is an issue that does need to be addressed.

The members themselves are also happy to be tested to address the issues of concern with respect to humans. We understand the need for caution, but we also recognise that there is no consistent empirical evidence of human health concerns. While I have called on both state and federal governments to be as transparent as possible with respect to PFAS in the Parliament recently, I ask the minister to get the EPA to act urgently to do this additional testing.

## Coburg North Primary School

**Ms BLANDTHORN** (Pascoe Vale) (17:14) — (13 849) I appreciate the opportunity to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that the minister investigate the accessibility of toilet facilities at Coburg North Primary School. Since 2007 enrolments have grown by approximately 150 per cent at this school. In addition it is forecast that this surge in enrolments will continue well into the future, as many young families are calling Coburg North home.

As the minister is aware, in 2017–18 the state budget provided Coburg North Primary School with \$6.7 million for the upgrade and modernisation of the school's facilities, including the construction of a new learning and arts hub. But in the interim I am advised that in 2018 several grades will be accommodated in double-storey portable classrooms, and these will be located out on the school oval. These portables do not have water connected to them and therefore do not include toilets, and their location will be somewhat away from the main school building. As a result of this both teachers and students will have to travel a considerable distance to access the closest toilet facility.

As the minister will appreciate, a long trip to the toilet takes away from precious learning and teaching time, and further, when a teacher has to go to the toilet, it has a ripple effect throughout the school as another teacher needs to be brought forward to supervise their class in their absence. I would appreciate it if the minister could investigate this situation further and see what may be able to be done to assist Coburg North Primary School in this instance.

## South Barwon electorate roads

**Mr KATOS** (South Barwon) (17:15) — (13 850) My adjournment matter this evening is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is for the minister to instigate repairs and maintenance works on the surface of Mount Duneed Road between Anglesea Road and Surf Coast Highway and also the roundabout surface at the Anglesea Road–Mount Duneed Road intersection.

I have received a lot of correspondence in my office with regard to the state of this road, and recently on Facebook Mr Ken Baxter from Torquay posed the question:

Does anyone know who is responsible for the appalling condition of Mount Duneed Road and the roundabout that joins the Anglesea Road to head to the ring-road? Impossible to do more than 5 kilometres at the roundabout for fear of

being bounced onto the wrong side of the road, extremely dangerous.

That is the view of one of my constituents, but many more have expressed such views. Effectively the roundabout, particularly when you are turning east from Anglesea Road into Mount Duneed Road, is a series of pothole patches, and the road surface has deteriorated immensely. I would be more than happy normally to raise this directly with VicRoads, but VicRoads is under direction not to speak to me because I am an opposition member; hence I have to raise it in this —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr KATOS** — I take up the interjections from those opposite.

**The ACTING SPEAKER** (Ms Thomson) — Please do not.

**Mr KATOS** — I know for a fact that members in the previous Parliament, the 57th Parliament — the members for Geelong, Bellarine and Lara — were regularly allowed briefings with VicRoads where they could raise issues with regard to their electorates. If there were problems with road surfaces or with their roads, they were free to talk to the VicRoads Barwon south-west director and raise these issues directly, but it has been a directive from this Labor government that we cannot raise these important issues directly with VicRoads. So I have to sit here in the Parliament to raise the facts about getting potholes patched and road surfaces repaired. It would be very easy to go and meet with Mr Mark Koliba from VicRoads Barwon south-west, but he will not speak to me, he does not return emails and he does not return calls, therefore I have to raise it in this forum.

I would very much like the minister to fix the surface of the roundabout that I have mentioned, and not just the surface of that roundabout but also the shoulders of the road. They are in very poor condition, and I include the drainage. It is very ordinary on Mount Duneed Road, particularly between the Anglesea Road and the Ghazeeppore Road intersection on that stretch of road. I call upon the minister to do that before anyone has a serious accident or is injured, particularly with the summer holiday season coming up.

## Bentleigh electorate schools

**Mr STAIKOS** (Bentleigh) (17:18) — (13 851) My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Education and concerns consultation on a secondary school at the East Village site in East Bentleigh. The action I seek from the minister is that he review the

feedback from the recent successful community workshop and advise us of the next steps in this development.

The workshop was a huge success. It was a great night. About 60 local residents attended to discuss what is an important issue — the possibility of a new secondary school for East Bentleigh, which in a built-up area like my electorate is not something that we talk about every day. There is an opportunity for the development of a school on a 1.2-hectare piece of land on the East Village site. At the workshop we particularly talked about a vertical school option, which I think a lot of people were quite impressed with.

There was of course a lot of interest in a second campus for McKinnon Secondary College, given enrolment pressures at that school. Currently it has around 2200 students and every year now nearly 400 year 7s are enrolling, so it is a school with significant enrolment pressures. There was also a lot of interest in what the government is doing to support special schools, and I took great delight in sharing with local residents present at the meeting the substantial investment in special schools both in the Bentleigh electorate and across Victoria. There needs to be a lot more consultation on this.

It is important to note that this site is within a stone's throw of the old Murrumbeena High School, which was closed by the Kennett government in the 1990s. It just goes to show — and we are reminded of this time and time again — just how short-sighted those mass closures were. We are still paying for that short-sighted decision, and now of course over the next few years our area is going to have to accommodate an additional more than 1000 extra secondary school students — that is, I believe, by 2021. This government is thankfully taking action, and I would ask that the minister review the feedback from the other night and advise us of the next steps.

### **Shepparton electorate schools**

**Ms SHEED** (Shepparton) (17:21) — (13 852) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that he take steps to implement the recommendations of the strategic advisory committee in relation to the Shepparton education plan. In this year's budget Shepparton district received \$1 million to put together an education plan that would transform the way schooling is delivered in the region.

We formed a strategic advisory committee to guide the process, and over the past six months the group has been working hard both in the community and with the

Department of Education and Training to develop a blueprint for change. In June we asked the community for their thoughts on the state of secondary education being provided to our children, and they had plenty to say. Residents turned out in impressive numbers to the local workshops, they completed detailed surveys and they gave feedback on online comment boards.

The response was overwhelmingly that our kids deserve so much better than what they are getting at the moment. They reflected our unsatisfactory NAPLAN results and our lower than average Victorian Certificate of Education results, and they reflected the poor state of enrolments — especially at Mooroopna Secondary College, where student sign-ups have dropped drastically and consistently, from 772 to around 350 in less than 10 years. Across the board they reflected that parents are leaving state secondary education in the Shepparton district on a continuing basis, and in the meantime our private schools are bursting at the seams.

We have known this for some time, but to hear the same message from so many people in our community was invaluable and helped to inform the next step, developing a suite of options for a way forward that was released for further community consultation in recent months. These include a full range of options, from maintaining the status quo to doing a short-term patch-up job on our existing schools to combining the four secondary colleges into a mega school with modern, state-of-the-art facilities. The advisory committee has taken heed of the community feedback and has now made its recommendation to the minister.

This is without a doubt a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It will be some years until the full education plan is delivered. In the meantime I am very concerned about issues of capacity relating to Mooroopna Secondary College that parents of students at that school have raised with me. We must ensure in the interim period that these students are receiving the education they deserve. Our committee has also identified a very strong need for resources to address early childhood issues, particularly in Mooroopna. Attention to an appropriate intervention that might be reflected in an integrated children's centre or hub has been seen as a priority in our recommendations.

The minister will require significant funding to be obtained, and we will be calling on him in the lead-up to the 2018–19 Victorian budget to advocate for our community's evident need for transformational change in the education sector.

### Narre Warren South ministerial visit

**Ms GRALEY** (Narre Warren South) (17:23) — (13 853) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police and concerns the culturally and linguistically diverse women in the south-eastern suburbs. The action I seek is that the minister visit my electorate for an information session with women from newly arrived migrant communities.

I recently, with the very hardworking member for Dandenong, held a community consultation with women in the south-eastern suburbs. I would especially like to thank and compliment my electorate officer, Naureen Choudhry, for organising the forum, and the Victorian Multicultural Commission, led by Helen Kapalos, for their support for the event.

One of the key pieces of feedback we received was that women in emerging communities have limited understanding of the work of law enforcement agencies, and there was a concern that this could develop into fear and distrust of authority figures. It was suggested that some women may be unaware of our laws and the rights accorded to them in Australia. Family members may also share similar views or be unaware of how our legal system works.

An information session with the Minister for Police would be a welcome opportunity for these women to talk about these issues, which are very concerning for them. I know that we as a government are working hard to bridge the gap between diverse communities and the police to build greater trust and respect and to develop strong and positive relationships. I look forward to joining with the minister to meet these very enthusiastic women.

### Warrnambool Golf Club

**Ms BRITNELL** (South-West Coast) (17:25) — (13 854) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Sport and Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and the action I seek is that he travel to Warrnambool and meet with members of the Warrnambool Golf Club to discuss their plans for expansion. For many years the golf club has been developing its vision to build an additional 18 holes overlooking the rugged and spectacular Southern Ocean.

As the minister has recently stated, golf tourism is a booming industry. People will travel across the globe to play on spectacular courses, which ours is. The Warrnambool proposal would give the south-west a slice of that action. The minister would be aware of the popularity of Barnbougle in Tasmania, with a long

waiting list of people wanting to play on it, as well as the two new courses on King Island and of course the highly regarded Port Fairy Golf Club just a few kilometres down the road.

There is a huge opportunity for tourism operators to offer golfing holiday packages with flights out of Melbourne to King Island and then on to Warrnambool. A feasibility study done on the proposal 10 years ago suggested the redevelopment would create 535 jobs and increase tourism expenditure by \$22.4 million. Forward figures suggest that by 2014 that benefit would have increased to 790 jobs and \$30 million in extra tourism dollars for the region. Imagine what those figures would look like in 2017 with golf tourism booming.

The Warrnambool plan would see 18 holes developed in dunes with frontage to the ocean rivalling St Andrews in Scotland and even Barnbougle. The area is so similar that you could almost overlay a photo of Warrnambool on Barnbougle and you would not be able to tell the difference. This would mean not only an expansion into Crown land but also that the landscape was being managed, and it would increase the club's intake of recycled water, meaning less water would be pumped into the ocean.

The course architect, Ross Perrett, is the first Australian-accredited verifier for the Golf Environment Organization. He actively promotes environmentally responsible golf course design and sees it as part of the solution to protect the natural environment. This was put into practice on a course Mr Perrett recently designed and built on heritage-protected Dent Island in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The Warrnambool development would be environmentally sensitive and designed by experts in a way that would have minimal impact, manage the landscape, remove weeds, cats, rabbits and foxes which kill native bird life from the scrubby areas, and provide ongoing maintenance of the landscape. The course superintendent in Warrnambool also makes his own natural pesticides and insecticides, which he has developed himself to perfectly suit the environment.

A new course in Warrnambool fits perfectly with the push to attract tourists further along the Great Ocean Road and would encourage increased visitation and extra dollars to be spent in the region. In 2015 an estimated 630 000 international tourists visited the Great Ocean Road but did not stay in the Great Ocean Road region. This is a key problem. Locals hardly benefit, and we need to be doing much more to encourage increased overnight stays.

Given that earlier this year the government put out a discussion paper planning for golf in Victoria, it would be worthwhile for the minister to come and visit the south-west and see for himself just how spectacular this new course would be and what a great opportunity it would be for not only South-West Coast but also the Great Ocean Road region. I know that the Premier is a keen golfer, so it might be a way to get him out of the city a bit more and for him to actually take note and understand what is happening in regional Victoria.

### Police resources

**Mr RICHARDSON** (Mordialloc) (17:28) — (13 855) It is great to have the last adjournment matter of 2017. It is an important one to the Minister for Police. The action I seek is for the minister to meet with local police in the Mordialloc electorate to discuss the hard work they are putting in to keep our community safe. Earlier in the year the Premier announced the biggest resourcing boost to Victoria Police. What was so important about that was that we finally took the politics out of policing. For too many years police have been a political football — backwards and forwards, constantly a political football. All the community wants to know is that if there is an incident, the police will rock up and be resourced appropriately. With a 20 per cent increase in Victoria Police resources in addition to attrition, which represents over 3000 additional sworn police officers in the coming years, this is about resourcing them appropriately to keep our communities safe.

It is a broader agenda in our community. It is not just policing; it is also emergency services. We are resourcing our ambulance services more, with 450 additional paramedics. Two hundred and eighty-two have already been delivered to our community, after we ended the crisis in our ambulance system. And of course there are more firefighters in our community and there is more support for our volunteer firefighters, such as those at the Edithvale Country Fire Authority brigade, where we are building a brand-new station. That broader approach to community safety is very important for police, ambulance and fire services across the board.

I had a look at some of the coverage in the crime statistics that have been released. There is a lot of work to do, and I want to put on record my thanks to my local police stations. I have four that service our area from Chelsea, Mordialloc, Cheltenham and through to Moorabbin. An article on ABC online today is headed “‘Biggest decline” in Victoria’s crime rate in 12 years as car thefts, aggravated burglaries fall, data reveals’. It shows that we are starting to turn the tide. There is a lot of work still to be done, and our men and women in

Victoria Police are dedicated to supporting and protecting our community.

I want to put on record our great appreciation and thanks. They put themselves in harm’s way each and every day to support others in their community. On behalf of my local community, the Mordialloc electorate, I thank you for your service and your dedication. In conclusion, I ask that the Minister for Police join those members of Victoria Police in my area and get an update on the hard work they are doing to boost community safety in my area.

### The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thomson) —

Before I call on the minister, can I just take the opportunity to wish everyone the best for the season ahead. Return to us safe and well, and may your families be safe and well.

### Responses

**Ms ALLAN** (Minister for Public Transport) (17:31) — I was also just going to briefly wish everyone all the very best for the festive season. I further wish everyone safe travels wherever they may go. On our collective behalf, I would also like to thank our fabulous parliamentary staff in all parts of the building, who look after us beautifully each and every day we are here. I would also like to acknowledge the whips from all parties in the Assembly — it is the Christmas spirit. The whips have a big job in managing the chamber. In his absence, I would like to acknowledge the work this year of the manager of opposition business. We have had a lot of business to do this year, and I have appreciated the working relationship with him. I would like to send a little special cheerio to the Labor government MPs as well, but I wish all of you and everyone a very —

**Mr Southwick** interjected.

**Ms ALLAN** — I said that at the outset. I wished everyone all the best at the outset.

On that note of festivity, I would like to advise the house that 10 honourable members raised matters for various ministers, and they will be forwarded for their action and response.

**House adjourned 5.33 p.m. until Tuesday,  
6 February 2018.**

